

During research on the Holy Communion to prepare for a youth class at our church, I encountered a trivia question that emerged into a fascinating discovery. One subject under examination of communion was “Hylomorphic Transubstantiation”. The adjective, “Hylomorphic”, is not always found in a standard dictionary. It was a Greek word used by Aristotle and defined as: a creature of corporal and spiritual matter. Transubstantiation is a term used to indicate that during communion, the wine and bread actually become the blood and body of Christ, and are not just merely symbols of his blood and body. This is a defining belief that identifies one as a Catholic. Here is the question that arose during my study of the Eucharist; “What was the blood type of Jesus?”

Not thinking that anyone would ever know the answer, I found that I was grossly mistaken. It is believed to be AB. The answer is not of critical importance, but the fact that there is an answer is to me evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the authentication of the life of Jesus.

Blood types were generally unknown or categorized before 1900. In 1902, type AB was discovered as specifically containing the antigens “A and B”.

Around 750 A.D. a Eucharistic miracle occurred in Lanciano, Italy. One morning at Mass a priest, somewhat skeptical of the concept of transubstantiation, and after finishing saying the words of consecration noticed that the wine turned into actual blood, and the bread into a circle of flesh. This event caused the priest to dramatically change his doubts of the Eucharist. This Eucharistic Miracle continues to be one of the most referenced Miracles on the list of over 100 Church recognized Miracles.

The miracle has been examined throughout the centuries without a trace of fraud. Pope Paul VI encouraged a scientific investigation in 1971 resulting in a determination that the blood was AB, and the flesh was material from a human heart. The reason for this inquiry was to compare samples to the Shroud of Turin.

My next search led me to call Dr. John Jackson who heads the Shroud of Turin exhibit in Colorado Springs. I asked him if his research had determined the blood type of Jesus. He said that the body that had been wrapped in the shroud contained type AB.

These pieces of evidence to the history and the meaning of the Eucharist were not the most interesting piece of information I found intriguing. The study of blood types has noted that blood types are regionalized throughout the earth, and that AB was extremely rare in the Middle East until the 9th century.

Some further interesting information about the Shroud is the evidence that the Shroud was likely the tablecloth used at the last Supper. Some of the stains on the cloth have been identified as specific foods such as almonds. The theory about the Shroud includes that Joseph needed to find a burial cloth for Jesus on a Sabbath when most businesses were closed. He knew just where to obtain a cloth that was the right size; a most interesting coincidence.

I was curious listening to Dr. Jackson and his detailed research with imaging, so I asked; “How tall was Jesus”? The answer: 5’10-1/2”. I am impressed with the professionalism of Dr. Jackson in that he approaches nothing as “proof”, but simply as supporting evidence.

The other question that Dr. Jackson proffers to the audience was, “What did John see when he entered the empty tomb, and exclaimed ‘Now I believe’? Many people might assume that seeing an empty tomb was the prompt for the statement. But, the evidence is that John saw the wrappings on the table along with the two ties that bound the neck and feet still attached to the wrappings. A simple act of body snatching would have taken everything intact, and not waste time to reassemble the wrappings.

Dr. Jackson also discovered that the two ties around the neck and feet were strips cut from the Shroud. The original dimensions of the Shroud were 2X8 cubits which was long enough to fully encircle the body lengthwise.

A permanent exhibit is now located at St. Gabriel’s in Colorado Springs.