

For Real?

Christ's Presence in the Eucharist

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PRAISE FOR FOR REAL?
CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist is not only the “source and summit” of the Catholic faith, it is quite possibly the most misunderstood mystery within Catholicism. What a tremendous gift this book is for souls longing for our Lord and answers. Deacon Dennis Lambert methodically explains not only *what* we believe as Catholics but, even more importantly, *why* we believe it. Drawing on trusted biblical scholars and the timeless wisdom of the saints, the reader is given a simple yet profound understanding of the Eucharist as God’s greatest gift and his plan of salvation. With relatable stories and Scripture verses, *For Real? Christ’s Presence in the Eucharist* is a must for Catholics who want to dive deeper into the sacramental mystery and learn how to help those they love do the same.

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Catholic author, speaker, co-host of *The Catholic Guy Show*
on SiriusXM’s the Catholic Channel

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To my wife, Debbie:

*You are a gift. I could not have asked for a better
companion to help navigate our mutual pursuit of heaven.*

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Preface

This book is a work of apologetics for the Real Presence of Christ Jesus in the Eucharist. It aims to provide an intellectual case to support the Catholic Church's teaching about the Eucharist as absolute truth.

This is vital for two reasons. The first is that credible research has found that more than one-third of all Catholics who attend Mass regularly—at least once a week—believe the Eucharist is just a symbol. A 2019 Pew Research study shows 37 percent of these Catholics “don’t believe that the Communion bread and wine actually become the Body and Blood of Christ.” These individuals join the Protestant/Evangelical faithful, who largely believe that holy Communion is merely a symbol or remembrance of the Last Supper. The study also shows there is a lack of understanding on transubstantiation and about it being held as a firm position of Church teaching.

The second reason relates to the first: if what the Church teaches regarding the Eucharist is true—that Christ makes himself substantially present every day, at every Mass—it would likely become a game changer for all who call themselves Christian.

I believe making this rational, logical case for the Eucha-

rist is imperative because those who don't currently believe in the Real Presence have likely not been offered enough information to dissuade their lack of understanding and in turn shift their belief. I should know since I once identified as a nonbeliever in the Real Presence. However, that changed when I began my own objective research into the topic.

While there are many books written in defense of the Eucharist, most have a singular focus, like: What did Jesus, his apostles, and the Church Fathers teach about the Eucharist? What prefigurements (foreshadowing) from the Old Testament hinted at, or pointed to, the Eucharist?

Like that of a skilled tailor, my goal is to seamlessly weave all these topics together in a single narrative by using the imagery of a relay race. The book's basic premise is that eucharistic teaching begins with Jesus at the starting line (leg one of the race). Leg one is by far the most important and convincing component. If you are currently a nonbeliever or skeptic about the Real Presence, my guess is that this section, at a minimum, will trigger thoughts within you. I hope that skeptics and nonbelievers will find it transformative. In this relay analogy, Jesus flawlessly hands his teachings to those who followed right after him, the apostles for leg two. After examining the apostles' teachings and beliefs, the "baton"—and our study—is handed cleanly to the next teachers of the faith, the early Church Fathers for leg three. From there, that baton of belief and teaching is handed to the present-day Church in leg four, the final leg we still run today.

Contrary to the belief of some, the Eucharist is not theology that was created by the Catholic Church hundreds of years after Jesus' time on earth. This teaching began with Jesus and has remained unaltered.

I believe three groups will likely benefit from reading this book. The first comprises Catholics and non-Catholics who do not believe that the Eucharist contains the full person, full humanity, and complete divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second group includes Catholics who are unsure about this truth, which Pew says totals about 5 percent. These people may be inclined to believe, but their rational minds cannot jump the last hurdle to total belief. The third group includes those who already believe in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist. If you don't believe in or are indifferent to Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, consider:

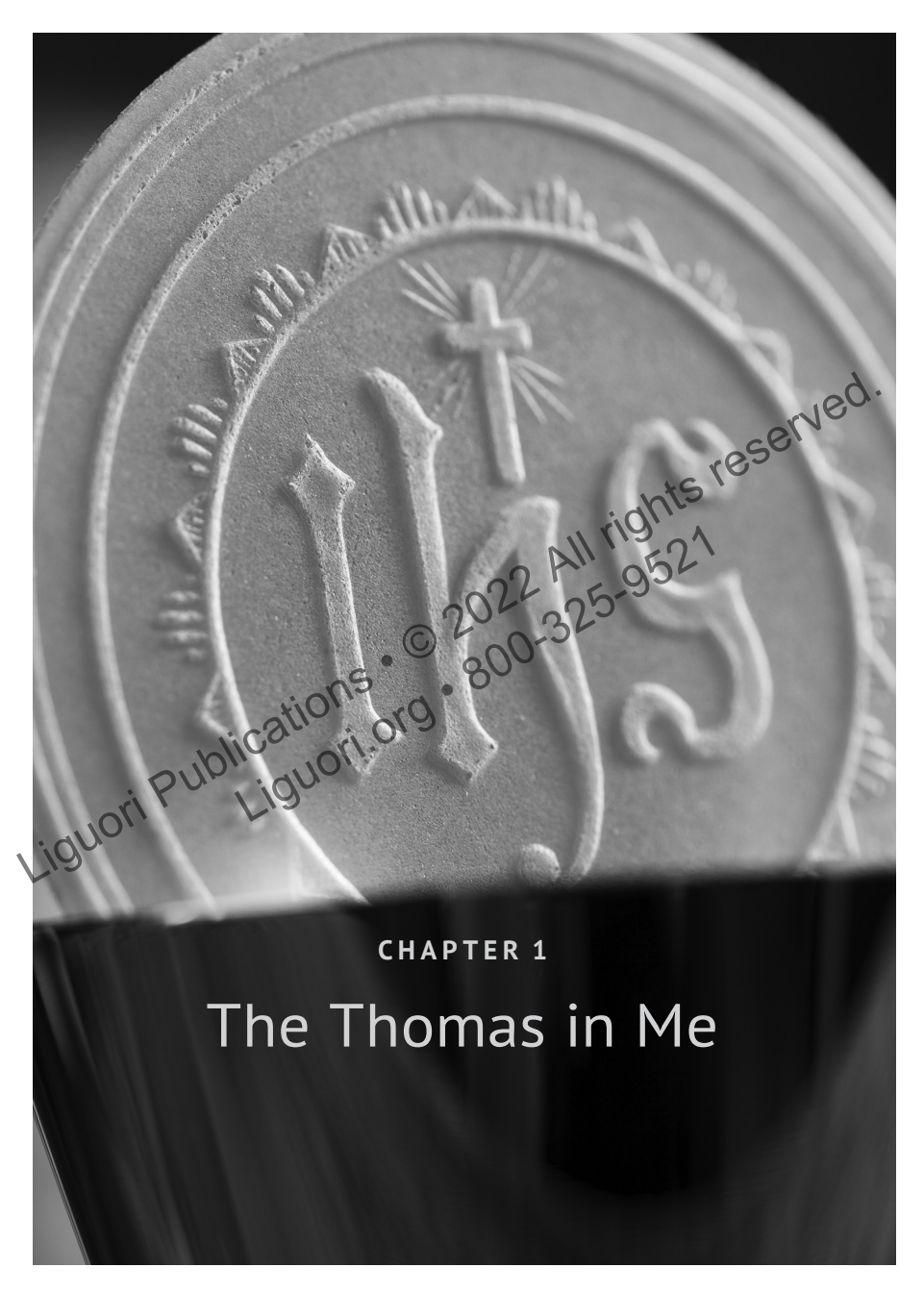
- If you came across convincing evidence that our Lord was indeed fully present in the Eucharist, would it have a positive and substantial effect on your faith journey and practice?
- To this point in your life, have you taken the time to hear or study the Catholic evidence for the Eucharist?

If the answers are yes to the first question and no to the second, do yourself a favor and keep reading. The worst thing that can happen is you will have spent a few hours learning

what the Catholic Church teaches about the Eucharist. At best, this book can draw you closer to God and improve your life.

If you already believe, keep reading. Learning more about the rational arguments for what you already believe in your heart to be true can help equip you to give a reasoned response to those who question your belief and the topic as a whole. This book likely will deepen and strengthen your own faith life and belief in the Eucharist.

I can think of few other topics that are more deserving of an honest and intellectual investigation. No matter where you are on the spectrum of belief in the Real Presence, I hope you are intrigued enough to forge ahead. Remember, I was once an unbeliever and skeptic. It took rational soul-searching for me to realize that Christ presents himself as a total gift to us within his personal gift of the Eucharist.



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CHAPTER 1

The Thomas in Me