

# UNCONDITIONALLY

FINDING JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

COMING 2015



...MAY WE COME TO SHARE IN THE DIVINITY  
OF CHRIST WHO HUMBLLED HIMSELF TO  
SHARE IN OUR HUMANITY.

Greg Wasinski

UNCONDITIONALLY: Finding Jesus in the Eucharist

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## INTRODUCTION

**A**uthor Brennan Manning once said, “My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it.” I think many of us have felt like that one way or another in our lives. Yet, the Lord comes to us unconditionally so that we may return to him in the same manner. No strings attached. The complete giving of Himself without reservation means we cannot place conditions on our relationship with Him. Specifically, how we will commit to worship him, receive Him in the Eucharist or work to be an authentic disciple within a community which represents His love. We will continually struggle without fully acknowledging our need for a personal connection with Jesus Christ; not just the human person, but the Divine being who brings all of His works, love and mercy into our hearts when we consume Him in the Eucharist.

Finding Jesus in the Eucharist consists of everything that we think we see but really cannot fully comprehend till we reflect on what our day has offered. We simply see a chalice or ciborium that holds a wafer and wine. What's beyond that appearance is the actual life and works of Christ that are poured into us each time we feast on, and with, Him. To say we consume "Him", means we consume ALL of Him. We immediately find Him in everything He experienced; moments of prayer, learning, leading, sacrifice, compassion, service and all of the things which made Jesus whole. By receiving Holy Communion, we accept His open invitation to dine with Him in order to allow Christ to become completely one with us. To Find Jesus in the Eucharist, is to see Him beyond the sacrament, looking deep into the soul of others who become the church through this communion, along with those who simply stare into His eyes through the act of Adoration, listening fervently for His voice to answer their deepest hidden prayers.

As Catholics, our fundamental principal of the Eucharist is that Christ is fully present in His body and His blood right in front of us. Not a symbol, not a hypothetical chance, not just a ceremony within our tradition... no, it is Jesus Christ, our Savior and our hope, presenting Himself once again.

We live in a world which talks about faith and

denominations of Christianity that allow us to encounter Christ. The one thing that is missing most times is this relationship with Him created specifically through His sacrifice. Moreover a chance to spend each day with Him inside of us renewing our being, sharing a last supper with him just as the disciples did. Our search for Him leads us on so many paths and we confuse His voice with “needs and wants” of this world. What He really desires is for us to take the time to allow Him to simply be part of us.

*“Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body - the Church.”* (CCC 1396) If we become the church when we consume the Eucharist, then the real answer in finding Him is that we need not look any further than ourselves. It becomes a tremendous responsibility when we are called to be Christ; one that sometimes feels to be too much. But why? If we desire to have a God who loves us unconditionally and shepherds us on the road which leads to the fulfillment of life through His sacrifice, then what would make our role within the flock any different for us to become that model of God? A living vessel that offers the same image to others. It is about us living in a manner which reflects His love unto others through self-sacrifice and belief which then leads others to join the journey with us. Basically, it is in giving

that not only do we receive His grace but feel the need to share it with the world.

How deep is the faith we find through the Eucharist? Nearly every Apostle died for it, people around the world today are still persecuted for it and those who choose to live out their faith are challenged at some point by someone who decides not to believe. Within all of that is the very hope and knowledge that what we find in a relationship with Christ is fulfillment. We are given encounters and experiences in which our feeling of euphoria is so great that we are willing to be discounted by some for believing in the unseen. This is grace, a mystical blessing flowing directly from God into us through the Eucharist. If we never felt His presence with us, then we could not fight for what we believe because we would be empty; nothing to hold us up other than words on the page of a book or host held to the heavens by clergy. However, that is not what happens at all. Finding Jesus in the Eucharist creates a gateway in which every ounce of spiritual knowledge flows into us, connecting our beings with the Mystery of Faith. When this happens, we walk away with God inside of us feeling things we never have felt before.

Denying the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is like being married to the one whose hands you place your life and then refusing to

acknowledge that they are sitting next to you. You love them, you want to spend the rest of your life with them, but you cannot admit they make you a better person. Or even better yet, you write letter after letter for years to someone you have never met, professing your love to them because of the simply beautiful words they continually send back to you. Then one day this person you love through the pen comes to you and is everything you thought they would be but you deny their existence because they are too good to be true. We pray, we believe, we acknowledge Christ's dying on the cross for us and the Last Supper which preceded it, but when faced with an opportunity to dine at His Eucharistic feast, we question the manner in which he presents Himself with a seed of doubt that possibly it is just a symbol. Why would He go through everything for us just to be a symbol?

This book is not meant to be solely educational, purely theological, nor should it be labeled as "Catholic self-help." Everything written is an invitation to fall in love more deeply. A chance to surrender unconditionally to the One who can give you everything your heart longs for but the world cannot provide. Finding Jesus in the Eucharist isn't a journey just to change how you see the sacrament, it's an encounter to completely transform everything you become when you receive Him, loving Him as unconditionally as He loves you.



## A CALL HOME

**W**hen the disciples desired to see Jesus in the days immediately following the crucifixion, their yearning led them to run to the tomb in which He was laid to rest. A cavernous grave to serve as the final end of the violence from Good Friday. Regardless, it held the One who transformed their lives forever; their teacher, their Messiah, their friend. They were headed there because they didn't really expect or understand all Christ foretold about being raised up, they just knew they wanted to be next to Him at all costs. Longing to be "home" again with their master to gain a sense of peace which nothing on Earth could provide in their turmoil.

Where do we run when we feel empty? Where do we desire to be, and who do we desire to be

with? In the end, we want to be home, a feeling of peace, security and love.

Let's start off by identifying what "home" really is. It's not a place, it's not a destination, it truly is a feeling. Take marriage, or any loving relationship/friendship for that matter, as an example. Whether the world is crashing down around you or you're on top of world celebrating life's victories, there is an indescribable feeling to be with the person who makes you feel safe and secure. Truth is, we can experience the feeling of home regardless of where we are. The point is, home is not merely defined as the house in which we reside.

Think about the hometown where you grew up in and how it makes you feel when you come back. People know you, they make you feel relaxed and their joy in seeing you is unconditional. Possibly, you might think about a time where strangers gave you a welcome which filled you with an emotion you could not put into words. However, you felt as if they had known you for years, which bonded you through instantaneous friendship. These are the factors that allow us to understand how home is not the physical place. Rather, it's the experience your soul feels which places you completely at ease. Home really is where your heart is and the only One who can truly say where your heart belongs is the

Creator who made you in His likeness. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us “*God thirsts for us so we may thirst for Him.*” (2560) What better way to quench that thirst than every time we celebrate in partaking in His Son who was offered for each and every one of us, regardless of who we think we are or where we have been.

Sometimes the first question we need to ask ourselves at some point in our faith journey is, “Why do we believe what we believe?” There is so much we don’t understand and sometimes the world is persuading us to give up on what we believe because there isn’t “scientific” or full historical proof to every facet of our religion. It’s interesting we have to place the question of “Why?” to ourselves because usually, we have no problem identifying ourselves as Catholic. Some might preface it with, “I am not practicing, I grew up Catholic,” or even “I love my faith but I don’t agree with...‘insert issue of the day.’” In the end, we associate ourselves with Catholicism because something inside of us lets us know that it is “home.” Whether we always feel that way or not in our humanness can be a different story, but it is really our heart which guides us in our decisions at the end of the day. To be loved unconditionally in the Eucharist fulfills every aspect our soul needs in order to return to God who made us for eternal happiness which we experience when our final end

is met. Catechism #27 tells us:

*The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for:*

*The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator. (Vatican Council II)*

Then why wouldn't we expect to feel home anytime we are able to invite Christ into our being through celebration of the Eucharist.

Used quite frequently in Catholic teaching and evangelization is the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) When preached about, it usually is meant to remind all of us of how the Father is always waiting for us no matter where we have been or how long we have been away. With that said, what I love to focus on is the fact that the father goes out to meet the son before he actually returns ALL the way home. Some might say this is because of

jubilant; however, there is an aspect of his action which helps us to understand how and where Christ meets us in the Eucharist.

When the father chooses to go out to see the son returning home, I see it as an act of unconditional love to make sure his son returns all the way back to him. Not only is the son broken and empty, he is also weak, a weakness which could rob him of the courage it takes to continue the final leg of his return home. Rather than letting anxiety or fear take over as the son gets closer, the father makes sure his return will be complete by meeting him and walking with him the rest of the way. In the same manner, our Father meets us in the Eucharist to become part of us so we do not have to journey alone. He knows how many times people have made the first step to come home to be with Him, only to have the fear of rejection or a lack of perceived acceptance stop them from completing the journey. As we take those steps toward Him down the aisle we are coming to receive the bridegroom who offered us everything we ever wanted and all we have to do is say “yes” in our “Amen.” It is the feast which is ultimately celebrated when the son makes it home and his father places his ring on his finger. A feast for a self-deemed “unworthy” son who is nothing less than beautiful in his father’s eyes. A father who just wanted his son home by any means necessary.

Making the decision to come home to the Father through Jesus in the Eucharist isn't just about that we may have been physically absent. Yes, we have a large population of those who identify themselves with the faith. But of those who fully participate in mass, there is a larger contingency who do not allow themselves to be present spiritually. It becomes impossible to encounter the Lord if we have not given over everything within us to ultimately be at peace and see the loving aspects of home experienced through our faith.

Think about every holiday you've had when all the members of your family gathered, but the party took on a life of its own apart from the reason you got together. There you all are, Uncle Johnny sleeping on the couch, mom stuck in the kitchen doing dishes, a conversation between two siblings in another room disagreeing on life issues and you, sitting in a recliner staring at the TV not feeling like it's a special occasion at all. Sure the family pictures on the wall remind you of where you belong, but within you, it's only when everyone is present with joy, laughter and an interest in one another when you truly feel home. Church for us is the same way. God just doesn't want us in the house, He wants us to be mentally present, sharing ourselves with Him so he may share Himself with us. We enter church

for fulfillment to reconnect with our Lord, yet, we cannot feel the peace we seek if our heart spends its entire time longing for an encounter with Christ which doesn't take place. Our opportunities to reconnect in these precious moments slip away. However, there is the time when the dinner is placed on the table and we come together for the feast. A special time which offers us what we desire as we dine on food which nourishes us and reminds us of not only our time together, but the love only true family can share. The Eucharist is our moment in mass where we find Jesus serving us just as he did with His disciples at the last supper to give us the same chance to see how much we are loved. A gathering in which time stands still and home is felt within the depths of our soul.

The call home for us will come in different forms. It just doesn't occur when we are gone, when we are broken or when we feel like we have nowhere left to turn. The home found in Jesus through the Eucharist is offered daily for us to celebrate with Him despite our shortcomings and amidst our celebrations. He is desperately calling you to come home every chance you get to remind you of the family you belong to and an intimacy which shows how much He loves you unconditionally. Nothing else on Earth can give us a chance to touch Heaven and feel home once more.

## **Catechism of the Catholic Church:** *The Desire for God*

**27** The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for:

The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.<sup>1</sup>

**28** In many ways, throughout history down to the present day, men have given expression to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behavior: in their prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations, and so forth. These forms of religious expression, despite the ambiguities they often bring with them, are so universal that one may well call man a *religious being*:

From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him - though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "in him we live and move and have our being."<sup>2</sup>

**29** But this "intimate and vital bond of man to God" (GS 19 § 1) can be forgotten, overlooked, or even explicitly rejected by man.<sup>3</sup> Such attitudes can have different causes: revolt against evil in the world; religious ignorance or indifference; the cares and riches of this world; the scandal of bad example on the part of believers; currents of thought hostile to religion; finally,



that attitude of sinful man which makes him hide from God out of fear and flee his call.<sup>4</sup>

**30** "Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice."<sup>5</sup> Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, "an upright heart", as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God.

You are great, O Lord, and greatly to be praised: great is your power and your wisdom is without measure. And man, so small a part of your creation, wants to praise you: this man, though clothed with mortality and bearing the evidence of sin and the proof that you withstand the proud. Despite everything, man, though but a small a part of your creation, wants to praise you. You yourself encourage him to delight in your praise, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.<sup>6</sup>

**44** Man is by nature and vocation a religious being. Coming from God, going toward God, man lives a fully human life only if he freely lives by his bond with God.

**45** Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness: When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete (St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 28, 39: PL 32, 795}.

1 Vatican Council II, *GS* 19 § 1.

2 *Acts* 17:26-28.

3 *GS* 19 § 1.

4 Cf. *GS* 19-21; *Mt* 13:22; *Gen* 3:8-10; *Jon* 1:3.

5 *Pss* 105:3.

6 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 1,1,1:PL 32,659-661.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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More info can be found at  
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