



Presence: Physical vs. Virtual

Talking Points

- "The Word became flesh"
 - Jesus is not simply an idea, but a physical reality.
 - Jesus of Nazareth is God-made-human, a person who lived in time and space.
 - God takes on our humanity in Jesus Christ so that we may take on His divinity.
 - This is symbolized in the mingling of water with the wine before the Eucharistic Prayer; the priest says: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."
- We experience the presence of Christ in the gathered community, which is possible through physical gatherings, but not fully in a virtual manner.
 - When we gather for the Eucharist, we realize the true identity of the Church as the Body of Christ.
- The sacraments are physical signs of inner realities – they require created things and people gathered in proximity.
 - The sacraments rely upon the stuff of the earth (water, oil, bread, wine, etc.) and these are experienced through our senses (touch, taste, smell), which is not possibly virtually.
- Sacramental Communion completes our participation in the Eucharist: we meet Christ in Holy Communion at Mass in a way beyond any virtual experience.
 - Obviously we cannot receive sacramental Communion while participating only virtually.
 - As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion.
 - While the graces received by participating at Mass are not solely received through sacramental Communion, the more perfect

means of participating in the Eucharist include receiving sacramental Communion when properly disposed.

- Church buildings are dedicated for our worship and are truly the "house of God".
 - Church buildings start out as ordinary buildings but become holy because of the worship of God's people within them. We call them *domus Dei* (house of God) but also *domus ecclesiae* (house of the Church).
 - Church buildings are consecrated for our worship and foreshadow the heavenly dwelling place.

Discussion Questions



What do I appreciate most about my parish church building?

What are the benefits I receive from participating in Mass by going to the church rather than only online?

How do I encounter God in my virtual encounters? How is God missing if I live only online?

What keeps me from truly appreciating Christ's real presence in the community of believers who gather in the church each Sunday?