

## THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘Take it this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, blessed it and gave it to them saying: ‘This is the blood of the covenant.’”

What is it that separates the Catholic faith from all other faiths or Christian denominations except the Orthodox? It is the Real Presence of Jesus of Nazareth whom we believe to be the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ. We believe that Jesus truly resurrected from the dead on the third day. We profess that faith conviction at every celebration of the Eucharist on the Lord’s Day when we recite the Nicene Creed. We believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. That the Lord allows himself to be summoned here by the invocation of the Holy Spirit over the gifts of bread and wine by an ordained priest and that his presence abides. It is real and it is permanent. The Lord leaves himself to us as bread to be eaten, bread to sustain us, bread for our journey through this life. His presence abides and that is why we place any consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle and genuflect before the Tabernacle as a sign of reverence and respect.

But there is more. We believe that we ourselves with Jesus Christ are part of what is known as the Mystical Body of Christ. He is the head and we are the members of the body. Each of us is a cell, one small cell, in the Body of Christ comprised of billions of individual cells. This image is drawn from the presence of the billions of individual cells which make up my body and your body. The Mystical Body of Christ includes all who believed in him, living or deceased. We are the Body of Christ. That is a communal reality and a personal reality. You are one cell, a living cell, in the Body of Christ. I am also such a cell. This is all by God’s design and because the Lord wants it to be this way. God wants us all to be in him. To live in him. To abide in him. And He in us. That is the heart of the Eucharist. It is not a symbolic presence primarily but a real presence. And whether we believe that or not is what marks us as Catholic. Did you realize that? That is the question of the week.