

- I. Biblical views of Eucharistic Practice:
 - A. Mt. 26:26; I Cor. 11:20-27. This is my body... Do this in remembrance of me.
 - B. “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no part in me” (John 6:51-63)
 - C. Early Eucharistic practices – communal in nature emphasizing community.
- II. Medieval Setting that Gave Rise to Doctrine of Transubstantiation:
 - A. Scholastic emphasis on Aristotelianism:
 1. Revival and advance of earlier theological controversy between Paschasius Radbertus (pro-transubstantiation) v. Rabanus Maurus and Ratramnus (against transubstantiation) in 9th c.
 2. Peter Lombard – 12th c. scholastic theologian supported it but recognized its problems
 3. Thomas Aquinas – using Aristotelian philosophy, he described consecrated elements as the “real presence” of Christ in its substance and the outward sensory elements of bread and wine as “accidents”.
 - B. Eastern influences – John of Damascus in 8th c. , renewed contact with eastern church and its emphasis on icons (physical signs representing spiritual realities).
 - C. Heresies which deny incarnation of Christ (Catharism) threaten reality/significance of Eucharist.
 - D. Dominance of sacramental/penitential Catholic Christianity. In this context, Eucharist becomes not merely symbol of salvation, but access to salvation itself. Failure to receive Eucharist is failure to receive salvation. Enhances power of Catholic church as authentic conduits.
 - E. Character of Eucharistic liturgy reinforces exclusive access by clergy – Mass in Latin, only priest can touch, some not served cup (*utraquiste*)
 - F. Pope Innocent III and the Fourth Lateran Council – officially established doctrine of transubstantiation. Pope controls keys to kingdom, including receiving of Christ’s body.

- G. Focus on physical aspects of Christ's passion consistent with material/physically violent focus of medieval world
- III. Popular Responses to the elevated emphasis on Eucharist
- A. Eucharistic festivals - preaching, celebrations with processions/parades, mystery plays. Two different results:
 - 1. Popular attempt to concretize a mysterious rite. Themes in mystery plays – struggling with human condition, small person able to extract help from God in spite of priestly interference (elements of cunning and humor).
 - 2. Avenue for stressing personal and corporate piety & spiritual renewal.
 - B. Beguines – societies of women emphasizing spiritual reform and living independent from regulated monastic settings:
 - 1. Emphasis on spirituality involved fasting to point of emaciation, only eating Eucharist (emphasizing goal to only consume Christ himself).
 - 2. By controlling their own bodies and refusing to submit to papal rules for cloistered societies, they challenged papal authority.

Further Reading:

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Rubin, Miri. *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

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