Bishop Robert Barron on Real Presence

John Chapter 6

* Jesus is the living bread come down from heaven. How can this be?
* Old Testament prohibitions against eating animal flesh and human flesh so they are shocked.
* Jesus does not try to make this more metaphorical. Rather, he doubles down:
  + My flesh is true blood and my blood is true drink.
  + He makes the command more realistic: gnaw on this.
* Church has struggled to understand this.
* Many disciples leave after this speech by Jesus. This has always been divisive.

How can we begin to understand this?

* The power of words
  + Words are descriptive and do not change reality
  + Some words change reality
    - Police: “You are under arrest!” Words because of status/identity change reality
    - Baseball umpire: “You’re out!” Because of status/ identity his words change reality
    - Words can demean or lift others up: they change reality
  + Now consider the Word of God
    - God SAID it and it was so. God’s word is not descriptive. It is creative. It constitutes reality.
  + Fast forward to Jesus:
    - The Word made flesh
    - When Jesus speaks things change
      * Little girl, get up!
      * Lazarus, come out!
      * My son, your sins are forgiven.
    - Climax: The last great meal.
      * Words of sacrifice
        + This IS my Body.
        + This IS the chalice of my Blood.
      * If the Word of God is the One who is speaking, then what He says IS.
        + Bread and wine are now changed by the power of the divine Word.
        + Council of Trent: The elements change by the power of the Word.

The priest is speaking *in persona Christi and so the change is effected, just as it was at the Last Supper*

* + - * + Transubstantiation: Aquinas. The deepest reality changes

The distinction between appearance and reality.

Things look a certain way but they aren’t:

Stars. You are looking deep into the past.

Someone seems like a “jerk” is not.

Through the power of Christ’s word, the substance has changed.

* + - * + “Man is what he eats.”

The Eucharist is really, truly, substantially the Body and Blood of Christ.

When we consume the Eucharist, we become what we eat, we become the deepest reality of Jesus.