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A few years ago a new study was released showing that 40% of American Catholics do not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I was surprised, as it is rather fundamental to the faith, and it is not one of the "controversial" moral teachings. However, I really should not have been because like the Trinity, which we celebrated in a particular way last weekend, it is one of the hardest things to grasp. Like the Apostles who last week we heard doubted but still worshipped, many Catholics apparently doubt the real presence but still worship, as we do every week at Mass during the consecration, and which many parishes do in a particular way with a procession today at the principle Mass. Doubt is an interesting thing because doubt is often thought of as an intellectual struggle. It's not. Doubt is a choice. You can tell me an outrageous fact or story. Whether I believe you or not is not a matter of the mind, as my mind tells me it's outrageous: it's a matter of choice. Are you the type person to be correct and to be truthful? The virtue of faith is therefore a choice, albeit one motivated by grace. I believe because God, who is never mistaken and who is always good and would not lie, revealed this.

The Eucharist was revealed clearly. Christ worked miracles indicating his ability to change substances like water into wine. He worked miracles indicating he could multiply substances like the feeding of the five thousand. Then he taught it. He said that his body was the true bread come down from heaven, that "this is his body," and he indicated that we should do it in memory of him. When people thought they misunderstood and doubted, he let them walk away. And down the centuries, he has given signs, like the Eucharistic miracles, such as when some hosts were stolen in Siena, Italy in 1730. Eventually found, because they were covered and dirt, the priests did not desire to consume them. They were reverently put in the tabernacle for people to come make reparation for the sin committed of stealing them. After awhile, it was expected they would decompose naturally and could be put down the sacrarium, or sacred sink, that empties into the ground where they would be properly disposed of. But they wouldn't decompose. Examined in 1914, a scientist concluded, "The holy Particles of unleavened bread represent an example of perfect preservation ... a singular phenomenon that inverts the natural law of the conservation of organic material. It is a fact unique in the annals of science."

Faith vs. doubt is not an intellectual problem. An ancient saying stated that we should believe that we might come to understand. Today we are presented with a difficult Truth, that Jesus Christ is sacramentally and really present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity under the appearance of bread and wine. Do we have faith to believe? If not, we must ask God for the grace of such faith. May God bless you.