

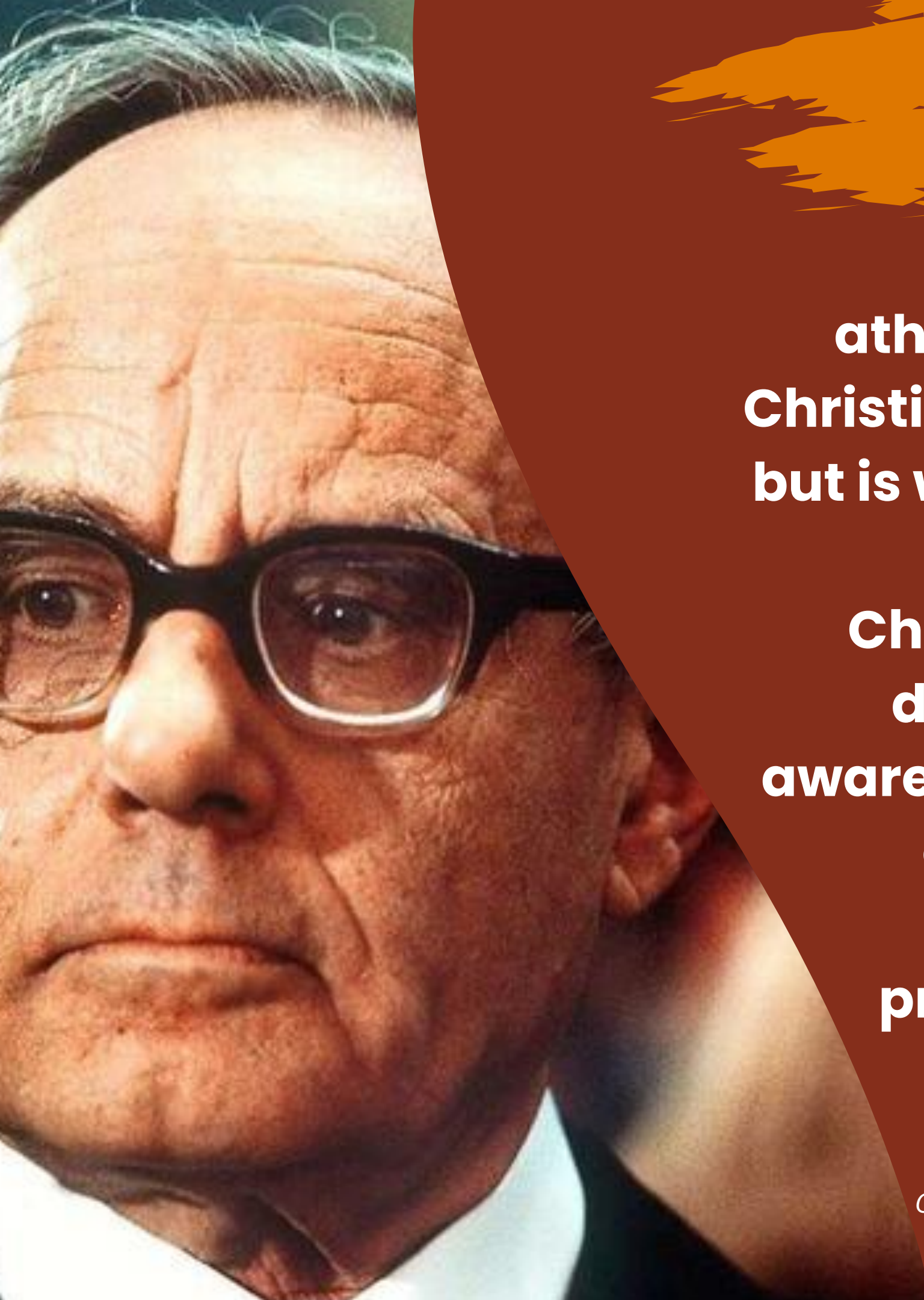
Real Presence and Eucharistic Living



**INSIGHTS FROM
THE CHURCH'S SAINTS
AND MYSTICS**

**MOST REVEREND MICHAEL G. WOOST
AUXILIARY BISHOP OF CLEVELAND**





FR. KARL RAHNER, SJ

“Today a lively Christianity can exist even in an atheistic society only when the exterior message of Christianity knows that it is not powerful in itself alone, but is willing to encounter the innermost experience of the person, which is the mystical component of Christianity, and actualize it, making it come alive, digging it out from under the rubbish of everyday awareness. It has already been said that the Christian of the future must be a mystic or no longer exist, precisely because he or she no longer has any protection against the general societal ideology.”
(1978)

Imhof, Paul and Hubert Biallowons, eds., “Following Christ Today,” in *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews 1965-1982* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1986), 183.

WHY TALK ABOUT MYSTICISM?

Because we all desire meaning, happiness, peace, joy, well-being, etc. in our lives.

- Shalom*
- Beatitude*



WHY TALK ABOUT MYSTICISM?

Our happiness or felicity is twofold. ... One is proportionate to human nature, and this we can reach through our own resources. The other, a happiness surpassing our nature, we can attain only by the power of God, by a kind of participation in the Godhead. ... So to be sent to this happiness beyond nature, we have to be divinely endowed with some additional sources of activity ... called **theological virtues**.

Summa Theologiae I-II 62.2



FAITH (transforms the intellect)



HOPE (transforms the memory)



LOVE (transforms the will)



HOW SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT MYSTICISM?



As an Element of Religion

Part of a greater whole both as beliefs and practices which emphasize the deepest and most essential “mysteries”



As a Process or Way of Life

Movement to the ultimate goal (i.e., union with God) and its effects on the individual and the community



As an Attempt to Express an Awareness of the Presence of God

Articulation in art, music, poetry, biography, essay, etc.



As a Consciousness Subjectively & Objectively Different

Apart from the usual ways of knowing; awareness given in a more direct way

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

Spiritual progress tends toward ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called “mystical” because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments – “the holy mysteries” – and, in him, the mystery of the Holy Trinity. God calls us all to this intimate union with him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all. (CCC, 2014)



JOHN OF THE CROSS, OCD

Mystical Theology
is the Encounter
with God in
Contemplation.



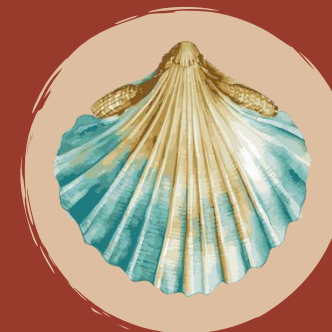
**Encounter with the
incomprehensible reality
of Trinitarian love**



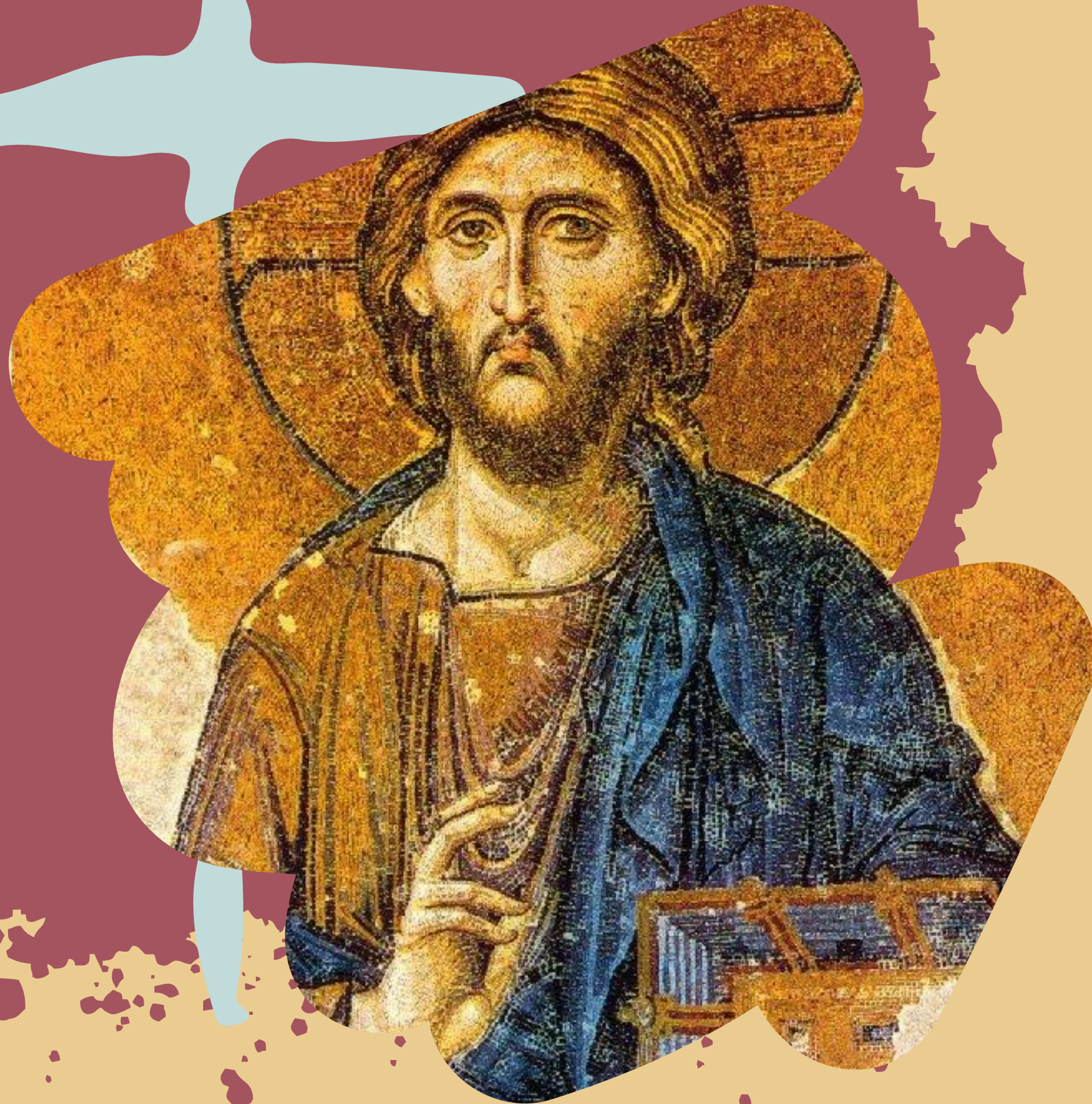
**Primary concern:
openness to receiving the
grace of prayer**



**Seeking God for God
alone, not for what God
gives (e.g., consolation)**



**A part of the ordinary
unfolding of the
Christian's life in God**



MYSTIC LIFE

Those who participate in a deep intimacy with God would also participate in the ordinary means of holiness within the Church

- The discipline of prayer
- The sacramental life
- Balanced approach to asceticism
- Works of charity
- Participation in the faith community's life

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

THE INCARNATION

- To share in God's own divine nature through incorporation into Christ's Mystical Body, the Church
 - Early Church Fathers:
 - God became human so that human persons could be divinized, that is, share in the divine nature



2 PETER 1:4

"...that you may be made partakers of the divine nature."



SAINT AUGUSTINE (+430)

SERMON 23B.1

“It was not enough for our God to promise us divinity in himself, unless he also took on our infirmity, as though to say, “Do you know how much I love you, how certain you ought to be that I am going to give you my divine reality? I took to myself your mortal reality.” ... The Son of God became a son of man, in order to make sons of men into sons of God. ... For the maker of man was made man, so that man might be made a receiver of God.”



SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

(+1274)

The only-begotten Son of God, wishing to enable us to share in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that becoming man he might make men gods.

Liturgy of the Hours
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood
of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Office of Readings, Second Reading



INCARNATION AND EUCHARIST

St. Augustine:

“In order that man might eat the Bread of angels, the Lord of the angels became Man.” (Sermon 225.2)

- **Links the primary end of the Incarnation with what is accomplished through, with, and in the Eucharist**
- **The divinization of human persons and the giving of deifying grace through incorporation in the Church**



EUCCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT OF INITIATION: EFFECTS

1

Encounter with the Risen and Glorified Christ/Trinity

2

Participation in the fullness of Christ's life/Trinitarian life

3

Fountain of grace for those properly disposed

4

Fountain of the promised "living waters" (Jn. 4:10-14)

5

Principal channel for developing grace and charity

6

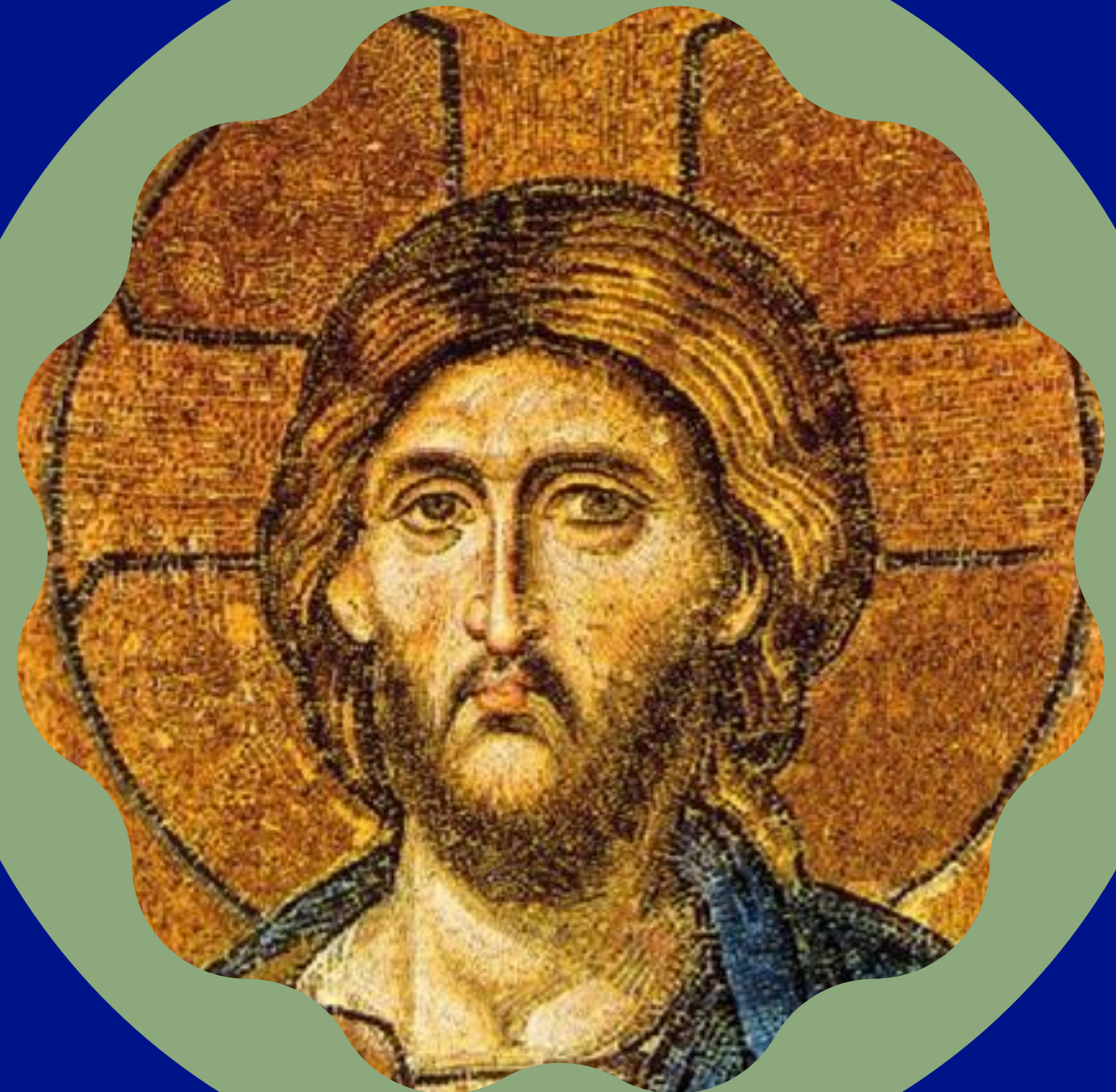
Sacrament of love and sanctification

- **Baptism opens the door to new life as children of God and effects a sharing in God's divine nature**
- **Eucharist brings what was born in Baptism to perfection by feeding us with the very Origin of all Grace -- namely, Christ/the Trinity**



EUCCHARIST AS DIVINIZING

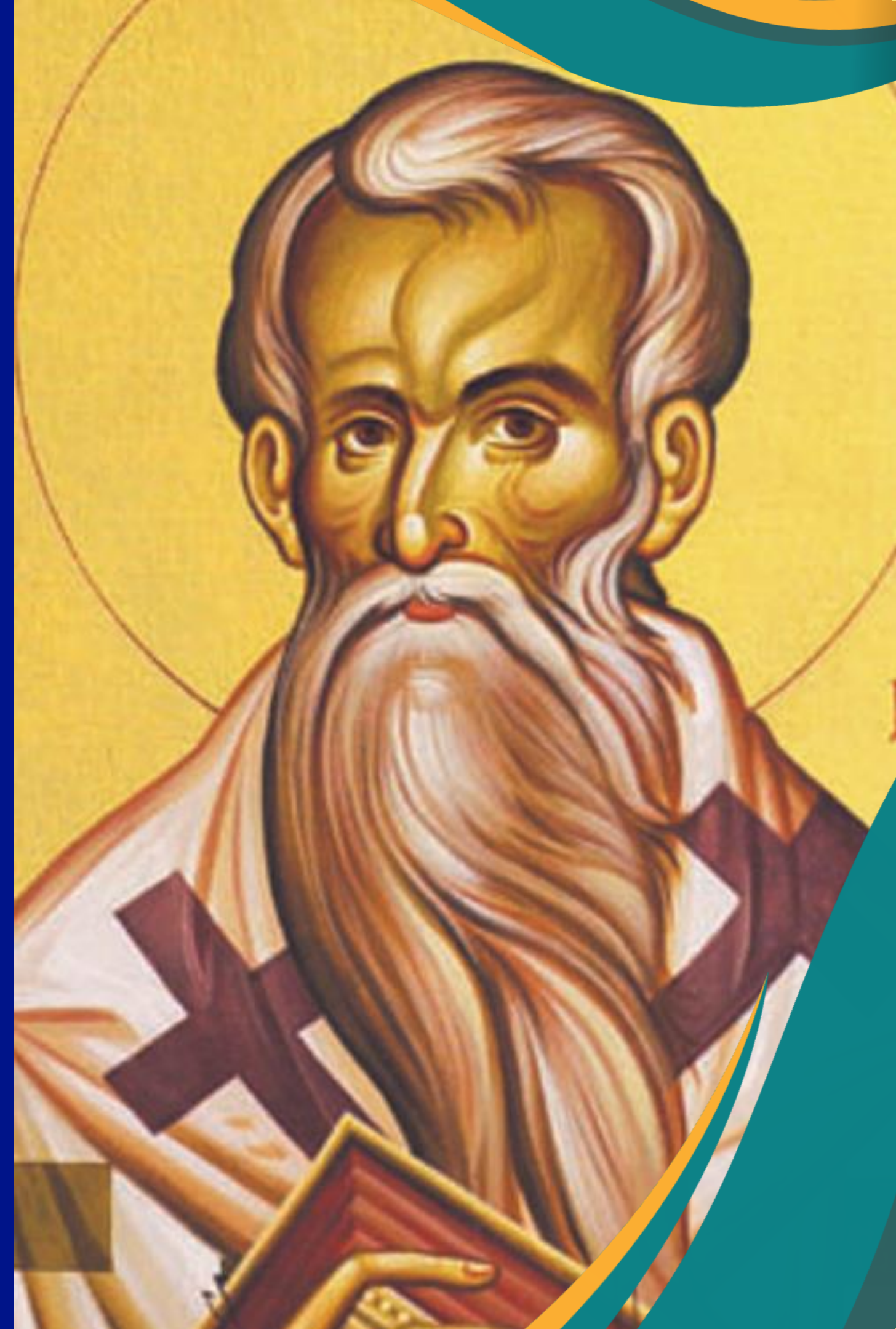
- **In the Incarnation, Christ joins our human nature to his divine nature.**
- **In the Eucharist, Christ gives us his humanity to be our nourishment.**
- **Receiving his humanity, we are nourished by his divinity as well.**
- **Substantially present in the Eucharist, Christ's humanity becomes the bridge by which we progressively share in his divinity.**
- **Eucharist is the means to realize and perfect this interchange within us.**



The Role of Eucharist in Divinization

“Since the God who was manifested infused himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of his grace, he disseminates himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa (+395)
Catechetical Oration 37



*Insights from
the Church's
Saints and Mystics
on the Eucharist*



ST. AUGUSTINE (C. 395–430)

“If, then, you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle as he says to the faithful ‘You are the body of Christ, and His members’ (1 Cor. 12:27). If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and His members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord’s table, you receive your mystery. You reply ‘Amen’ to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear ‘The Body of Christ, and you reply ‘Amen.’ Be a member of the body of Christ that your ‘Amen’ may be true.”



SERMON 272

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380)

“When she receives this sacrament she lives in me and I in her. Just as a fish is in the sea and the sea in the fish, so am I in the soul and the soul in me... When this appearance of bread has been consumed, I leave behind the imprint of my grace, just as a seal that is pressed into warm wax leaves its imprint when it is lifted off. Thus does the power of this sacrament remain in the soul; that is, the warmth of my divine charity, the mercy of the Holy Spirit, remains there.”

Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 211.



THE DIALOGUE

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA (1491-1556)

“Then in chapel before Mass and during it I had an abundance of devotion and of tears. Later with great tranquility and security of soul, like a tired person taking a good rest and neither seeking nor desiring to search for anything further, I considered the matter finished – except for giving thanks and expressing devotion to the Father, and offering the Mass of the Trinity...tomorrow...”

Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 242. [Monday, February 11 – Mass of the Holy Spirit; part of his prayer of election of February 2 to March 12, 1544]



THE SPIRITUAL DIARY #19

ST. TERESA OF AVILA (1515-1582)

“Receiving Communion is not like picturing with the imagination, as when we reflect upon the Lord on the cross or in other episodes of the Passion, when we picture within ourselves how things happened to Him in the past. In Communion the event is happening now, and it is entirely true... ..why doubt, if we have faith, that miracles will be worked while He is within us and that he will give us what we ask of Him, since He is in our house?”



THE WAY OF PERFECTION

Kavanaugh, Kieran, trans., *St. Teresa of Avila: The Way of Perfection - A Study Edition* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000), 381. [W 34, 8]

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, OCD

(1542–1591)

“In receiving Communion they spend all their time trying to get some feeling and satisfaction rather than humbly praising and reverencing God dwelling within them. And they go about this in such a way that, if they do not procure any sensible feeling and satisfaction, they think that they have accomplished nothing. As a result they judge very poorly of God and fail to understand that the sensory benefits are the least among those that this most Blessed Sacrament bestows, for the invisible grace it gives is a greater blessing. Not only in receiving Communion, but in other spiritual exercises as well, beginners desire to feel God and taste Him as if he were comprehensible and accessible. This desire is a serious imperfection and, because it involves impurity of faith, is opposed to God’s way.”

Kavanaugh, Kieran and Otilio Rodriguez, trans., *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991), 372.

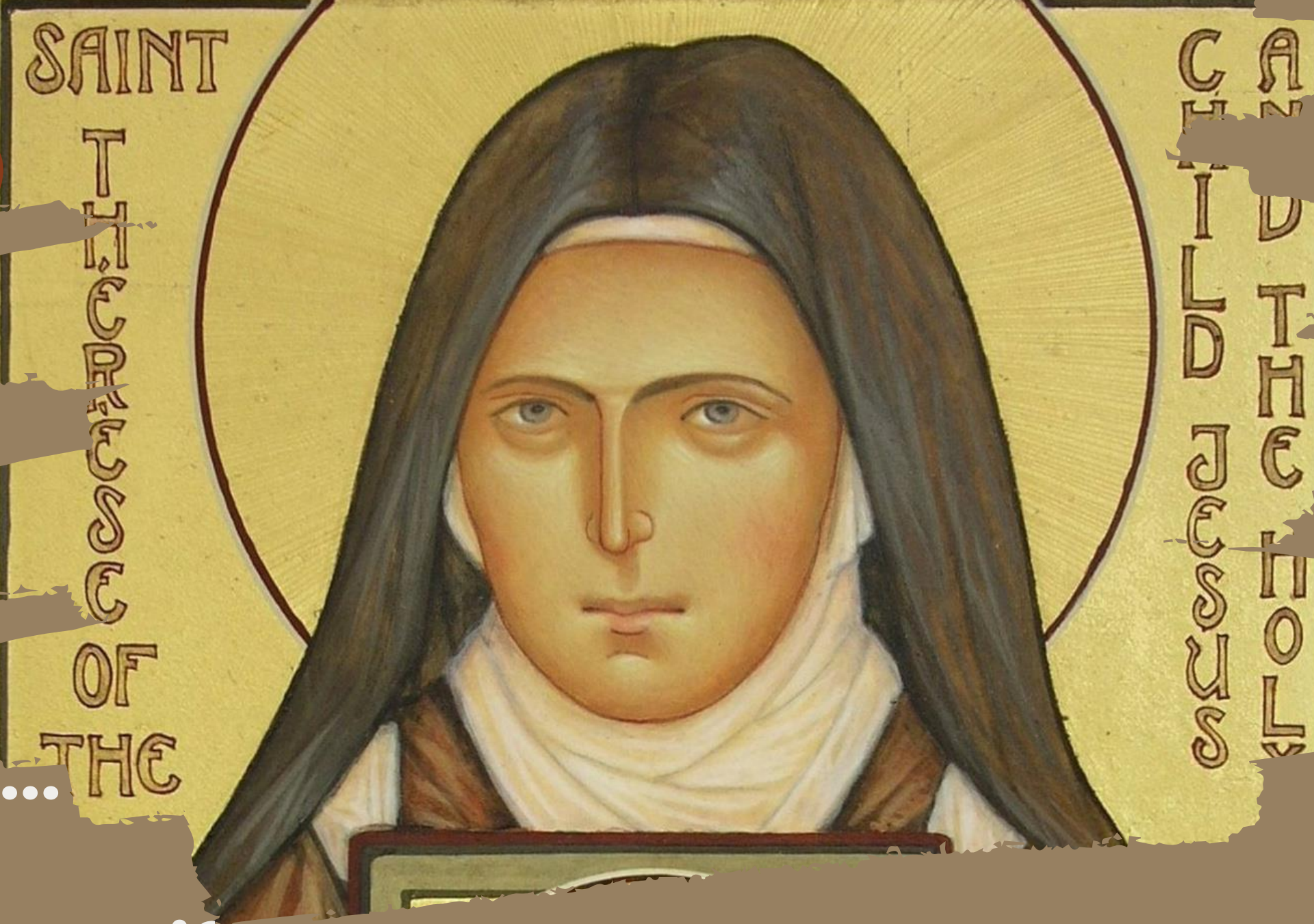
THE DARK NIGHT I, 6, 5



ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, OCD (1873–1897)

Holy Paten, I envy you.
Upon you Jesus comes to rest.
Oh! may his infinite grandeur
Deign to humble itself even to me...
Fulfilling my hope, Jesus
Does not wait until the evening of my life.
He comes within me; by his presence
I am a living Monstrance!

Kinney, Donald, trans., *The Poetry of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux*
(Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1995), 134.
[Autumn, 1895]

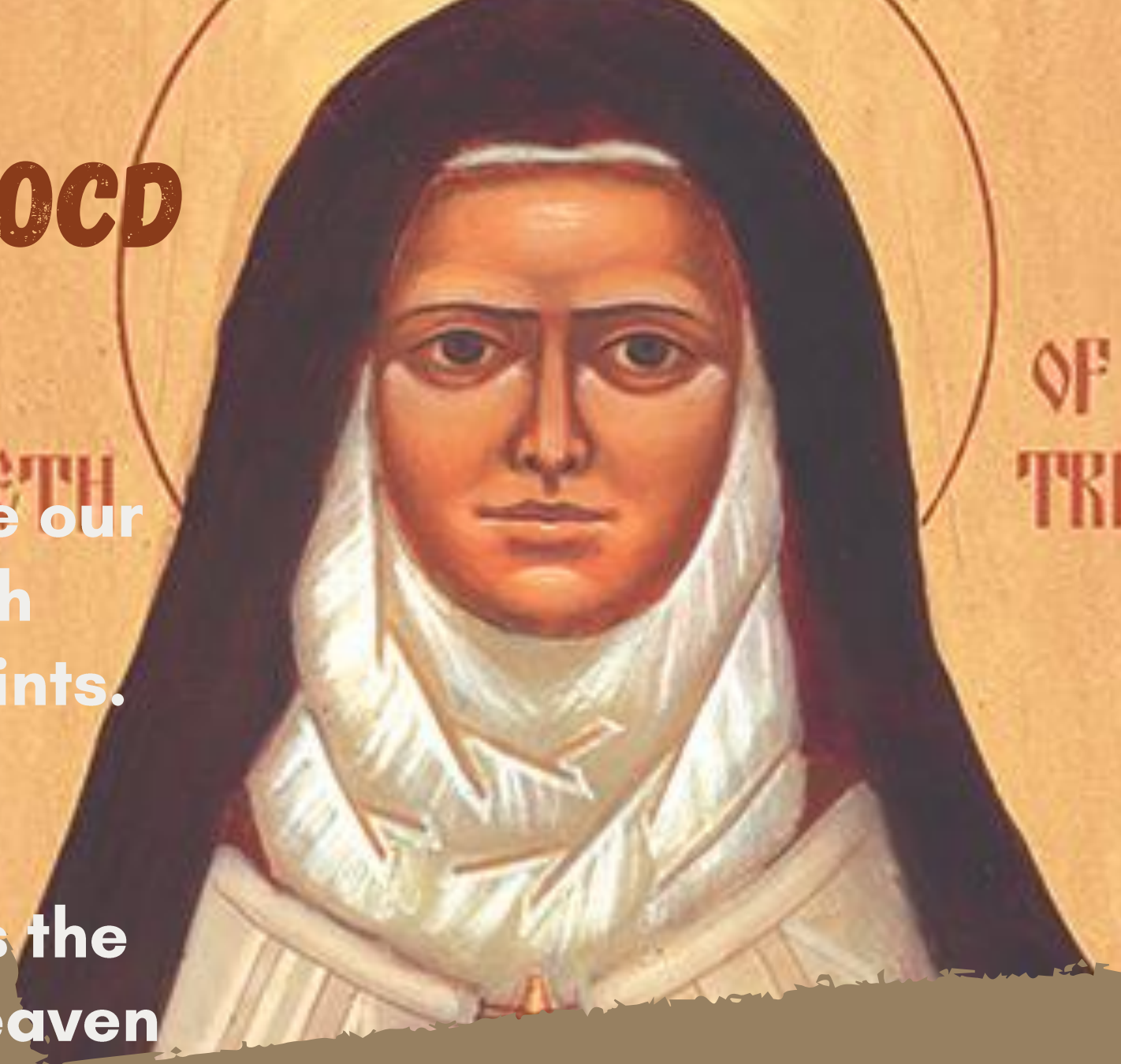


**“MY DESIRES NEAR JESUS
HIDDEN IN HIS PRISON OF LOVE”**

ST. ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY, OCD (1880-1906)

“...let us live with God as with a friend, let us make our faith a living faith in order to be in communion with Him through everything, for that is what makes saints. We possess our Heaven within us, since He who satisfies the hunger of the glorified in the light of vision gives Himself to us in faith and mystery, it is the Same One! It seems to me that I have found my Heaven on earth, since Heaven is God, and God is in my soul. The day I understood that, everything became clear to me. I would like to whisper this secret to those I love so they too might always cling to God through everything, and so this prayer of Christ might be fulfilled: “Father, may they be made perfectly one.”

Elizabeth of the Trinity, *The Complete Works: Letters from Carmel*, vol.2 (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1995), 50-51.



LETTER 122, 1902



ST. FAUSTINA KOWALSKA, OLM (1905–1938)

“My daughter, try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and if you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Blessed Sacrament, My Heart, which is full of mercy, and should you be unable to step into the chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant. I claim veneration for My mercy from every creature, but above all from you, since it is to you that I have given the most profound understanding of this mystery.”

SAINT

FAUSTINA

DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL #1572



ST. FAUSTINA KOWALSKA, OLM (1905–1938)

“I am a host in Your hand,
O Jesus, my Creator and Lord,
Silent, hidden, without beauty or charm,
Because all the beauty of my soul is
imprinted within me.

I am a host in Your hand, O Divine Priest,
Do with me as You please;...

I am like a white host in Your hand, O God,
I implore You, transform me into Yourself...

I am a host abiding in the tabernacle of Your
heart.

I go through life drowned in Your love...”

Kowalska, M. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in My Soul* (Stockbridge, MA:
Marian Press, 1987), 575–576.



DIVINE MERCY IN MY SOUL #1629

ST. TERESA OF KOLKATA, MC (1910-1997)

“Every human being has a longing for God. ... Christians can go even further - they not only long for God, but they have the treasure of His presence always with them. We not only have this, but the joy of getting even closer to Him by receiving Him in Holy Communion. Jesus was not satisfied with just feeding us with the Bread of Life but He made Himself the Hungry One in the distressing disguise of the poor. ... If you really love Jesus in the Eucharist, you will naturally want to put that love into action. We cannot separate these two things - the Eucharist and the poor.”

*Mother Teresa, Where There Is Love, There Is God
(New York: Image Books, 2010), 54.*



THE EUCHARIST

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II (1920–2005)

“Can we not make this Year of the Eucharist an occasion for diocesan and parish communities to commit themselves in a particular way to responding with fraternal solicitude to one of the many forms of poverty present in our world? I think for example of the tragedy of hunger which plagues hundreds of millions of human beings, the diseases which afflict developing countries, the loneliness of the elderly, the hardships faced by the unemployed, the struggles of immigrants. These are evils which are present—albeit to a different degree—even in areas of immense wealth. We cannot delude ourselves: by our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern for those in need we will be recognized as true followers of Christ (cf. Jn 13:35; Mt 25:31-46). This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged.”



**MANE NOBISCUM DOMINE
OCTOBER 7, 2004**

*Become What
You Receive!*

