



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Statement of Bishop Jaime Soto on the Eucharist

During the recent plenary meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, my brother bishops and I, after a robust and respectful conversation, approved the future development of a teaching document on the Eucharist. I support the decision of the body of bishops to provide clear teaching on the beauty of the Lord Jesus' merciful gift to his Church found in the sacramental mystery of his most precious body and blood offered for us on the cross.

Over the coming months while this document is developed and discussed, I invite the faithful in the Diocese of Sacramento to pray and reflect on our relationship with the Lord Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Jesus has given us the great *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Sacrament of Charity. The familiar refrain from a contemporary Eucharistic hymn reminds us that we must become what we receive. (Amén. El Cuerpo de Cristo, John Schiavone) The Lord Jesus, himself, invites us to be conformed to the truth of his awesome charity, poured out from his Most Sacred Heart.

The ineffable mystery of the Eucharist cannot be defined by the political rancor of this moment. The Most Holy Eucharist defines us and commands us to love one another as he has loved us. The Lord can command to love in truth because he loved us first in truth, the trembling truth of the cross. His arms outstretched on the wood of the cross attract us to communion with him. To approach him in Holy Communion we are also drawn into a communion of both mind and heart in Christ.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world judges us. Our sins are revealed by his wounds and by his wounds we are healed. (I Pt. 2.24) He is the spotless victim, who bore the weight of all human sin. He suffers with all victims of sinful human degradation: abortion, racism, war, and abuse. To open our hearts to the Lord in Holy Communion we unite ourselves in solidarity to his saving sacrifice so that all might live in fullness of his charity. By doing so we become his friends. "You are my friends if you do what I command you." (Jn. 15.14)

Join with me in contemplating the charity of the crucified Lord and praying for the wisdom and mercy of Jesus to harmonize our lives with the truth of his divine charity. Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, reflecting on the too prevalent rupture between the Eucharist and Christian living said, "'Worship' itself, Eucharistic communion, includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented." (Deus Caritas Est, 14) Healing the wound of this moral fragmentation is the task before us. This is the Eucharistic coherence we must seek for ourselves and our world so that all may be one in Christ.

May the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary and her most chaste spouse, Joseph, help us communicate the beauty of the Most Blessed Sacrament with the wisdom and charity of the Lord Jesus.

Respectfully,

+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento