



# HOLY EUCHARIST

## SERIOUS or a JOKE?



The now deceased and one time infamous Irish anti-Catholic Presbyterian preacher from Northern Ireland, the Rev. Ian Paisley (1926-2014), was once speaking of the belief of Catholics in the Holy Eucharist. He held up a white host (unconsecrated) for all to see and mockingly said: *“You know, Catholics actually believe that this piece of bread is God! Hah! Can you believe that? They think it’s God! You know what? If this is God—then they should be crawling down the aisle of the church on their bellies in order to receive Him!”*

Obviously Paisley did not believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation—and there he was wrong. But he was right in the respect that should be shown to the Holy Eucharist if it is God! We should be in awe and respect, even trembling, as we approach to receive the Holy Eucharist at Mass! Yet, instead, we are bored, indifferent, blasé, distracted, nonchalant, over-familiar and a host of other equally condemnable attitudes. Here is a passage from the book, *The Blessed Eucharist*, by Fr. Michael Müller, C.S.S.R., which essentially says the same as the blasphemous Ian Paisley said concerning respect:

“Do we not see men who hardly bow their head, much less bend the knee when passing before that Most August Sacrament? Women enter the church who, by their dress and thoughtlessness, cannot claim any high prerogative in the modesty of their sex. Men even happily gaze upon the women’s immodesty, heedless of the penetrating eye of their God, who fills that temple and whose sight has already pierced their souls. When, at processions intended to honor the Blessed Sacrament, I see such behavior, I must conclude that this is the result of the most complete indifference towards Jesus Christ or a total forgetfulness of His Presence. What then? Shall I call these persons pagans? Shall I call them sorcerers? No. But I think I shall not be far astray in saying that they have not a lively Faith. They may be Catholics, if you will, but certainly, their Faith is not practical. They do not realize that Jesus Christ is present in the tabernacle and in the monstrance. They are deceived by their senses.

“In the monstrance, or in the hands of the priest at Mass, they see nothing but the white host, and their thoughts penetrate no further. But if they only reflected on what their Faith teaches, namely, that under that little Host, Jesus Christ conceals His heavenly splendor and glory, how different would be their behavior! How different their thoughts and feelings! Would you know how they would act if their Faith were real and lively? Go to the palace of a king. Mark the silent expectation in that splendid apartment! What mean those movements so circumspect? That tread so noiseless? That voice so subdued? Ah, it is the royal antechamber! There a loud word is an impertinence; there immodesty in dress is a crime. But listen! Even that stealthy conversation is hushed; every eye is turned to one point; each one assumes the most respectful attitude; the curtain is drawn; and the courtiers stand in the presence of their King. What an unpardonable breach of decorum would it not be for anyone to remain sitting at a moment like this! Yes, to talk, to laugh, or to remain with head covered!

“Now, if such honor is paid to earthly princes, what reverence is not then due to Him Who is *“King of kings and Lord of lords?”* St. John Chrysostom is indignant with us for even making the comparison, and it is with reason. For what is an emperor when compared to the King of Heaven and Earth? He is less than the blade of grass when compared to the whole universe. Whenever the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the tabernacle, borne in procession or carried as Viaticum to the sick; whenever the Sacred Host is raised at the Consecration in the Mass, our infallible Faith says to us: *“Behold your King!”* Behold your Redeemer, your Judge, your Creator, your God! If then in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament I feel no devotion interiorly and show no modesty exteriorly, what will you think of me? You will say with truth and justice that: *“That man does not believe that his God is present there”*, or again, *“That man’s Faith is cold and dead.”* (Fr. Michael Müller, C.S.S.R., *The Blessed Eucharist*).

What are we like in the presence of the Eucharist?