

THE PRESENCE



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Creator of all things, visible and
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The Eucharistic Humility of God

(a reflection by Dom Mark Kirby, OSB at vultus.stblogs.org)

The Most Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Divine Humility. Those who partake of It worthily enter into the humility of God, for one cannot eat the Bread of the Humble and remain proud. Those who adore this Sacrament of the Divine Humility are drawn into the obedience of God, who, at the word of a man, of a priest speaking and acting in the Name of Christ, annihilates the substance of a little bread to replace it entirely with His Divinity united to the Sacred Humanity.

Who can describe the Eucharistic Humility of God? Here the Word made flesh, born of the Virgin Mary, and crucified, He whose side was opened by the soldier's lance, He who rested in the darkness of the tomb, He who rose from the dead and is seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, here, He is really present: silent in the fragility of the sacred species, and hidden from view not only by the sacramental veil -- the appearance of bread-- but, more often than not, by the tabernacle as well.

This is the Humility of God, hidden from the eyes of the learned and the clever, but revealed to little children . . . Worldly arrogance scoffs at the folly of a God hidden under the appearance of a little bread and put away in a box; but this Mystery follows and completes the disconcerting logic of God who hides Himself in a Virgin's womb, becoming a man like unto other men in all things, save sin.

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The Eucharistic Face of Jesus, His Hidden Face, is revealed only to those who themselves risk being hidden, as the psalm says: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Face, from the disturbance of men, Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues" (Psalm 30:20).

The last place at the banquet is elusive; he who thinks he has found it may be surprised to discover that Another has taken a still lower place before him. No matter how low we think we have placed ourselves, no matter how little we think we have made ourselves, no matter how diligently we think we have sought the last place of all, no matter how completely we imagine ourselves to be buried in silence, there is Another, the Other, who has forever laid claim to the lowest place, who, though He be the infinite God, Creator of all things visible and invisible, has made Himself littler than a crumb of bread.



Has He not made Himself the very last thing that remains when all have left the banquet table: a fragment of bread to be stored away? Has He not entered into an inviolable silence that astonishes even the angelic Choirs and causes kings to fall silent and adore?

One does not become humble by striving to be so, for all our striving is infected by an insidious pride. One does not become humble by striking humble poses, by affecting a humble speech, or even by thinking humble thoughts. And why? Because humility belongs to God alone who made it His own in the mystery of the Incarnation, and who continues to make it His own so often as the mystic words are uttered by a priest over a little bread and a little wine mixed with water: "This is My Body. This is the chalice of My Blood." Here is the *Mysterium Fidei*: the Eucharistic Humility of God.

Eat the Body of Christ, and digest the Divine Humility. Drink the Blood of Christ; it is the elixir of those who would hide themselves with Christ in God.

Since the event of the Incarnation -- the descent of God into the Virgin's womb, in view of His descent into death's dark tomb -- and so often as Holy Mass is celebrated -- the descent of God into the frail appearance of Bread and into the taste and fragrance and wetness of a few drops of wine -- humility can be found nowhere else. The very least and last of the guests has become The Host, and The Host has made Himself the very least and last of the guests.

Tremble, then, to adore Him, and having adored Him, receive Him, that your soul may become the throne of the Humble Hidden God, and His humility your most cherished treasure.

"Learn from Me," He says, "for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29), and again, "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Adoremus in aeternum sanctissimum et augustissimum Sacramentum.