

## THE MEANING OF EUCHARIST

The following is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century theological master Gaudentius of Brescia, and it was the excerpt found in the “Office of Readings” of the Breviary for Thursday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Easter. Its content dove-tails perfectly with this “First Eucharist Sunday” here at Our Savior:

The heavenly sacrifice, instituted by Christ, is the most gracious legacy of his new covenant. On the night he was delivered up to be crucified he left us this gift as a pledge of his abiding love.

It was the Lord’s will that his gifts should remain with us, and that we who have been redeemed by his precious blood should constantly be sanctified according to the pattern of his own passion.... Therefore let us all, priests and people alike, be faithful to this everlasting memorial of our redemption. Daily it is before our eyes...We hold it in our hands, we receive it in our mouths, and we accept it in our hearts.

It is appropriate that we should receive the body of Christ in the form of bread, because, as there are many grains of wheat in the flour from which bread is made by mixing it with water and baking it with fire, so also we know that many members make up the one body of Christ which is brought to maturity by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, and since it was fitting that he should fulfill all justice, he entered into the waters of baptism to sanctify them. When he left the Jordan he was filled with the Holy Spirit who had descended upon him in the form of a dove....

Similarly, the wine of Christ’s blood, drawn from the many grapes of the vineyard that he had planted, is extracted in the winepress of the cross. When we receive it with believing hearts, like capacious wineskins, it ferments within us by its own power.

And so, now that you have escaped from the power of Egypt and Pharaoh, who is the devil, join with us, all of you, in receiving this sacrifice of the saving passover with the eagerness of dedicated hearts. Then in our inmost being we shall be wholly sanctified by the very Lord Jesus Christ whom we believe to be present in his sacraments, and whose boundless power abides for ever.

**May we always cherish, reverence and love the great gift of Self that Christ gives us in the Eucharist!**