

Growing up I suffered daily from intense stomachaches. After countless trips to the doctor, I discovered I have Celiac disease, I am allergic to gluten. This news, while expected, was still upsetting to receive. Thankfully, I have many different options, and I can nourish my body without digesting wheat. However, there is only one way I can truly nourish my soul; the Eucharist. Unfortunately, the host contains gluten, but I have discovered that receiving the Eucharist has never upset my stomach. It is easy to believe this is simply because it has less gluten, causing my body to be less affected. However, in 2022 the National Celiac Association proved that it only takes 10 milligrams of gluten to make a celiac ill. Due to this fact, I believe the host has never bothered my stomach because it is necessary to keep me alive, not physically, but spiritually.

The Eucharist is important to me because it is a reward from God. Jesus gave Himself for me because He loves me and wants me to live with Him forever. He promises Himself for me if I agree to follow Him and His commandments, whether it is by refraining from fighting with my siblings, working on honesty, or simply trying my best. I try to understand this miracle by comparing it to a life vest. Without the Eucharist we may be able to stay afloat for a fleeting moment, but we cannot stay alive because “it is dangerous to try to get to Heaven without the Bread of Heaven” (St. Jerome). As a result of this, I receive the sacrament of the Eucharist because it is the only way I can obtain Heaven.

One thing people often overlook regarding the sacrament of Holy Communion is that one grace is it removes venial sin. When I receive the Eucharist, it strengthens my fragilities and offers me a new type of grace. Due to this new grace, I grow in my relationship with God, and the Eucharist becomes the way I acquire eternal life. Knowing that when receiving the host, I receive Jesus’ body does not bother me. Instead, it is preferable to me because it strengthens my

belief that above everything else, I am a beloved child of God. Sharing this belief St. Thomas Aquinas stated, “The Eucharist is the sacrament of love: it signifies love, it produces love.”

Similar to His dying for us out of love, Jesus gave Himself through the Eucharist out of love.

Through my many obstacles and challenges with both with my physical health and my blunders on the way to God, Jesus has always been there for me. He always offers Himself to get me through the darkest times in my life because he loves me and longs for me to succeed. Jesus and the sacraments He gives me are my life vest. I cling to Him for life because I long to live with Him and His Father in Heaven forever.