

# Eucharistic Miracles Strengthen Our Faith

By Daniel P. McGivern

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During the nearly 2000 years since Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, He has chosen to work perhaps 100 documented Eucharistic Miracles. He has done so for specific reasons at the time, and also to strengthen the faith of those who live in later generations.

## The Miracle at Lanciano

This miracle took place 1200 years ago, in a small church in Lanciano, Italy, near the Adriatic Sea. It was initially a response by God to a priest who had doubts about the Real Presence of Christ in the Mass. He had just spoken the words of the Consecration when the host was suddenly transformed into a circle of flesh, and the wine in the chalice changed to blood. He confessed his doubts to all attending the Mass and invited them up to the altar to see the miracle. They were astonished, and many cried and prayed. The fresh Blood coagulated into five globules, of different sizes and shapes. Since 1713, both the host and Blood have been kept in a beautiful silver monstrance, retained at St. Francis Church in Lanciano. The Franciscans Minor Conventual Friars have been in charge of the miracles since 1252 and built the present church in 1258.

Over the centuries, there have been various Church investigations and recognition of the miracle. Science stepped in during the last 40 years to verify the miracle. In 1970-71, and again in 1981, the most thorough scientific investigation took place. It was conducted by Professor Odoardo Linoli, professor of anatomy and

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*I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh....Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

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pathological histology, chemistry and clinical microscopy. He was assisted by Professor Roggero Bertelli of the University of Sienna, Italy. The analyses determined that the Flesh is real flesh. Just as Jesus said, in John 6:51-57:

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

The Flesh at Lanciano consists of the muscular tissue of the Heart. Jesus chose this miracle to visually show us His Heart, for the heart symbolizes one's love. In the Flesh, the scientists saw in sections the myocardium, the endocardium, the vagus nerve and also the left ventricle. The Flesh is a piece of a human heart. In examining the Blood, the scientists found proteins and minerals in the same proportion as fresh, normal blood. The Blood (and the Flesh) are both blood type AB.

It should also be noted that there has been no special attempt over the centuries to do anything other than to reserve the Body and Blood and to show it to the devout. The scientists determined that there were no preservatives. This miracle is one of about 100 known Eucharistic miracles in the world.

### **The Miracle at Santarem**

For all of my life, I have approached Holy Communion, knowing full well that I am about to receive Christ Himself. I have never had any doubts that the bread is changed at the moment of consecration into His body, blood, soul and divinity. In my 54<sup>th</sup> year, however, I had the opportunity to see two Eucharistic miracles firsthand – one in Portugal and another in Austria.

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Located halfway between Lisbon and Fatima in Portugal is the city of Santarem. In the year 1266 A.D., a Catholic woman of that city was at her wit's end because her husband was unfaithful to her. In desperation, she approached a sorceress, who told her that she could restore her husband to her if she would do one thing: bring a consecrated Host to the sorceress. The Catholic woman knew this was wrong, but she decided to do it anyway. She was desperate.

Immediately after receiving Holy Communion on her tongue at St. Stephen's Church, she hurried down the aisle and took the Host out of her mouth and wrapped it in a veil around her arm. As she began to walk the 100 yards from the church to her small home, people noticed she

was bleeding profusely from beneath the veil wrapped around her arm. Burdened with guilt, she ran home to avoid the passersby concerned about her bleeding. Once inside her home, she put

aside all thoughts of seeing the sorceress. She took the Host in her blood-drenched veil and placed it inside of a chest, and closed the top.

That night, after she and her husband had gone to sleep, they were both awakened by a very bright light which illuminated the entire home. They both got up and saw that the light was coming from the closed chest. The wife told her husband everything, what she had done, and why she had done it. Both the husband and wife spent the rest of the night on their knees in adoration before the chest containing the miraculous Host.

The next morning, neighbors came over, attracted by the illuminating light. Next, a priest was summoned from St. Stephen's. After being told everything, and undoubtedly hearing the confessions of both, he carried the bleeding Host back to the Church, moulded clay around the Host to hold it, and to contain the bleeding. He then put it inside the tabernacle, and locked it securely. When he opened the tabernacle later, there was another miracle! The clay had broken into many pieces and the Host and Blood were contained inside of a clear crystal.

This miracle took place over 700 years ago and the lines of blood are very clear to anyone who looks closely. Sometimes the blood has the color of fresh blood, and other times, that of dried blood – a continuing miracle. The Host is somewhat irregularly shaped with delicate veins running from top to bottom, where a quantity of blood collected in the crystal.

### **The Miracle at Seefeld**

This Eucharistic miracle took place high in the hills of Austria, near Innsbruck, in the town of Seefeld. In the year 1384, a knight named Oswald Milser, was the guardian of Schlossberg Castle, just north of Seefeld. On Holy Thursday, the day Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist to nourish us, Knight Milser decided to unworthily receive Holy Communion. He and his men went into St. Oswald's Church (no relation to Oswald Milser) in Seefeld. They were armed, and at Communion time Knight Milser, filled with pride, went up to the stone altar and told the priest that he wanted to receive the larger Host, at that time reserved solely for the priest, instead of one of the smaller ones distributed to parishioners.

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*As soon as [Knight Oswald Milser] received [the larger host ordinarily reserved solely for the priest], the ground gave way beneath his feet. He sunk up to his knees. In desperation, he clutched at the altar to keep himself from sinking further. The altar started to sink! ...When [the consecrated Host] was removed from the Knight's tongue, it was blood-red.*

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All eyes were on the priest. What would he do? Nervously, he placed the larger Host on the tongue of the knight. As soon as he received it, the ground gave way beneath his feet. He sunk up to his knees. In desperation, he clutched at the altar to keep himself from sinking further. The altar started to sink! He instinctively knew what to do next. He stuck out his tongue for the priest to remove the Host. He then climbed out of the depression made by his feet and legs. Hurrying off to a nearby monastery, he confessed, and did penance until his death two years later.

Today, St. Oswald's Church is filled with artwork depicting the miracle. In addition to the artistic evidence, we have three visible proofs of the miracle. First, in front of the stone altar, over which a free standing modern altar has been placed, is a grating on the floor. Removing it and turning on the light, one can easily see the feet and leg impressions of Milser. You can just picture him climbing out of the hole and running off to the monastery over 600 years ago.

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*First, in front of the stone altar, over which a free standing modern altar has been placed, is a grating on the floor. Removing it and turning on the light, one can easily see the feet and leg impressions of Milser....The second miraculous proof is the stone altar itself. When the knight began to sink into the ground he grabbed the altar. His hand-prints are still in the altar and one can feel them, and put one's own hands into them. The third proof is the consecrated Host. When it was removed from the Knight's tongue, it was blood-red.*

The second miraculous proof is the stone altar itself. When the knight began to sink into the ground he grabbed the altar. His hand-prints are still in the altar and one can feel them, and put one's own hands into them.

The third proof is the consecrated Host. When it was removed from the Knight's tongue, it was blood-red. It was placed in a monstrance, and is still there, located in a side niche in the church, kept under lock and key. The Host is clearly visible when one looks at it in the monstrance. It is no longer blood-red.

An interesting but sad footnote is the story of Knight Milser's wife. She was separated from him and the Church. When she was told the full story of what had happened in front of so many witnesses, those attending Mass and Milser's armed men, she refused to believe it. The church records say she stubbornly refused to accept the truth, then went mad and lived in the woods as a wild beast. One can only hope that she came to her senses and repented before her death.

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Eucharistic miracles are not worked by God for just the people who witness it. Proof remains! The Host, which should have crumbled into nothingness hundreds of years ago, remains after 600 and 700 years in these last two cases. The Hosts were exposed to the elements over all those years and should have dissipated. The Eucharistic Miracles are proof positive of what happens at our Catholic Mass, where bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ at the consecration. When we receive Jesus, we must receive Him worthily. We must be in the state of grace, with no mortal sin, or hurry to a priest to confess all of our mortal sins, and complete the penance assigned promptly. Then we can receive the Eucharist at Mass.

Eucharistic miracles are visible proof of what we believe in Faith! We don't thoroughly understand it – what the theologians call transubstantiation. Yet I know that we receive the True Presence of Jesus at Mass. The veins of blood at the Church of the Miracle at Santarem will be etched in my memory forever, because I knew I was looking at Christ's blood.

The Catholic faith is unchanged from that first Holy Thursday in the upper room, when Jesus Himself gave His Body and Blood to His apostles, to Holy Thursday in 1384 when Knight Oswald Milser unworthily received Holy Communion, to Mass this very day all over the earth. Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us is taking place at every Mass. He gives His Body and Blood to us,

to nourish us, to sustain us, and He leads, guides and directs us in our lives – if we ask Him and let Him!

*For further reading: Joan Carroll Cruz's **Eucharistic Miracles** is available from Tan Books, (call toll-free 1-800-437-5876). **This is My Body! This is My Blood! Miracle of the Eucharist** by Bob and Penny Lord, and also a video on several famous Eucharistic miracles, including Lanciano, are available from Bob and Penny Lord, P.O. Box 429, Slidell, LA, 70459 (call toll-free 1-800-633-2484). The best book of all is the **The Eucharistic Miracles of the World** with many color photographs and great documentation. Go to [www.lifeeternal.org](http://www.lifeeternal.org) or buy one from 1-800-842-2871, Eternal Life Publishers.*

**The following daily prayer was obtained at the Church of the Eucharistic Miracle in Lanciano, Italy:**

**“O Jesus, living Bread descended from heaven, how infinitely great and good is Your love! In order to perpetuate and strengthen our faith in Your Real Presence in the Eucharist, you changed the consecrated species of bread and wine into Flesh and Blood, which are perpetually reserved in the Eucharistic Sanctuary of Lanciano. Oh, increase ever more our faith in You, Sacramental Lord.**

**Grant that burning with love for You, we may come to seek comfort in dangers, in necessities and in anxieties, only at your feet, O Divine Prisoner of our tabernacles, O perpetual fount of every grace.**

**Excite in us hunger and thirst for Your Eucharistic food, so that in keeping Your Word, tasting this heavenly Bread, we may be able to enjoy true life now and forever. Amen.”**