



## ***What's all this talk about 'Adoration' and the 'Blessed Sacrament Chapel' I'm hearing about?***

### **Part 2: "... the Eucharist is no mere bread and wine, but the very Body and Blood of Christ Himself"**

The Church has always believed that, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Lord's Body and Blood was truly present. Besides the Scripture that has been rehearsed in these columns many times, we have ample testimony from the earliest Christian writers who also believed that Christ is present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

St Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107), a disciple of St John the Apostle and Evangelist wrote, "[The heretics] abstain from the Eucharist...because they do not admit that the Eucharist *is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his graciousness, raised from the dead" (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 6:3-7). St Justin Martyr (d. ca 165), writing about fifty years later, wrote: "And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which on one is allowed to partake but the [one] who believes that the things which we teach are true... For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, *is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh*" (*First Apology*, 65, 66). St Irenaeus of Lyons (d. ca 215) wrote, "So when the mixed chalice and the baked loaf receive the word of God, and when the Eucharistic elements become the Body and Blood of Christ...", thus indicating (as he does elsewhere) that the Eucharist is no mere bread and wine, but the very Body and Blood of Christ Himself" (*Against Heresies*, 4: 8:4).

In point of fact here are exactly *zero* instances of any dissenting views regarding the Eucharist as being the Body and Blood of Christ among the Fathers of the Church. Moreover, it is not even until the beginning of the *eleventh century* that we encounter any serious dissent on this Catholic belief by way of a certain Berengarius of Tours, who erroneously insisted that the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood were only "symbols." Consequently, he was summoned *twice* to publicly repudiate his error and to make a profession of faith in the Real Presence.

Approximately two hundred years later, the Fourth Lateran Council—one of the most important in the mediaeval Church—in its 'profession of faith' stated: "His Body and Blood are truly contained in the Sacrament of the Altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the Body by the divine power and the wine into the Blood..." Subsequent councils up to and including the Second Vatican Council all make the same point: That the Sacrament of the Altar truly becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

The next question, for us, becomes: What is *our* response to this? Our next column will answer that by way of a history of our parish's patronal feast: Corpus Christi.

***... to be continued***