



**W**ithout doubt, it is often fear of the unknown that triggers more anxiety and worries than the event itself. An example is that of a child's anticipation when going to see a dentist. It can be more painful than the actual extraction of the tooth itself. Our human

## The Alpha and Omega

mind is 'programmed' with the ability to sense danger and threats to our survival, with the instinct of fight or flight. Indeed, our intuitive sense is at times greater than our rationality when we react to potential situations of perceived attacks and threats to our lives.

Hence, it is most comforting to hear the assuring words of Jesus to us in today's Gospel reading: "Do not let your hearts be troubled, Trust in God and trust in me." (Jn 14: 1). Often when our faith is wavering and battered, all the more we are to cling to Jesus. I have prayed this wonderful prayer of consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, "O most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you, in all, for all and in spite of all." Perhaps you may find this prayer helpful too.

Who do we trust? Surely not one who has betrayed us; not one who has constantly lied to us; not one who has taken us for a ride; not one who lets us down time and time again. Indeed, who do you trust?

I suggest three criteria by which we judge if someone can be trusted: 1) Consistency, 2) Truthfulness and 3) Dependability and Consistency

about telling the same truth of the narrative from the beginning till the end. While truthfulness is truth telling and keeping to one's principles and not to resort to lying at any costs or spicing up the truth and or to distortion for one's selfish gains. Finally being dependable means that I can rely on a

person to do what he says he will do and to do what he says. Is this person dependable and honest?

We can apply these three criteria to Jesus to authenticate His words and actions. Is Jesus consistent, truthful and dependable? We know He neither deceives nor can be deceived. He tells us, "You must believe in me when I say, I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason." (Jn14: 10). The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We can judge something for ourselves by experiencing it. We have experienced the presence of Jesus in our lives, His love, His care and His goodness to us.

Most of all, He has given us the greatest promise of His power to lay down His life and to raise it up again. His resurrection is the most powerful testimony of his life marked by love consistently, truthfully and dependably — from the beginning to the end. Jesus is truly the Alpha and Omega. He is the beginning and the end of all history, all creation and all of our lives. In Him we trust, we shall not fear.

FR COLIN TAN, SJ

# Virtually

## The Real Presence of Christ!

### *Threading the Lines to a Subtler Reality*

**F**elix Just presents an interesting response to two lightning rod opinions written by Robert Mickens and J.P. Grayland. Mickens' and Grayland's comments on "virtual" Eucharistic celebrations and what is "real" occasioned Just to examine closely our perceptions of "digital presence", "real" and "physical presence".

Just argues that the various realities we present ourselves are real, but in different ways and initially contends that Gray faultily compares virtual versus physical presence. Thus, virtual reality and physical reality are both "real." So is the reality of friendships and romances sustained through hand-written letters. Yet, they do not have the same character, or being, as the sacramental reality of Christ present in our Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Matrimony, Holy Orders, Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.

Mickens posits that there can only be physical presence, as that is the only real presence. Just counters with various examples of the reality of other presences or realities, one of which is cyber-bullying – virtual, but very real, especially for its victims of all ages. Similarly, so are sacramental realities, as well as spiritual realities (especially those live in areas of active spiritual activities of mediums, witch

doctors, and the like). During this COVID-19 pandemic, who hasn't been gladdened or felt close with friends and family through virtual multimedia greetings and messages? Even legal proceedings have recognized the "digital presence" facilitated by modern telecommunications!

More so than humanly mediated virtualities, Just quotes Matthew 18:20 where Jesus promises to be "there" when two or three are gathered in His name. In Montreal, when a 90-year-old Catholic gathers with her contemporaries for a rosary on a telephone "party line" – where is Christ, if not there with all of them, however "there" means for each of them? Just pointedly asks the same of where Christ is among the people who watched the live stream of the Pope's Urbi et Orbi blessings, or Mass, if not with them.

The Church has long embraced "tele-distancing" or "re-broadcasting" of blessings from an audio or video recording, and not just specifically for the Urbi et Orbi blessings. On 12 February, 1931, the Vatican Radio's inaugural broadcast was Pope Pius XI's message "Omni creaturae". He was attended to by Guglielmo Marconi (the accredited inventor of the radio) and Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII). In essence, the "real effect" of these prayers, blessings

and sacraments are not limited by physical proximity nor by "temporal simultaneity".

In the Church, the Sacraments are a living tradition of Christ's spiritual presence among Christians when Christ Himself is "absent in body". As Just points out, even St Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth to "behave as though he were present with them" (1 Cor 5:3; 2 Cor 10:11; 13:2; Phil 2:12). True, he was physically absent but St Paul was still present to them "in spirit" rather than "in the flesh."

While the summit of Christ's presence in the Church is in the Eucharist, albeit not "physically present," what we celebrate and believe in the Eucharist is in some ways the absence and traumatic loss of Christ's human flesh and blood 2000 years ago. Jesus' exemplar of self-sacrificing love transmuted the event of the Paschal Mystery with the new meaning of salvation, of reconciling the world to Himself and sending forth the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness our sins.

As such, Church doctrine on "transubstantiation" holds that the consecrated species which initially and ostensibly was "ordinary bread and wine" is now 'really' "Christ's body and blood". Science thinks otherwise, and maintains they are "physically" still bread and wine". For those of us with faith, and living out of that faith,

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FELIX JUST, "Real Presence and Virtual Liturgies (Part I): A Response to Robert Mickens and J.P. Grayland," April 28, 2020, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/real-presence-and-virtual-liturgies-part-i/12261>. Felix Just SJ, PhD is minister of the Loyola House Jesuit Community in San Francisco (USA) and director of Jesuit Biblical Ministries (UWE Province), as well as creator and manager of "Catholic Resources," <https://catholic-resources.org/>.  
ROBERT MICKENS, "A Church (and world) in denial that just can't

stop itself: The pandemic has shown that even Catholics believe they are what they do," *La Croix international*, April 24, 2020, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/a-church-and-world-in-denial-that-just-cant-stop-itself/12232>.

JP GRAYLANDS, "Liturgy is an act of the People of God and they must be really present: A response to Michael Kelly SJ," *La Croix international*, April 17, 2020, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/liturgy-is-an-act-of-the-people-of-god-and-they-must-be-really-present/12200>.

Just contends that “the ‘real presence’ of Christ is a ‘sacramental reality’, which should not be confused with or reduced to a ‘physical reality’. Christ is not ‘physically’ present in the consecrated bread and wine in the same way that He was ‘physically’ and ‘historically’ present to His first disciples.”

From the Second Vatican Council, Just highlights what this sacramental reality, the presence of Christ among us, is truly “present” in the Church’s liturgy:

“Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister ... but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings”. (Sacrosanctum Concilium 7)

Our emphasis on the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament sometimes eclipses Christ’s presence “in the word (as the scriptures are proclaimed), in the presider [who represents the community of the church gathered in the form of] (the bishop or priest who leads the community at prayer), and in the assembly of the faithful (the faithful who are gathered in prayer).”

As seen from the quotation, Christ is not just present in the Eucharist, but in all the sacraments. Sacramental reality is not limited to the Mass or the Eucharistic liturgy. Christ continues to be present not only “sacramentally”, [but also] “mystically”, “spiritually” and “ecclesially” (in the assembly of the Church), “even if he is not ‘physically present’ as an individual human being in the same historical way that he was while he lived on earth long ago.”

**MICHAEL PHUNG, SJ**

## PARISH NEWS

During this ‘Circuit Breaker’ period, the entire grounds of the Church of St Ignatius is closed to the public. For your health and safety, please do not enter church grounds. The pedestrian passage way/staircase next to the main church building is also closed until further notice.

If you have any business to transact with the parish office during this period, please first contact us by telephone (6466 0625) or email (administrator@stignatius.org.sg) and we will advise you on how to proceed.

A Liturgy of the Word for Children session led by Fr Leslie Raj, SJ, entitled **SUNDAYS WITH JESUS** is available at <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/>

A recorded **GOSPEL REFLECTION** by Fr Colin Tan, SJ for this weekend 10 May, is available at Weekly Sunday Reflection: <https://stignatius.org.sg/home>

Fr Jerome Leon, SJ's reorded **DAILY REFLECTION** and livestream **MASSSES** on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, at 12pm are accessible at [www.youtube.com/c/jeromeleonsj](http://www.youtube.com/c/jeromeleonsj)

All are welcome to join Fr. Ravi, SJ and our youth community, De Vita Christi, for **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION** "live" on YouTube, every Wednesday, 8pm -10pm. The link will be posted on Telegram.

Fr Colin Tan, SJ is available for **TELE-MEETING** with 10 parishioners daily. Call the office (6466 0625) to leave your name and number. He will be happy to return your call. Or email him at [csi.pp@catholic.org.sg](mailto:csi.pp@catholic.org.sg)

## ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

### CBN COVID-19 PROJECT

During this Covid-19 period, the Catholic Business Network (CBN), partnering with their adopted charity, Canossaville Children & Community Services (CCCS), aims to provide for 120 families, in their Aid and Financial Support project, in the form of NTUC vouchers, Food and Provisions in time for Hari Raya Puasa.

CBN will be collecting cash donations on behalf of CCCS and the proceeds will be used for this Aid Project. Your donations are tax-deductible at 2.5 times, and if you wish to have tax deduction receipts (for donations \$10 and above), please indicate your NRIC number, Full Name as per NRIC, email id and contact number.

Send your donations by 20 May, so that CCCS can distribute this Aid and Financial Support in time for the Hari Raya Puasa weekend.

#### Bank Transfer:

Bank Account name : Catholic Business Network

Bank name : OCBC Ltd

Bank Account no. : 591-205570-001

**PayNow:** UEN T08SS0001L

**Cheque:** Issue to Catholic Business Network and mail to Agape Village, 7A Lorong 8 Toa Payoh, #04-01, Singapore 319264

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Jerome Leon, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest  
Angela Kurnadi Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Cheryl Lek Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator  
Robert Ong Sacristan ★ David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Communications Manager