

It Takes Faith

TO THE EDITOR:

This is written in response to the third point in Jeff [redacted] letter of March 6 and concerns his reference to First Corinthians 11:26-30.

In Verse 27 Paul writes "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." The full passage concerning the Lord's supper begins in Verse 17 and ends in Verse 34.

Paul is writing this because the Corinthians had lost sight of the significance of the communion celebration. For the Corinthians were coming to the Lord's table with hearts of division, stomachs that wanted to be filled and thirsts that wanted to be satisfied. They were being rude to each other, some were eating their supper without sharing it with those who were hungry and some were even coming to church drunk or coming to church to get drunk! (I liked Reverend Larry Wyen's comment in his March 26th letter to Readers Write, "Jesus loved a good party." I believe Jesus changed the water into the very best and real wine at the wedding feast in Cana, but He did not condone drunkenness. Luke 21:34-36. Jesus ate with and sought drunkards out because the sick [sin sick] need a doctor. Luke 5:29-32. One party that continually excites Jesus and all of heaven is described in Luke 15:7, 10, 18-24 and 32.)

Paul is telling the Corinthians to first examine themselves and

to confess their sins so that when they came to receive communion it would not be in an unworthy manner and then they would not be "guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." Now Jeff wrote that "an offender against the Blessed Eucharist cannot be described as guilty of Christ's body and blood, if these not be present in the sacrament." In other words, Jesus must be physically present in order for an offense or a sin to take place.

As I thought about this, I remembered Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, where He explains that you can be guilty of the sins of murder and adultery without actually doing the physical act. The deeper spiritual aspect or attitude of the sin in a man's heart does not presuppose a physical act or a physical contact. Therefore in a deeper spiritual way, the people at Corinth could be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of Jesus without Jesus being present physically. This idea is supported in this passage, also, because Paul still refers to the elements as bread and wine (drink the cup) three separate times.

Yes, Jeff, it does take a lot of human reason and Catholic tradition to believe that Jesus held Himself in His own hands at the Last Supper. But, it takes faith to believe that Jesus can hold me in His hands and it takes faith to believe that Jesus' hands are big enough to hold all that believe in Him and His Word. John 10:24-30.

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