

## November Reflection

### **The Early Church Fathers on the Holy Eucharist**

By Fr. Vasyl Chepelskyy



Christ nourishes us with His Body and Blood in the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist, helping us to mature in His image and grow in His likeness (cf. John, 6:51-58, Luke, 22:19-20, Mark, 14:22-25, Matthew, 26:26-29). The Greek word *eucharistia* means “thanksgiving.” There are countless references of the Early Church Fathers to this Sacrament.

“It is called Mystery, because what we believe is not the same as what we see; one thing we see and another we believe. For such is the nature of mysteries.” – *St. John Chrysostom*

“I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire His blood, which is love incorruptible.” – *St. Ignatius of Antioch*

“What seems bread is not bread, though by bread taste; but the Body of Christ. What seems wine is not wine, though the taste will have it so; but the blood of Christ.” – *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

“In this very Sacrament, our people are shown to be one. Just as many grains, collected and ground and mixed together, make one bread, so in Christ, who is heavenly bread, we may know that there is one body, with which our number is joined and united.” – *St. Cyprian of Carthage*

“In our fragmented lives, the Lord comes to meet us with a loving ‘fragility,’ which is the Eucharist,” says Pope Francis, calling it “the memorial of God’s love.” “The Eucharist encourages us, even on the roughest road, we are not alone; the Lord does not forget us and whenever we turn to him, he restores us with his love,” – states the Holy Father.<sup>1</sup>

The Eucharist is the source of Christian life. It is the real presence of Christ, who comes to our hearts and lives and dwells within us each time we receive this Holy Mystery. Eucharist brings wholeness to our fragmented lives, it heals and restores us. It connects us with God in a very intimate and profound way.

In today’s society where we are always in a rush and have so much going on and where it is hard to stop and reflect let us find moments to be thankful to God for His gifts and love for us. Let us especially be thankful to Him for His gift of Himself in this Holy Mystery. May our whole lives become thanksgiving and may God continue to guide us on the way of our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis’ homily during the Mass for the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (‘Corpus Christi’), celebrated Sunday, June 18, 2017 at 7p.m. in the square in front of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.