

This week & next we celebrate and say YES to two mysteries of our faith—the Mystery of the **Trinity** & the Mystery of the **Eucharist**, which are central to our Catholic faith. We believe that Jesus is present in the Word we are hearing. We believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist. We believe in the mystery of the **Trinity** that the Father sent the Son to share our humanity that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live like Christ. These set us apart from other religions

Today, we celebrate The Trinity & the mystery of **Christ Present** in the Eucharist. The Synoptic Gospels of Mt, Mk, & LK were written about the same time, sequence, style, wording, & recount the same stories. John's Gospel was written at a later date with different accounts. In the Synoptic Gospels, the institution of the Eucharist is at the Last Supper, but not in John. John, instead, places reference to the Eucharist in the feeding of 5000 & the Discourse on the Bread of Life in Chapter 6 next week here He compares **Moses**, who mediates the miraculous feeding of manna in the wilderness, to **Jesus**, who mediates the miraculous feeding of 5,000 with 2 fish & 5 loaves of bread. Jesus reveals **Himself** as the bread of life, not the manna given to the chosen people.

As Catholics we believe in the mystery of the **Real Presence** of Christ in the Eucharist. We receive the Person, Christ. & we are united to Christ & to each other in the Body of Christ. The physical characteristics of the consecrated bread and wine do not change. Our focus is not on the physical elements, but on the **Person we receive**. We cannot physically see Christ, but we believe that he is **present** in the consecrated bread & wine, & that this **Presence** gives us eternal life. The Eucharist requires an act of Faith & challenges us to love selflessly as Jesus did. Next week, the disciples question Jesus because his statements are hard to believe. Some left Him. Those who had faith in Jesus stayed. We, too, profess our faith in the Eucharist with our **Amen** when we hear the words, "Body of Christ". Faith is accepting as **truth** what we do not fully understand.

The mystery is **how ordinary bread & wine can be transformed into Christ himself**. We cannot fully understand, but it will be revealed fully to us when we meet God face-to-face. But now we celebrate & accept with faith, the awesome gift of the Trinity & the **Real Presence** because we trust that what Jesus said is true. Other scenarios of faith in Scripture are Mary, Zechariah, and Moses. They all questioned what they were told, but they received different responses. Mary says, I don't understand how this can be, & angel tells her & she accepts. Moses strikes the rock for water twice instead of once as God told him and therefore he will not see the Promise Land. And Zechariah told of the impending birth & says that's impossible, and his speech was taken from him.

We are to have Faith & to love as the Lord. It's easy to do when things are going well, or involve people we like, but difficult when things go wrong. We are to:

1. Love the unlovable, especially the ones nearest to us, sometimes that's family
2. Serve those most in need who cannot repay our service—prison, food pantry, the elderly, & the poor of the world.
3. Love by forgiving the ones who hurt us most—that's often the most difficult. I often say to myself, "How can they say or do that to me? Don't they know I'm the Arch Deacon of Northwest Arkansas?" Then I recall Christ on the Cross who did nothing and was crucified. Then He forgave them in His dying words.

My brothers & sisters, just as the Trinity lives in a relationship of love, **in our daily lives**, we are challenged to see **people**, not the **task**. When we're **task oriented**, we **build our own kingdom**, not relationships. When we're **people oriented**, we build relationships, God's Kingdom. When God calls us, we have a choice of how to respond. We can love, serve, forgive, develop those relationships. Only through the strength of **Christ Present** in the Eucharist can we be empowered to love & to serve as one body, just as the Trinity lives as one.