



Sacraments 16/36: The Tri-partite Theory of the Eucharist

Sacramentum Tantum What the Sacramental Rite itself looks like. This is the matter and form we see at the Mass. It includes all of the ritual actions of the Mass as well as the bread and wine offered. While the whole Mass communicates the meaning of the Eucharist, the exact moment of the *Sacramentum tantum* is the Words of Institution: “Take this all of you and eat/drink.”

Res Tantum What the immediate result of the Sacrament is, the grace given and its ultimate meaning. For the Eucharist, the *Res tantum* is the ongoing perfection of our union with Jesus Christ. As we receive the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, we are transformed in a real way more and more into Jesus. We were Baptized to begin our process of receiving grace and preparing for heaven. In the Eucharist, we continue the process of sanctification. It is our strength for the journey of life. Each time we receive, we are transformed, not just for ourselves, but to be able to go out and minister to others. We become Jesus for other people.

Res et Sacramentum What the abiding, everlasting purpose of the Sacrament is. The abiding reality of the Eucharist is the Real Presence itself. The bread and wine are permanently changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. That is why we continue to care and reverence them after the Mass. In the Lutheran service, the bread and wine are changed only while people are receiving them. The reality does not continue after the service. The leftovers can be given to children or fed to the birds. But in Catholicism, they are permanently changed. The Precious Blood can never be just dumped out, it must be consumed at the end of the Communion Rite. The Hosts are kept in the tabernacle, which always has a candle lit beside it to mark the Presence of Jesus, the Light of the World. It is kept in reserve to be taken to the sick, to give them strength as well. The ministers who take the Eucharist to the sick are trained in the awesomeness of what they are handling and transporting. They cannot stop to run errands or buy groceries while they have the Eucharist on them. The Real Presence as the abiding reality (the *Res et Sacramentum*) also explains our practice of Adoration. We adore the Host and spend time in meditation in front of it, for it is truly God among us in the flesh.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Catechism Summary of the Eucharist