

Augustine on the Eucharist

The sacrifice you are looking at was instituted by Christ our Lord as the sacrifice of his own body and blood. His body was pierced by the spear and there flowed out water and blood, through the medium of which we have obtained the forgiveness of our sins.

Mindful of this gracious gift, approach with fear and trembling to take part in this feast, knowing that God himself is at work in you. Recognize in this bread the body that was hanged on the cross. Recognize in this cup of wine the blood that gushed out from his pierced side. Take and eat the body of Christ, since in the body of Christ you have become Christ's members. Take and drink the blood of Christ.

To counter your tendency to disunity, eat that body which is the bond of your unity. So as not to appear to be without value in your own eyes, drink that blood which is the price that was paid for you.

When you eat this food and drink this wine, they will be transformed into your substance. Equally you will be transformed into the body of Christ, if you live in obedience and faithfulness.

The Apostle reminds us of the prediction in Scripture: "Two will become one flesh." [Eph. 5:31] And elsewhere, in reference to the Eucharist itself, he asserts: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body?" [1Cor. 10:17]

You, therefore, begin to receive what you already begin to be.