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## Letter from the Editor

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# Letter from the Editor

By MyLan Metzger

If you have worked at all in Catholic ministry over the past few years, you have likely heard of the Pew Research Center study in 2019 that found that only 31% of Catholics in the United States believed in that in Catholic Mass, the bread and the wine actually became the body and blood of Jesus Christ. A vast majority of Catholics believe that the bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ, or simply know too little to have an opinion. Given how central the Eucharist is to Catholic theology and worship, it was quite jarring to find that so many Catholics were either misinformed about the Church's teaching or disagreed.[1]

At a time when the Church is facing disaffiliation, abuse, polarization, and misinformation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops believed that the Church in America needed to again focus on the Body and Blood of Christ, which is with us always through the Eucharist. In 2022, the USCCB published *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* which explained the need to encounter Jesus Christ through the Eucharist and began the National Eucharistic Revival. The Revival is a three year long process involving many different levels of the Church and encourages both lay and clerical participation in and celebration of Christ's body and blood.

This journal seeks to contribute to that conversation on the mystery of the Incarnation and the sacrifice and celebration of Christ in the Mass. In three essays, this journal reflects on the Body of Christ, particularly as the Eucharist relates to two groups who are often marginalized in the Catholic Church: women and people with disabilities.

In her paper "Life-Giving Bodies," Laura Tringali compares Christ's self-sacrificing gift of food in the Eucharist to a mother's self-sacrificing gift to a child in breastfeeding. In "Wheat, Rye, and Barley," Nathan Jowers reflects on his own spiritual and liturgical journey and relationship with the Eucharist as a Christian who carries the gene for celiac disease. Finally, in "Remember the Ladies," Erica Lizza looks at what the *imago dei*, the teaching that all people are made in the image and likeness of Christ, means for women today. Lizza's paper expands on the Body of Christ and the incarnation especially as it relates to marginalized women.

In the previous issue of *New Horizons*, the journal explored Christian responses to violence. In this issue, the journal looks at God's response to violence: Jesus Christ given to the broken world in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist.

[1] Gregory Smith, "Just One-Third of U.S. Catholics Agree with Their Church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ," *Pew Research*, August 5, 2019.