

Why I Am Catholic

The Feast of *Corpus Christi* (The Body and Blood of Christ).

The feast originated in the diocese of Liege, Belgium in 1247, through the petition of St. Juliana, an Augustinian nun with great Eucharistic devotion who desired a feast to celebrate the gift of the Eucharist. Jacques Pantaléon, then Archdeacon of Liege, became Pope Urban IV in 1261 and wrote a papal bull in 1264 making this a feast for the whole Church.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote songs for the new feast including: *Lauda Sion, Pange Lingua*, and *Tantum Ergo*. Another influence on the feast was a Eucharistic miracle that occurred in Bolsena, Italy in 1263. A visiting German priest—who had doubts about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist—saw blood flow out of the host during the consecration and elevation. He quickly went and presented evidence to the pope.

The blood stains are still visible on the floor of the chapel of St. Christina today. The stained altar linens are kept at the cathedral in Orvieto.

Pope Clement V elevated *Corpus Christi* to a mandatory universal feast in 1312.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'" (1323)