



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

04 August 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Transubstantiation \ˈtrɑn(t)-səb-ˈstən(t)-shē-ˈā-shən\

A term first used in the 12th century and affirmed at the Council of Trent in 1551. It expresses that the bread and wine offered at the Eucharist are not mere signs of our union with Christ but are changed "in substance" into the Body and Blood of Jesus. This belief is commonly known as the Real Presence.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-Transubstantiation>

CONTEXT

As a result of **transubstantiation**, nothing remains of the bread and the wine except for the species—beneath which Christ is present whole and entire in His physical "reality," corporeally present.

—Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*

Translation is a kind of **transubstantiation**; one poem becomes another ... The poet moves from life to language, the translator moves from language to life; both, like the immigrant, try to identify the invisible, what's between the lines, the mysterious implications. —Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*

WHY IT MATTERS

Transubstantiation is a way of underscoring Real Presence: that the life of Christ is authentically offered to us and becomes part of us in the reception of this sacrament. Maybe theologian Karl Rahner said it best: "Truth is not primarily something we grasp, but that by which we are grasped."

From the *Sermons of Saint Augustine*: "That bread that you see on the altar, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what is in that chalice, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ."

RELATED WORDS

Real Presence | Eucharist | Holy Communion

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I explain transubstantiation to others?

First, you can say that we believe that the bread and wine at Mass become the Body and Blood of Christ. Then add your own experience of encountering the Real Presence of Christ, because, frankly, theological terms never get to the heart of the matter. No one comes to Jesus by means of a word like this. So, why do we have this word? Medieval theologians sought to explain why our eyes see bread and wine, yet we claim Christ truly present. During the Protestant Reformation, Eucharist was hotly contested. Most Reformers viewed Eucharist as a memorial meal. In response, the Council of Trent defended an actual substantial change —**transubstantiation**.

Twentieth-century theologians introduced two more words to the conversation. *Transignification* emphasizes changes in meanings rather than in form. Bread and wine normally mean nourishment. Consecrated bread and wine signify nourishment with Christ's life. *Transfinalization* focuses on ultimate purpose or "finality." Food and drink for the body gain a new goal as food for the spirit. Still, the most vital change remains what happens to us who receive it.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* https://www.vocationnetwork.org/en/blog/questions_catholics_ask/2024/07/how_can_i_explain_transubstantiation_to_others

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD (AUGUST 6)

Glimpses of glory

Jesus takes the disciples Peter, James, and John up the mountain. There they see their Lord glorified. He speaks with Elijah and Moses, to show his connection with the prophets and the law. Not surprisingly, Peter wants to remain in this place of truth and assurance. They hear a voice from heaven telling them to listen, and suddenly "they no longer saw anyone but Jesus."

READINGS: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Mark 9:2-10 (614) <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/080624.cfm>. "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

FAITH IN ACTION

As Christians we crave times of assurance and certainty. But most of our journey won't be on the mountain. Do Christ's work and you will continue to feel his presence.