

**“This IS my body; this IS my blood!”**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**Once upon a time**, an artist designed an unusual church door. He divided the door into four panels, each depicting symbols referring to a specific Gospel event.

The **1<sup>st</sup>** panel shows 6 water jars, referring to the Cana-miracle, where Jesus changed water to wine.

The **2<sup>nd</sup>** panel shows 5 loaves & 2 fish...the Capernaum-miracle—multiplying the loaves & fish.

The **3<sup>rd</sup>** panel shows 13 people at table, referring to the Last Supper on Holy Thursday night.

The **4<sup>th</sup>** panel shows 3 people at table, referring to Jesus eating at Emmaus w. 2 of his disciples.

The artist chose these 4 events because they relate to the Mass. So, let me begin.

Often as not, modern Christians have trouble seeing how water can change to wine. The early Christians, however, did not have such ‘trouble’ with this miracle. They lived off the soil & saw something similar to it happen each summer in their vineyards. Grapevines drew water out of the ground and, with the help of the sun, changed the water into wine. **But**, & there’s that proverbial **BUT** in life already, the important thing is not **how** Jesus worked the miracle, but **WHY** he worked it. Was it merely to save a young couple from the embarrassment of running out of booze at their wedding? The artist designed the door to suggest that Jesus had a deeper reason. Jesus took advantage of the situation to prepare his disciples for the Last Supper, when he’d change wine... **into his blood**.

Now, to the **2<sup>nd</sup>** panel, which shows the 5 loaves & 2 fish. Again, some modern Christians have trouble with this miracle. Not so for the early Christians. They saw something similar happen each year in their wheat fields.

In spring, they would plant 5 bushels of wheat. At harvest time, the 5 bushels of sown-wheat would multiply into 500 bushels of wheat.

But again, the important thing is not **how** Jesus worked this miracle, but **why**. Was it merely out of compassion for a crowd of hungry people? Again, the artist seems to suggest another reason. The miracle gave Jesus a chance to tell the people that he would soon feed them more marvelously than he had just done. He would feed them even more marvelously than Moses had fed their ancestors in the desert. Jesus said:

**“What Moses gave you was not bread from heaven.... I AM the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give him is my flesh.” Jn 6:32, 51**

The **3<sup>rd</sup>** panel shows 13 people seated at table, referring to the Last Supper. At the Last Supper, Jesus does more than change water to wine; he changes wine into his blood! And he does more than multiply loaves of bread; he changes bread into his own body! In Mark’s Gospel, which I just read to you, he describes it this way:

**“While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. ‘Take it,’ he said, ‘this IS my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God & handed it to them; and they all drank from it. Jesus said, ‘This IS my blood which is poured out for many, my blood which seals God’s covenant.’ ”**

Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> panel, which shows 3 people seated at table. This refers to the Easter supper Jesus ate at Emmaus with the 2 disciples he had met on the road to Emmaus. Herein the artist interprets the Emmaus meal as the 1<sup>st</sup> celebration of the Lord's Supper. St. Luke describes it thus:

Jesus **"took the bread & said the blessing; then he broke the bread & gave it to them."** Lk.24:30

Obviously, this description matches what Jesus did at the Last Supper.

**"So, what's the point of the artist's door & panels?" you ask.  
Well, I am glad you asked that question!**

The artist's door is an excellent summary of the Lord's Supper as it develops in the course of the Gospel, i.e., Jesus' life.

It traces from **Cana**, where it was **pre-figured**, to **Capernaum**, where it was **promised**, to **Jerusalem**, where it was **instituted**, to **Emmaus**, where it was 1<sup>st</sup> **celebrated**.

And all this ties in beautifully with the **Feast of Corpus Christi**, which we celebrate today.

Corpus Christi celebrates Jesus' gift of himself to us as our spiritual food & drink.

This mystery-of-love is beyond all imagining...something invented & designed by God himself. In this gift, Jesus gives himself SO completely...that there is nothing more for him to give.

**Once upon a time**, divers, off the northern coast of Ireland, discovered a 400 year old ship, buried beneath that cold, cold sea. Their most prized article found among its treasures was a man's gold, wedding ring. Etched into the wide band of the ring was a hand holding a heart with these 7 words:

**"I have... nothing more... to give... you."**

That same sentence could be used to describe today's feast. Jesus is saying to each of us here:

**"I have given myself to you so totally that... 'I have... nothing more... to give... you.'"**

I suggest when you approach the Eucharistic minister in a few minutes, when he/she holds up the host and says... **"The body of Christ,"** try to realize, in a special way, what you receive.

It is the living body of Jesus.

It is the same Jesus... who was born on Christmas Day.

It is the same Jesus...who died on the cross on the 1<sup>st</sup> Good Friday.

It is the same Jesus... who rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

It's the same Jesus... you received on your 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion Day.

When you stop to think about it this way, it is so incredible that it's hard to imagine.

Yet... we know, with the eyes of faith, it IS true.

Only a loving, Father-God could have invented such a gift for his children.

May that loving, Father-God, our Abba, bless you...  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.