

## **BEING IN THE REAL PRESENCE OF GOD MASS AND HOLY COMMUNION AT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH**

A friend asked me these questions:

“The communion bread that you take is just a symbol of the Body of Jesus, right?” “You don’t really believe it is Jesus, right?”

I quickly replied:

“I do believe it is, because Jesus said at the Last Supper,” This is my body, which is given to you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

She replied very blandly, “Oh”.

Why didn’t I respond more enthusiastically about the very source and summit of the catholic faith, The Eucharist, THE REAL PRESENCE. Could it be that, like many regularly attending Catholics, I have been taking this miraculous gift for granted.

So, the next Sunday I very conscientiously enter Our Lady of Guadalupe Church with renewed fervor. As I entered and blessed myself with holy water and was grateful for my baptism and being a member of this beautiful church, I then genuflected before the Blessed Sacrament and in the reverent kneeling position took my place in the pew. I recalled that reverent postures help me to better appreciate this holy place and the REAL PRESENCE of Jesus in the tabernacle.

All stood for the opening hymn and gave praise to God as a community. Then we prayerfully asked God and each other to forgive our sins as we implored the intercession of Mary and the saints to help us to be prepared for receiving Holy Communion.

As the Scriptures were read and the homily given, thoughts were of the billion Catholics throughout the world hearing the same word of God and being inspired. They too are in the REAL PRESENCE of God. We, all together, recited the Creed professing that we are one, holy and apostolic Church.

The offertory simple gifts of bread and wine were brought to the altar in gold containers and reverently received by the priest, who then prepared the altar for the consecration.

As I sat watching I took in the beautiful art and architecture with renewed attention to details. There was Jesus on the Cross with the tabernacle at his feet reminding us that He died for us and remains always with us. The sanctuary lamp was burning as a further reminder of His everlasting REAL PRESENCE.

As the words of consecration were being said, I couldn’t help but recall my First Communion; the white dresses and suits, the folded hands, the bells reminding us that a miracle was happening, the childlike prayer; “Jesus, Jesus come to me. All my longing is for Thee.”

These memories jog mind and heart. As the Host and Chalice are elevated, bells rung, heads bowed we are now ready to receive Holy Communion. With humble gratitude we can approach the altar and receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

My prayer after Communion as I marvel at the gift of God Himself and the REAL PRESENCE in the tabernacle, is one of humble gratitude. We can share our faith with confidence and peace because Our Lord promised after His Resurrection to be with us always. He is right here with us at Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parishioner