

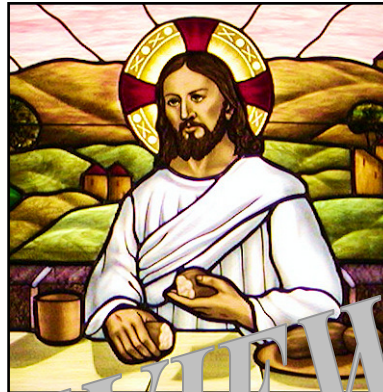


Behold! The Eucharist is the Lamb of God!

Read:

1 John 2:29--3:6

John 1:29-34



In every Mass, we hear the presiding priest say the words of John the Baptist that are quoted in John 1:29-34: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Behold what? Behold who? Behold what? Behold who? The priest isn't showing us something that is visible to our eyes. "Behold" means "look with the vision of faith and see Jesus! He is here! Accept him! Worship him! Receive him!"

To which we reply: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed."

With this healing, we're freed from our sins thanks to the Penitential Rite at the beginning of Mass if we're truly repentant. With this healing, we receive Jesus in all of his humanity and his divinity. With this healing, we can leave church reformed and renewed into the likeness of Jesus. We become tabernacles of his True Presence.

Is Mass that kind of experience for you? It requires full attention for what's going on in Mass — in all parts of the Mass. Jesus is present in the community song that initiates the Mass. Jesus is present in the Penitential Rite, listening for sincerity and genuine awareness of our sinfulness. Jesus is present in the Liturgy of the Word; the Word read and the Word preached, the Word broken open like bread to nourish our spiritual growth (and when the homily is poor or absent, the Holy Spirit preaches to us privately; straying thoughts are often an action of God). Jesus is also present in all the prayers of Mass.

Like John the Baptist, we can say: "I did not know him." In other words: "I saw only bread and

wine, but the Holy Spirit revealed to me the presence of my beloved Savior" or "I was sinful and didn't realize the damage I had done, but the Holy Spirit gently exposed my sins and gave me help in overcoming them" or "I was wounded and did not know how to be healed, but the Holy Spirit led me to the right resources, the right counselor, the right doctor."

1 John 2:29--3:6 says that we are God's children now; however, what we shall be after we die in Christ has not yet been revealed. We won't know it or understand it or experience it until we die, and then "we shall be like him." We're only partially like him now, because we only partially understand him. After death, "we shall see him as he is" fully, and then we will want to be like him fully; in whatever ways we are not like him we will gladly purge from us (which is the process called purgatory).

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, when the bread stops being bread and becomes the Body of Jesus, and the wine becomes his Blood, time disappears and we're united to our Lord who lives in eternity. Through the Eucharist, we experience a taste of heaven. We become like Jesus, and we stay like him after Mass in the ways that we imitate him.

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