

Mystery & Eucharist

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The Final Night of 40 Hours Devotion at St. Mary's

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Please note: This written reflection was prepared as faithfully as possible using an audio transcript of Father David Hereshko's talk during the 40 Hours Devotion. Minor edits and clarifications were made for readability, grammar, and continuity due to occasional limitations in the audio transcription.

Again, as we gather here for our 40-hour devotion during the Easter season, we are the Christians of the world who need to proclaim to the world that there is life after death. Jesus Christ is our God who took flesh, and as He took our flesh, He suffered as we do, and He died as we do.

He was seen alive after His death. Our God who took flesh and died rose from the dead. He is alive. Sin has no power over us. Death has no power over us. There is life eternal. We know what lies beyond the grave. Our God, our Heavenly Father, has sent His Son into the world so that we can share in His divine life, follow in His ways, participate in His life now, and be with God's love forever in the glories of the Kingdom of Heaven. That's the Easter message. That's the good news.

And here we are celebrating the Holy Eucharist in the very midst of the 50 days of celebration of Easter joy. We have to be the witnesses of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have to be the witnesses to the world that there is more. We thank the Lord for blessings and the truth that He's bestowed upon us.

When we celebrate at Easter and we look upon the Lord risen from the dead, the mystery of what lies beyond is the great mystery. Everybody wants to know what lies

beyond.

Even Philip, when he was speaking with Jesus, said, "Just show us the Father." Right? "Just show us the Father, Jesus." Right? "Just show us what lies beyond." And Jesus said to Philip, "Philip, how long have you been with me? Don't you know that when you see me, you see the Father? The Father and I are one." Jesus Christ is God incarnate. He's God in our flesh.

And we are the believers that He has bestowed the faith within us at baptism to accept the graces of His life, to live the life of faith, to turn to Him and say, "Lord, help me to experience Your love and to be Your witness in the world." This great mystery of the resurrection of Jesus, the great mystery of what lies beyond, the great mystery of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, we can never understand fully. That's the whole understanding of the mystery of God, is He's always beyond our comprehension.

A mystery of this world, we wait for the last days or the end of the movie and we're like, "He solved it." God will never be solved. He will always be love that is too much for us. He will always be love that's beyond our comprehension. His presence in the Holy Eucharist, we can have words for it. We can put words to it, say, transubstantiation from one substance to another. What's the substance of God?

It's a mystery. As soon as we put it into words, we know it's the words that help us to grasp the mystery of God, who is pure love. How do we grasp pure love? When we enter into the mysteries of the Holy Eucharist at Easter, what lies beyond our death?

I always love the image of a little child in the ocean. And that little child is in the ocean with her father, and she's there, and she can barely grasp it. She maybe some water in her little swimming pool at home.

Maybe she can grasp a little bigger pool, or maybe there's a pool in the town, or maybe she drives by a river with her parents. But standing in the ocean, how do you explain to a child how vast and immense a little child this ocean is? All they see is what's before their eyes. They can't grasp it.

It keeps going and going and going and going and going and going and going and deep and deep and deep. It's beyond their comprehension. They can't understand it. But what can that little child do as he stands in the ocean?

She can enter into the ocean. That little child can frolic into the ocean, play in the ocean, hold on to her father in the ocean, and enter and experience the joys of what the ocean is without fully grasping and comprehending it.

That's our life today. We cannot understand how Jesus is present in the Holy Eucharist, but what can we do as children of God? We can enter into it. We can frolic and enter into the real presence of Jesus Christ. We can embrace the mystery and share in His love, even though we cannot fully grasp and understand it. That's the mystery of our faith."

We can embrace the mystery and share in His love, even though we can't fully grasp and understand it. That's the mystery of our faith, that our God, who is love beyond comprehension, reveals Himself in what seems to be the most, the simplest of ways that we will never understand, but always able to enter into.

As we hear today in our readings, this great mystery of our Heavenly Father that we cannot see, Jesus says today in our reading, He says, "Now that everything You gave me is from You, because the words You gave to Me, Father, I have given to them." The mystery of the Heavenly Father, the words of the Heavenly Father,

Jesus says, "Everything You've given to Me," Jesus says, "I have given to them." The words, what lies beyond eternal life, the mystery of life after death, Jesus has come

into this world to share that truth with us. Your words, He says, "Give it to Me, I give to them." We have the words of eternal life. We have the words of the mystery of the truth of what lies beyond the grave. And these words have been given to us to allow us to enter into the mystery, never fully understanding, but always able to enter into it.

When we look at the Holy Eucharist today, what are some of these words of the Heavenly Father that's been given to the Son and has been given to us? Well, Jesus said in the Last Supper, "This is my body . This is my blood. Do this in memory of Me." Father, You have given me the words, He said, "I have given Your words to them." We have the words of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. We are called to enter into it. What are the words that Jesus gave us that help us to know the mystery of eternal life, that we have received those words so that we can enter into the mystery beyond comprehension?

Well, it was in the synagogue at Capernum when he was there, he said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever." And he said, "The bread that I have come to give to the world is my flesh. The bread that I've come to give to the life of the world is my flesh. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in Me, and I in him." The presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, we participate in His life. The words of eternal salvation are given to us, that He is the bread of life for heaven. And sharing upon this truth, we know that these words are the words of eternal truth.

These words that when Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. It is my flesh. This must be eaten," they didn't want to hear it. The Jews were gathered around and said, "How can this be?" And they wanted to push this away. Jesus' own disciples, when they heard the words of eternal salvation that were given to the Son and given to us, when those words were given, those words that are spoken, when you hear it, the disciples heard them and said, "This is a hard saying." And this hard saying that they experienced caused them to walk away. His own disciples hearing that Jesus is saying, "I am the

bread. Eat and drink my flesh and blood.

This is the way to eternal salvation," and they walked away. They couldn't accept the truth of the ways of Jesus and His words. They had to grasp it more deeply. They couldn't understand it, and they were unable to enter into it.

We're called to recognize that we will never understand it, but we enter into it. Jesus, as they walked away and left, He turned to the twelve. The twelve will be the bishop, the apostles, and the ones who pass down the handing down of the life of God through the priests to make sure that we experience the Eucharist every Sunday at Mass. And He turns to the twelve and says, "Where are you going to go away to?" And Peter speaks for them and says,

"Where are we going to go?" Listen to this. You have the words of eternal life. The Heavenly Father gave the words to Jesus, and Jesus said, "I have given the words to them." And Peter says, "Where are we going to go?" Other people are walking away because they can't grasp the Eucharist. When it's Simon Peter, who says, "You have the words of eternal life," what did he not say?

"I understand it." What he did say is, "I recognize that you have the words of eternal life, and I trust it." That's who we are called to be as people of faith, to trust the words of Jesus Christ, that He truly has the word from eternal salvation given to Him to give to us so that we can enter into the truth. And by sharing that truth, we can go out into the world and be the witnesses of eternal salvation.

I just want to close with this story that helps us to grasp and look at this, maybe through the image of the story, our faith in Jesus and the Holy Eucharist, and what makes us come to believe in His real presence. It's the story of Saint Louis. Let me emphasize one word. Saint. Saint Louis. He was a king, and this king was very strongly in love with the ways of the Holy Eucharist.

He was a king who was trying to bring the truth of Christ and bring it to His people. And in the very midst of that, he was proclaiming the ways of the Holy Eucharist. There was Mass being said in his place. He is the king, a special place for the celebrating Mass. And as they're celebrating Mass for him across the town, there's something happening in one of the churches across the town. There's a Eucharistic miracle. There's somehow some way that it seems like there's real flesh being seen in the Eucharist, and people are flocking to the church.

"We have to tell the king." And they run across back to where the king is at. He's celebrating Mass with the priest. And he says, "You have to come over here. There's a Eucharistic miracle!"

That which seems normally to look just like bread has now somehow formed a scent of some flesh that is present." And King Saint Louis says this, "I'll stay right where I was. I prefer to believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist simply because my Lord has told me."