

HOLY THURSDAY

Institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist

26.1 First Point

This sacred day is a happy one for all the faithful. It is the day on which Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of his body and blood. He multiplies himself in it in order to be always with the faithful, to make sharers in his divinity,¹⁷⁵ and to change their hearts and bodies into living tabernacles.¹⁷⁶ There he can remain as in a place pleasing to him and honorable for those who receive him and in a way that is most advantageous for them.

It was for the sake of his disciples and for those who share their spirit that Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament. It is to let them share in his spirit that he gives them his body in this august sacrament.

Adore Jesus Christ in this action. Unite yourselves with his intention and take your full and proper part in this holy institution.

26.2 Second Point

In instituting this divine sacrament Jesus Christ changed bread into his flesh and wine into his blood. It was on this very day that he became the living Bread come down from heaven,¹⁷⁷ in order to unite himself with us, in order to incorporate himself in us, and in order to communicate himself to the lowliness of a vile creature.

This heavenly Bread unites him to our soul in order to nourish it with God himself and to make it grow strong, to use Tertullian's expression, with the flesh of Jesus Christ.

He puts aside all the splendor of his divinity to take on the appearance of ordinary bread, an appearance which has no proportion to what it really contains. What takes the place of the bread is his own true substance, the object of veneration for angels and for all his people.

Admire this holy institution, make yourselves worthy to profit from it by a holy life, and today beg Jesus Christ coming to you to destroy entirely your own inclinations and spirit, so that you may have no other inclinations except his and may no longer be guided except by his spirit.¹⁷⁸

26.3 Third Point

The love of Jesus Christ for us led him to institute this divine sacrament in order to give himself entirely to us and to remain always with us. He knew that immediately afterward he would suffer and die for us, that this offering he would make of himself on the cross would occur only once,¹⁷⁹ and that after his ascension into heaven he would no longer appear among us. This was why, to give us a sign of his tender love and goodness before dying, he left to his apostles and to the whole Church in their persons his body and blood, to be for us in the ages to come a precious proof of the tender love he feels for us.

Today, receive this gift with respect and thanksgiving. Give Jesus love in return for his love, considering what a great benefit you receive, and may this love you have for him and the desire you have to unite yourselves with him lead you to have a great love for frequent Communion.

175 2 Pt 1:4

176 1 Cor 6:19

177 Jn 6:51

178 Rom 8:13

179 Heb 10:10