

May Reflection

Appreciating the Holy Eucharist Through Iconography

By Amanda Singel



Icons instruct the faithful and help us appreciate the Eucharist by depicting how Jesus transforms everything into something greater.

A simple example, the icon of the Wedding of Cana, Jesus' first public miracle. The icon shows water simply being transformed into wine. But we can draw a deeper conclusion: Jesus takes something simple, water, and transforms it into something more, wine, which can be transformed into something even greater, Eucharist.ⁱ

The icon of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is rich with Eucharistic references and it helps us appreciate John's gospel (Chapter 6) because John uses this event for his most important teachings on Eucharist.ⁱⁱ

After preaching near the sea of Galilee, the crowd is hungry and Jesus invites everyone to eat and have fellowship with him. Already this moment foreshadows the Mystical Supper. Next, Jesus explains how *He* is the bread from heaven, "*Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.*" (John 6:32)

Not only does Jesus demonstrate that the bread is a *person*, he also shows how this gift is in the *present*, not the past and it promises eternal life, *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.*" (John 6:32-33)

ⁱ *Inexhaustible Delights*. God With Us Publications, 2003. See page 121.

ⁱⁱ *The Holy Gospel: A Byzantine Perspective* by John S. Custer. God With Us Publications, 2004. See pages 298-299.

