

Eucharistic Miracles

reflection # 20

Gorkum, Netherlands (1572)

El-Escorial, Spain

Today's Eucharistic miracle is a tale of two cities. It began in **Gorkum, Netherlands**, but resides today in **El-Escorial, Spain**. At this time Europe was fraught with religious wars between Catholic and Protestants.

In 1572 some mercenaries broke into the tabernacle of the Gorkum cathedral and spilled a consecrated host on the floor. A soldier stomped on the host with a spiked heel. The host split into 3 parts and drops of blood formed on each of the parts. Overcome with fright, the soldiers fled, but the perpetrator quickly confessed his action to the local priest. The priest and perpetrator took the blood-spotted host to a neighboring town fearing further sacrilege to the host if it was left at the local church.

This begins a long and secretive 22 year journey through the religious wars raging in Europe. The host found protective custody in Belgium, Austria, Czechoslovakia before eventually making its way to the king of Spain in El-Escorial, Spain. King Philip II and his successor, King Charles II, were very faithful Catholics. King Charles had an exquisite monstrance crafted and built a chapel to host this Eucharistic miracle.

Since that time this host has evaded and endured the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the Spanish Civil war of 17 and 18 hundreds.

To this day this 3-parted, blood stained host is incorrupt and is displayed for public adoration twice each year – on **September 29th** which is the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel renown for his defense of God, and on **October 28th** which is the feast of St. Jude patron saint of hopeless cases acknowledging the many time this host seemed destined for demise.

This Eucharistic miracle confirms Christ's promise to be with us until the end of the ages. The 3 blood-stained parts of a single-split host may suggest the Trinity is present on our altars whenever Mass is celebrated, or the 3 days between Christ's death and Resurrection assuring us that we, too, will rise with him.

Such is the continual wonder of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist.