



PO Box 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + [www.dritaly.com](http://www.dritaly.com)

## ***The Eucharist as the Body and Blood of Christ and Pledge of Resurrection***

***St. Irenaeus of Lyons***  
***Early Church Father and Doctor of the Church***



***The real presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist (transubstantiation), also known as Mass or the Lord's Supper, was taken for granted in the early Church. Written by St. Irenaeus about 185 AD, this excerpt makes clear the Church's realistic interpretation of the Eucharist as the risen body of Christ which serves as the medicine of immortality, the pledge of our own future resurrection. This excerpt from St. Irenaeus' monumental work, *Against Heresies* (Lib. 5,2, 2-3: SC 153, 30-38) is used in the Roman Catholic Office of Readings for Thursday of the third week of Easter with the accompanying biblical reading of Revelation 9:13-21.***

If our flesh is not saved, then the Lord has not redeemed us with his blood, the Eucharistic chalice does not make us sharers in his blood, and the bread we break does not make us sharers in his body. There can be no blood without veins, flesh and the rest of the human substance, and this the Word of God actually became: it was with his own blood that he redeemed us. As the Apostle says: *In him, through his blood, we have been redeemed, our sins have been forgiven.*

We are his members and we are nourished by creatures, which is his gift to us, for it is he who causes the sun to rise and the rain to fall. He declared that the chalice, which comes from his creation, was his blood, and he makes it the nourishment of our blood. He affirmed that the bread, which comes from his creation, was his body, and he makes it the nourishment of our body. When the chalice we mix and the bread we bake receive the word of God, the eucharistic elements become the body and blood of Christ, by which our bodies live and grow. How then can it be said that flesh belonging to the Lord's own body and nourished by his body and blood is incapable of receiving God's gift of eternal life? Saint Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians that *we are members of*

PO Box 271227 + Flower Mound, TX + 75027 + 1-800-803-0118 + [www.dritaly.com](http://www.dritaly.com)

*his body*, of his flesh and bones. He is not speaking of some spiritual and incorporeal kind of man, *for spirits do not have flesh and bones*. He is speaking of a real human body composed of flesh, sinews and bones, nourished by the chalice of Christ's blood and receiving growth from the bread which is his body.

The slip of a vine planted in the ground bears fruit at the proper time. The grain of wheat falls into the ground and decays only to be raised up again and multiplied by the Spirit of God who sustains all things. The Wisdom of God places these things at the service of man and when they receive God's word they become the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ. In the same way our bodies, which have been nourished by the Eucharist, will be buried in the earth and will decay, but they will rise again at the appointed time, for the Word of God will raise them up to the glory of God the Father. Then the Father will clothe our mortal nature in immortality and freely endow our corruptible nature with incorruptibility, for God's power is shown most perfectly in weakness.

For more readings from the Fathers on the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, see also:

[Sunday Eucharist in the Early Church, Saint Justin Martyr](#)  
[Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem](#)  
[This is My Body by Saint Ambrose](#)

#### **Come to the Table - Meredith Gould**



Come to the Table is for anyone seeking to integrate the traditions of Judaism and Christianity. Interfaith families will find it an especially useful companion during Passover and Holy Week. An amazing book that invites Christians to more fully appreciate Last Seder where Jesus established the Eucharist as a sacrament.

#### **Psalms: School of Prayer 10 Week CD Set**

This CD series contains the audio from the Psalms DVD series in which Jeff Cavins, Sarah Christmyer, and Dr. Tim Gray provide comprehensive teaching and commentary on the Psalms. Each 50-55 minute talk is designed to follow a lesson in the Psalms Study Set.



#### **I Believe - The Heart of Catholic Faith**

First given as a Lenten retreat, this is an awesome 4 session program to revitalize your faith and prepare you for the joy of Easter. Great for individuals or families or small groups. The workbook is a treasure of discussion questions, devotions and spiritual exercises that can serve as an easy-to-follow roadmap through the Lent or Holy Week that will break you out of stale patterns and enrich both your prayer and your understanding of the central truths of the Catholic faith, empowering you to share that faith with others.

