

Reflection Easter Week 6 Ascension Thursday 2021

A fundamental belief of our faith is the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, in the bread and wine that becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. It is Jesus' complete gift of himself to us. How can we better understand and experience this presence?

It is clear that, at the resurrection, Jesus' closest friends failed to recognise him at the first encounter, Jesus had to speak to them first. When we are offered the consecrated bread the words *Body of Christ* are spoken. The response, AMEN, is a way of saying *You are most welcome, Jesus.*

Having discovered Jesus in a new way, a new presence, after the Resurrection, Jesus leaves his disciples once again and ascends to his Father but promises to stay with them, as he promises to stay with us, for ever. Once again, his followers faced the question about the presence of Jesus. This is why the Eucharist has such a central place in our lives. Eventually, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in receiving the eucharist the disciples realised that Christ was present within them and in the all those they encountered as well as in nature and creation. Despite all the challenges and set-backs, these early disciples grew in understanding of how Jesus was present in their lives and in the world. Only in acknowledging this presence of Jesus will we discover the holiness inherent in everything, discover the true wonder of this presence and how it teaches us about God, continually reshaping and remoulding our understanding of our relationship with God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One of the best ways to experience this presence of the Divine is in nature, in our environment, in creation. The Word of God became flesh, incarnate in Jesus; love became real and tangible. The same Word brought us and the whole of creation into being. By leaving us at the Ascension, Jesus opened the door to our becoming more aware of how close and intimate is his presence in and around us. In the reverence and dignity we pay to the blessed sacrament, we pay reverence and respect to each other and to creation and vice-versa. As God said to Moses, *"We stand on Holy Ground!"* We also stand among holy people and we always walk in the presence of God.

A soldier on sentry duty fell asleep while standing up, and woke to find his commanding officer standing in front of him, looking furious. With great presence of mind, the soldier said, "Amen!"

A Sunday school teacher asked her children on the way to church, *"And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"* One little girl replied, *"Because people are sleeping."*