



# **Six Arguments for the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist**

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There are six keys for interpreting Christ's declarations in John 6:

The first key is the **immediate context** of Christ's words. The Jews took literally Christ's words - "[They] quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat'"? (John 6:52). If only speaking figuratively, Christ had ample opportunity to dull the edge of his claim; however, he did not back off, but instead further sharpened his assertions.

The second key is the **cultural significance**, i.e., "the conditions of the time and culture" (CCC 110) of the phrase "eat my flesh/drink my blood". In first century Israel/Aramaic, this phrase already existed and would have been used pejoratively to express the absolute conquering of a foe. If Jesus were speaking figuratively, he would have been suggesting that "those who annihilate me will have eternal life", which of course does not make any sense.

The third key is the relationship between **'flesh and blood' to the word 'spirit'**. In John 6:63 Christ seems to contradict his previous claims when he says, "It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail." Throughout sacred scripture, it is important to note the difference between the words "*the* flesh" - meaning figuratively a man living their life without faith (e.g., 1 COR 3:3) - and all Christ's previous affirmations in John 6 using the words "*my* flesh", meaning literally his very own body and blood.

The fourth key is the **analogy of faith**, i.e., "the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation" (CCC 114). Indeed, Christ's disciples continue the sacred tradition of the Eucharist in accordance with Christ's intentions, as noted for instance by the Apostle Paul in 1 COR 11:23, which can only be understood within the context of John 6.

The fifth key can be observed in the **Greek words John chooses** to convey Christ's terms. The Greek translation for the word "eat" - *trogein* - means "to chew" or "to gnaw" The graphic,

and literal nature of this word in John 6:54, 6:56, and 6:58 would be highly improper and illogical if Christ were only speaking figuratively.

Finally, the sixth key is the testimony of the **early church fathers**, who emphatically and consistently pronounced the Eucharist as the body and blood of Christ, notably Saint Ignatius of Antioch (a contemporary of John) and Saint Justin Martyr, who died for his defense of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.