



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I mentioned last week, in this time of Eucharistic Revival, I will be writing about the Eucharist. In the early 2000s, St. John Paul II declared a year of the Eucharist. The plan was for people to rekindle "Eucharistic amazement" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 6). We are called constantly to rekindle this amazement in our lives. We can do this by prayer (spending quality time with our Lord in His Eucharistic Presence), in study (like the study I began on Monday, or reading good books on the Eucharist), and by telling stories. Telling stories helps to engage our whole selves. I recently read a book with thirteen different authors telling their stories about the Eucharist, and I would like to share a few of these (stories and quotes come from *Beautiful Eucharist*, Dynamic Catholic).

Fr. Mike Schmitz recounts a story that affected how he looked at Eucharistic devotion: When the Communists came to power in China, they sought to get rid of Christianity. In one small village, they put the priest under house arrest, and destroyed the Church, including throwing the tabernacle out the window. The Eucharist – the Body of Christ – was scattered over the ground. The priest could do nothing, except watch from a window. That night, he saw a 12-year-old girl sneaking through the shadows to the site. She had been taught that she could not touch the Eucharist with her hands and that she could only receive the Eucharist once a day, so she put her head to the ground and picked up the Eucharist with her tongue, and snuck away. She came night after night, to receive the Eucharist this way, one host at a time. The priest knew how many hosts were in the Tabernacle, and so when the last night came, he was relieved, for she would be safe after this night. But after the girl received, she made a noise, and two soldiers rushed to her and beat her to death. She gave her life in care and love for the Eucharist.

Do we have the same longing for the Eucharist as this young girl? Do we have the same care and devotion? "One crumb of the body of Jesus is enough to save the world" (p. 20).

Peter Kreeft shares what he learned about the Eucharist from a Muslim: A Muslim man questioned the Catholic belief in Jesus' presence: "*He is really present there, yes? That what's there is the man who was God?*" (p. 33). He continues, "I don't think you really do believe that.... If I believed that that thing that looks like a little round piece of bread was really Allah Himself, I think I would just faint. I would fall at His feet like a dead man" (p. 34).

Do we really believe Jesus is present in the Eucharist – that it is not a symbol, but really and truly God Most High in that tiny Eucharist? Would that change our reverence and respect for the Tabernacle, the Mass and the Sacred Species?

Jenna Griewe shares the story of how she learned to adore the Lord: As a teen her youth minister brought her to Adoration. Not knowing how to enter in to this, and struggling with the silence, her youth minister said to her, "Just picture Jesus as if He's sitting up there on the altar—because He is. He's just talking to you and you're talking to Him. What does He want to tell you? What do you want to say to Him?" (p. 42). With that, everything changed for Jenna. Time with Jesus became increasingly more personal; fruits flooded her life, fruits of stillness, calm, prayer and joy. The next time she went to Communion, it had radically more meaning and filled in all the gaps she felt were missing in Mass. Even as a wife and mother, she continues to go to Adoration in order to get through the confusion, anxiety and lack of peace.

In our chaotic lives, do we turn to Jesus to bring order to the chaos, to bring peace to the confusion. All it takes is for us to go in front of the Lord and have a real heart to Heart conversation with Him, trusting in faith that He is truly there.