

Eucharistic Miracles

reflection # 1

Lanciano, Italy (750)

Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist is a solemnly defined teaching of the Catholic Church. When a priest consecrates the bread and wine of the Eucharist, it becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. Since there is no perceptible difference in the bread and wine before and after the prayer of consecration, belief in the Real Presence is often questioned. Throughout history God has provided signs to strengthen our belief in His Eucharistic Real Presence. These signs are often called – **Eucharistic miracles**.

As seen on our map in the meditation space, today's story of a Eucharistic miracle occurred in **Lanciano, Italy** around the year 750.

A Basilian monk was celebrating Mass in the little Church of St. Longinus, and he had doubts about Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist. But when he said the words of consecration at Mass—*"This is My Body"* and *"This is My Blood"*—the bread and wine miraculously changed into actual human flesh and blood. The blood coagulated into five solid drops, representing the five wounds of Christ.

The Eucharistic elements are still on display in Lanciano today, in the church of St. Francis. They are contained in a sort of reliquary or monstrance. The host turned flesh is visible in the upper portion and the five solid fragments of clotted blood are contained in a crystal chalice below.

It is fitting that this miracle took place in the Church of St. Longinus. As noted in John's Gospel a Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ on the Cross beheld the blood and water flow from His side. Tradition tells us the name of that soldier was Longinus. Upon seeing this event Longinus proclaimed, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

As Longinus witnessed to the "*sacredness*" of that event, may we revere the "*sacredness*" of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist.