

When I was a kid, I remember asking my grandmother once at Mass right before communion: "Does the priest ever run out of hosts?" She gave me a quick and hushed response, "No." My mind registered her answer with utter amazement. In my little mind, I imagined angels dropping hosts into the paten to make sure there were plenty. Though this would be an amazing thing, and technically nothing could keep God from multiplying hosts, even more amazing, is what ordinarily happens every time the Mass is celebrated. It's more amazing than Jesus feeding five thousand with a few loaves and fish.

The same God who has created everything out of nothing, transforms ordinary bread and wine before our eyes, into the Body and Blood of Jesus, and offers it to us as food for the journey. Lord of Lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood. Just as Jesus vests himself in humanity for us to come to know God the Father, just as Jesus vests himself in bread to enter into our souls, likewise, in the Eucharist I cannot see Jesus, but he is there, veiled in human vesture and given to us for heavenly food. We are truly blessed because we have been called to share in the supper of the lamb. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world comes into our bodies to transform us.

Saint Athanasius, of the early church, wrote, "God became man so that man could become God." At this banquet we become what we eat. God comes to us so to lift us up to Him, and we share in His divinity as He has shared in our humanity. How is it that our lives are different because we receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? If we did not have this great gift, would we feel something lacking? The Eucharist matters, so our lives should be different because we receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. Our lives are different because God raises us up to Himself. Our lives are different because the Eucharist allows us to embrace the unconditional love that Christ has shown us- a sacrificial love that gives it all. The Eucharist allows husbands to love their wives more, and vice versa; parents to love their children more, and vice versa. It allows us to love coworkers, acquaintances, friends and strangers. It allows us to love those who annoy us, those who hurt us or frighten us. Those most unlike us, and those we disagree with. It allows us to see each person as God sees them. God living in us makes us recognize the same God in our brothers and sisters. We ourselves cannot see God in the other person. Only God in us can see God in the other person. Our participation in the Eucharist leads us to a new way of participation in each other's lives. It manifests itself in concrete ways: in forgiveness, reconciliation, mutual support, outreach to people in need, solidarity with all who suffer, and an ever-increasing concern for justice and peace. This is who we are and what we do as a Eucharistic people.

I remember walking with my grandmother towards the priest and watching in awe at her receiving something I could not yet receive. I stood beside her admiring this mysterious food. Pray that we may never lose the wonder and awe that the Eucharist instills in us. God comes to be among us and to lift us up to Himself.