

**Case Report**

Reality or Fiction of the “Real Presence” of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist?

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Abstract

We investigated the possible case of a “bleeding host” found at the Franciscan Church of Schwarz, Tyrol, in 2016. Five years after initial discovery of the “bleeding host” by the Franciscan friars, we discovered bacterial and fungal contamination of the host (wafer), but no solid proof of mammalian tissue was evidenced by histopathology in 2021. Unfortunately, subsequent DNA-analysis failed due to limited material made available by the friars who put the remainder of the “bleeding host” into a monstrance placed in the tabernacle at the high altar of the church. In the very same part of the province Tyrol, Austria, in Fiecht, a similar case of a “bleeding Eucharistic Miracle” was already Catholic Church-approved in 1310 - and this one is still venerated by pilgrims coming from around the world.

Keywords: Eucharist, Eucharistic Miracle, Histopathology, Tyrol, Austria

Introduction

Recently, Pope Francis has beatified Carlo Acutis (1991-2006) [1] from the Diocese of Milan, Italy, who died because of acute promyelocytic leukemia at the age of 15 years [2]. The beatification took place at the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, Italy, on the 10th of October 2020, the town of Saint Francis of Assisi [3]. Who is one of the most well-known Saints of the Catholic Church. As did his beloved Saint Francis, the Blessed Carlo Acutis was most excited about the Holy Eucharist. Carlo Acutis at his youth especially was interested in the Church-approved Eucharistic Miracles that took place throughout the ages in various countries of

the world creating a virtual plate form on Eucharistic Miracles [4]. Carlo Acutis called the Holy Eucharist “My Highway to Heaven - the more Eucharist we receive, the more we will become like Jesus so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of heaven” [5] which reflects basically Saint John Paul II’s teaching [6]. “Highway to Heaven”? Hence, is there really a man behind the physical appearances of bread and wine when substantially transformed by a clerical rite? Most Christian churches believe that Christ is really made manifest in the Eucharist by citing the rite and deem this as a “Holy Mystery”, a “Eucharistic Miracle” by itself, or the “Mystery of Faith” as in the Catholic Church [7]. Practically, the institution of the Eucharist happened at the Last Supper and since then the Church has celebrated, this event “until He comes again” (1 Cor 11-24). Catholic Church-approved Eucharistic Miracles

represent an appreciation of the “Real Presence of Jesus Christ, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity”, in the Holy Eucharist [8]. In the celebration of the Eucharist, by means of the Eucharistic Prayer, the actual substance of the bread and wine are changed substantially into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and this substantial change is called “transubstantiation”, a philosophical terminology that defines the presence of Jesus for the Roman Catholic Church instituted at the Council of Trent 1551 [8] which is widely not accepted in its essence by non-Catholic Christian denominations. However, the core reality in Saint Thomas Aquinas teaching is the substantial change and not its visual appearances, which are still bread and wine after consecration by a priest [9]. Above this, however, there seem to exist “extraordinary” Eucharistic Miracles in which bread and wine are altered (“transubstantiated”) into the accidents of body and blood, and which seem to be rather evidenced for believers than unbelievers in order to build up and strengthen the faith, - according to Saint Thomas Aquinas “extraordinary Eucharistic Miracles”. Verification of such “extraordinary Eucharistic Miracles” depends on special commissions investigating whether such private revelations are worthy of belief [10]. In our secularized world, about 75 percent of the Catholic Faith people do not believe in the “Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist” according to a recent citation by Bishop Robert Baron, though the Eucharist presents the inner core of the Church [11]. Eucharistic Miracles have been reported in various Christian churches and such miracles consist of scientifically unexplainable phenomena. Most commonly, reports exist on hosts that were “visibly bleeding” such as the one in Fiecht, Tyrol, Austria, in 1310 [12], in Bolsena, Italy, in 1263 [13] and more recently in Buenos Aires, Argentina [14] Only a few cases report that hosts were transformed into human flesh such as in the 8th century in Lanciano, Italy [15]. Other examples include hosts surviving when had being been thrown into fire [16], hosts preserved extremely long such as for hundreds of years as it happened with the Hosts of Siena [17], hosts levitating such as described for a host in Amsterdam [18] or hosts sustaining faithful people for decades (such as the Brazilian Servant of God Floripes Dornellas de Jesus [19] Marthe Robin from Portugal [20] or Teresa Neumann, Germany [21]. Other phenomena include that believers receive the Holy Eucharist from heavenly Angels (Saint Faustina from Cracow, Poland [22] or Blessed Lucia from Fatima, Portugal [23], or that consecrated hosts saved from war and persecutors (Saint Clare of Assisi [24]. Following numerous Eucharistic miracles, including the bleeding Eucharist of Bolsena in (probably) 1263 [13] the Feast of the Holy Sacrament (i.e. Fiest “Corpus Christi”) was promoted to the Church by Pope Urban IV in 1264 [25] on the basis of extensive theological and philosophical work presented by Saint Thomas Aquinas, only then instituted later by the Council of Trient [8], and presented to the universal Church as the “Real Presence” of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist,

the very essence of Christianity. At the province of Tyrol, Austria, Fiecht, Austria, a Eucharistic miracle was observed in 1310 [12]. During a Eucharistic celebration at the monastery church, a priest doubting the “Real Presence of Jesus” in the consecrated elements experienced that the wine changed into blood, began to boil and overflow out of the chalice. The phenomenon was witnessed by numerous of people including the abbot of the monastery and the monks. Unable to drink all the blood, the remainder of the blood was placed in a vessel in the main altar`s tabernacle. After 170 years, in 1480, the blood was “still fresh as flowing from a wound” according to the chronicler of those days and the adoration of the “Precious Blood” was encouraged, as the miracle was declared authentic by the Catholic Church. The relic of this “Precious Blood” is still preserved and venerated in the church of the monastery at Fiecht, Tyrol, Austria. Here we investigated the case of a possible new “extraordinary Eucharistic Miracle” in the province of Tyrol, Schwaz, Austria, near Fiecht, which took place in 2016, which most likely is composed of bacterial and fungal contamination.

Case Report

At the Franciscan Church in Schwaz, Tyrol, three monks give witness to a case of “bleeding” of a host, which was found in the church (affidavits in the Supplements 1-3). In summary, a host was found on the ground under the gallery of the Franciscan church by a Holy Mass-visiting woman on Saturday, April 16, 2016. She handled the host over to one of the monks, and, as usual, the host was then put for being dissolved into a so-called “vasculum”, that is a tiny glass jar, which was placed into the tabernacle at the high altar next to the consecrated hosts. It was not clear if the host under discussion was a consecrated host or not. The monks mentioned that it was not a “bread host” which they are using for the Eucharistic celebration but a type “oblate host”. Fourteen days later on May 1, 2016, one of the monks serving at the altar, wanted to throw the dissolved host behind the altar, which is the usual praxis (also) with consecrated hosts once they are dissolved. The three monks witness that the host had become partly red, looking like a “bleeding host”. The colour of the host had then turned partly into “brown” over the last five years when we scientists were involved in 2020 in order to investigate the essence of this “bleeding” host. First inspections done by a local medical practitioner in 2016 had stimulated believe in the supernatural transformation of the host into “blood” among the monks. According to the Fathers, involved permission of doing scientific investigation with the host was obtained by the Superior of the Austrian Franciscan Order, Fr. Dr. Fritz Wenigwieser, Salzburg. After a first visit to the monastery to view the “bleeding host” by IV in March 2020, CLF & IV on September 15, 2020 together took the first sterile probe for bacterial and other microorganism investigation. Additional probes were taken for pathohistological examination and DNA analyses by BZ

in February and May 10, 2021. For genetic analysis and a second opinion, material was investigated at the University of Vienna by LK in 2021. The remainder material of the host was finally put into a monstrance by the friars in May 2021. No further detailed genetic analysis could be performed with the limited material of the host made available by the monks.

Methods and Results

Visual Presentation of the Host

Over the years, several images were taken repeatedly by the Franciscan friars, some also by the authors. Here are examples of the macroscopic appearance of the host over the years 2016-2021. Macroscopically, the host was incorporated in brown-jelly based clumps. Macroscopy showed a soft cohesive conglomerate of different colours from greyish to black to brown to dark red areas. No clearly diagnostic tissue on gross examination could be identified. No remnants of a consecrated wafer were detectable (Figure 1).

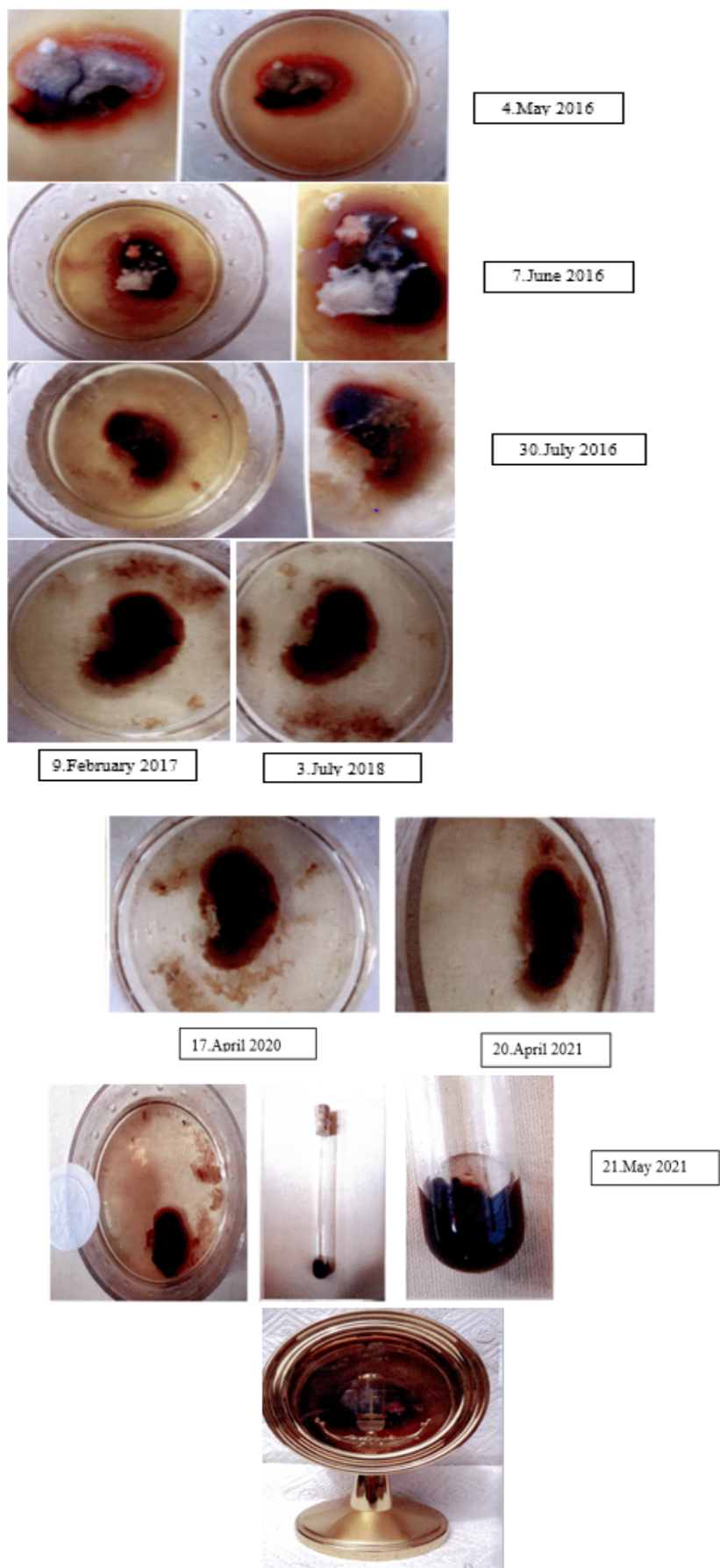


Figure 1: Photographs of the Host over the years 2016-2021.

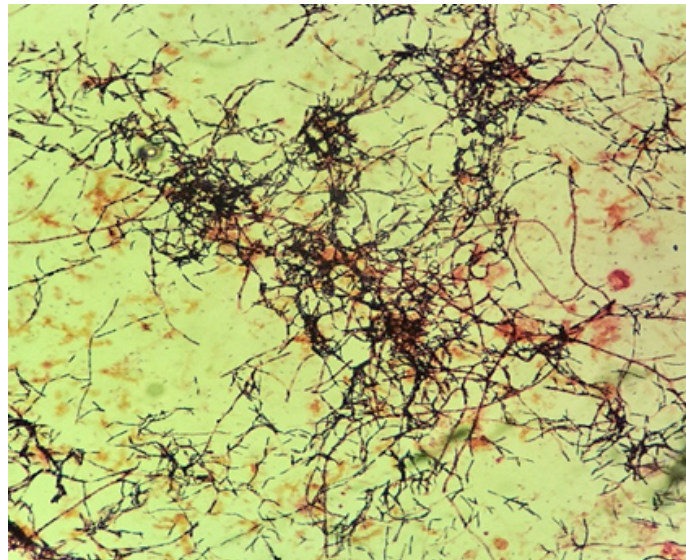


Figure 2: Matrix-assisted laser desorption ionization-time of flight mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS).

Bacterial and Microorganism Examination

The host was stored in the “vasculum” that had been put into the tabernacle at the high altar. Samples (n=7) such as fluids and swabs were taken for direct microscopy and culture. Specimens were plated on 5% sheep blood Columbia agar (Heipha, Eppelheim, Germany) and Scheduler’s agar (Oxoid, Basingstoke, United Kingdom) and incubated at 30° and 37°C, in aerobic and anaerobic atmospheres for 48 hours. Additionally, specimens were inoculated into brain heart infusion broth (Mast Group, Merseyside, United Kingdom) and thioglycolate broth (Becton Dickinson, Heidelberg, Germany) at 37°C for 7 days. Microbial identification was performed with matrix assisted laser desorption ionization-time of flight mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS). Microscopy (gram staining) revealed gram-positive rods, associated with mixed bacterial flora (Figure 2). All samples were culture-positive with *Bacillus flexus*, *Hydrogenophaga pseudoflava*, *Arthrobacter pascens* and *Pseudarthrobacter sulfonivorans* being detected.

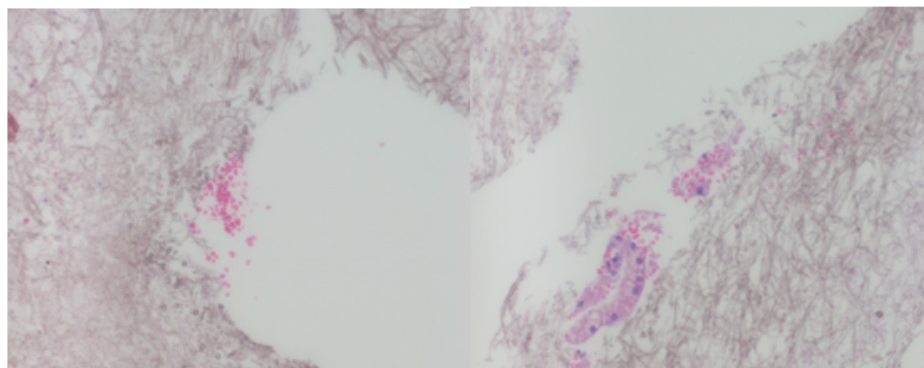


Figure 3: Histopathology showing eosinophilic roundish structures (right) still detectable after five years in serial cuttings. These structures may represent degenerated erythrocytes as erythrocytes rupture in water, and a consecrated wafer is unleavened bread and only isotonic saline solution can avoid the rupture of erythrocytes. Furthermore, epithelial structures were also found (left).

Gross and Pathohistological Examination-Method and Results

The specimen was taken under sterile conditions and fixed in formaldehyde 4%-buffered solution. The specimen was dissected and processed in 2 paraffin embedded blocks. A hematoxylin eosin stain [26], a Grocott's methen-amine silver stain [27] and a Perjud Acid Schiff stain [28] from each block were performed. The prepared slides showed myriades of hyphae and spores, some of them pigmented. Pigmented forms showed slender hyphae and many spores, whereas unpigmented fungi showed plump hyphae and right-angled branching. The former suspicious of *Aspergillus niger*, the latter of *Absidia*, *Mucor* or *Rhizopus* (Figure 3). At the periphery of the mycelium and focal within the mycelium there were eosinophilic roundish structures approximately 4 to 5 µm in size and on one point there was a group of cells of unknown origin as well as again those eosinophilic roundish structures, most likely fungal spores (Figure 3). The epithelial cells showed small monomorphic basal located nuclei and faint eosinophilic cytoplasm.

Gross check and Genetic Analysis

For further evaluation, a specimen of the host was prepared for genetic analysis. Unfortunately, because of limited material the performed automated DNA-extraction from the micro-dissected epithelial cells failed. The Franciscan fathers neglected to provide further material of the host as the rest of the host had already been put into a monstrance in May 2021.

Discussion

In summary, our case represents an investigation into an alleged “Eucharistic miracle” that occurred in 2016 at the Franciscan Church in Schwaz, Tyrol, Austria, which is based on presence of fungal and bacterial tissue with some questionable epithelial cells in the host which are still suspected five years after the “bleeding event” was first observed by the Franciscan friars in 2016-despite of the fact that nothing has been attempted to preserve the bleeding host. Subsequent DNA analysis failed due to limited tissue made available by the friars. Furthermore, epithelial cell streams were found in the host. In a total, about 150 cases of “Eucharistic Miracles” have been approved by different Christian Churches happening worldwide over centuries. “Bleeding miracles” are not restricted to Christian faith people but have also been visualized centuries before Christ and are contributed nowadays to the presence of certain bacteria colonies [29]. Generally speaking, In ancient times no specific techniques were available and only the visual interpretation was taken for granted. Visual evidence was usually evidenced by the priest consecrating the host or by churchgoers witnessing when seeing a “bleeding host” which represent the type of “Eucharistic Miracles” most

frequently reported over centuries. Now in our century, several “Eucharistic Miracles” have been investigated more precisely by appropriate modern scientific means.

The Type of “Bleeding Eucharists”

According to the legend, a Bohemian priest who doubted the doctrine of transubstantiation when celebrating Holy Mass at Bolsena experienced bleeding of the bread of the Eucharist. The blood fell onto the altar linen and the face of Jesus appeared with the blood. This miracle took place in 1263 [14] and led to the institution of the “Feast of Corpus Christi” by Pope Urban IV in 1264 [25]. Our observation of a “bleeding host” is not that spectacular as postulated for the Bolsena Eucharistic Miracle observed about 800 years ago. Bacteria that can colonize flour/bread/wafer and give it red colour, sometimes even resembling blood streams, have been discussed to underly the so-called bleeding event. For example, because of its red pigmentation, caused by expression of the dye prodigiosin, and its ability to grow on bread, *Serratia marcescens* [29] has been evoked as a naturalistic explanation of medieval accounts of the “miraculous” appearance of blood on the corporal of Bolsena [30]. In fact, five years after the initial visualisation of our “bleeding host” by the friars we also found similar bacterial colonies. Due to its abundant presence in the environment, and its preference for damp conditions, *Serratia marcescens* is commonly found growing in bathrooms (especially on tile grout, shower corners, toilet water lines, and basins), where it manifests as a pink, pink-orange, or orange discoloration and slimy film feeding off phosphorus-containing materials or fatty substances such as soap and shampoo residue. *Serratia marcescens* may also be found in environments such as dirt and the sub gingival biofilm of teeth. Due to this, and because *Serratia marcescens* produces a reddish-orange tripyrrole dye called prodigiosin, it may cause staining of the teeth. The condition in the vasculum the friars had placed the host under discussion fairly presents an ideal condition for growth of such bacteria colonies that may show up even in the type of a cross [31]. There are a few observations where such bacteria or fungi are not likely to account for Eucharistic Miracles showing up the face of Jesus such as in the Eucharistic Miracle reported for Chirattakonam, Trivandrum, India [32]. In recent years, the Church also investigated another “bleeding host” observed in the Church Saint Francis Xavier in Kearns, a suburb of Salt Lake City, Utah. The tiny wafer began to “bleed” turning red for some reason after it was placed in water by a priest. The wafer, which normally dissolves in water, was still around after three days and had turned a reddish colour. It had developed a red colour, and parishioners said the host appeared to be bleeding. After an investigation, the Diocese of Salt Lake City concluded that the host was not miraculously bleeding, but had red bread mold [33]. The statement said “the observed change in the host could be satisfactorily and conclusively explained by natural causes, namely the growth of

what is commonly known as “red bread mold,” or red bacteria, most likely *Neurospora crassa* or *Serratia marcescens* [34]”.

In 2011, a similar so-called “Eucharistic miracle” was reported at the St. Augustine Catholic Church in St Paul South, Minnesota. During a church service, the host was placed in water after it was accidentally dropped on the floor. It was supposed to dissolve in the water. Not only did it not dissolve, it has turned red. It was later revealed that the wafer changed color due to a fungus and not Jesus [35]. In contrast, despite of contamination found in the Eucharistic Miracle of Venezuela [36] also blood cells with the group AB were found matching with reports on the Shroud of Turin [37] and in the Host Lanciano [15]. Another recent example is the bleeding host of Aalst, Flanders, Belgium. In 2016, a 200 years old Eucharistic host in a monstrance suddenly showed blood red colour in the presence of several witnesses. Scientific colleagues investigated the “bleeding host” and suggested that colour occurred by *Serratia marcescens*, *Monilia sitophila* or *Oidium* [38]. The miracle of the blood of Saint Januarius [39], patron Saint of Naples, was being called into question. Saint Januarius was martyred by Emperor Diocletian in 305AD. His blood, saved by one Eusebia at the time of his death, was discovered to miraculously liquified and solidify in meaningful ways. According to one elegy, the color, volume, texture and activity of the blood could presage war, death, rain, plagues, crop failure - and even positive events (when it froths). After all, archaeologists had found agave wine and scented oils that looked like blood. Garlaschelli et al, offer a hypothesis: “... the very act of handling the reliquary, repeatedly turning it upside down to check its state, might provide the necessary mechanical stress to induce the liquefaction” [40]. Our “bleeding host” over five years never composed and no special attempt was done to preserve the host. In the year 2016 the host under investigation was put in a water-filled vasculum. Therefore, from the scientific point of view there was the need of further analysis to investigate the cellular and molecular nature assure if the eosinophilic elements are 100 percent erythrocytes and to further assign the epithelial cells found in the host as well. Unfortunately, because of limited cellular material made available by the friars these examinations failed, so did the performed automated DNA-extraction from the micro-dissected epithelial cells.

The “Flesh Types” of Eucharistic Miracles

Whereas the visual appearance of the host bleeding can be attributed to the presence of bacteria similar to the ones reported for other miracles, the presence of epithelial cell streams cannot be neglected. The Italian cardiologist Franco Serafini [41] describes for five Eucharistic miracles that were Catholic Church-approved the presence of heart muscle tissue. In addition, various scientists from a broad range of experts including haematologists, oncologists, neurologists, geneticists, molecular biologists were involved and verified the presence of human DNA in the

Eucharistic samples, the identical blood group AB standing for a contemporary man, and from the statistical fortress from the area of the Middle East. The rare type of Eucharistic Miracle is where the Eucharist becomes human flesh as in the miracle of Lanciano, which is believed to have occurred in the 8th century [15]. A Brazilian priest doubted the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist when saying the words of consecration. The host all of a sudden turned into the form of a heart, the blood coagulated into five irregularly shaped globules. Several scientific investigations by established scientists over years repeatedly evidenced human heart tissue and human blood from the group AB. In 1996, in the Parish of Santa Maria of Buenos Aires, Argentina, a Eucharistic Miracle occurred that was Church-approved after extensive scientific studies under former Archbishop Bergoglio, now Pope Francis [14]. Human DNA, white blood cells and human skin most probably presenting heart muscle cells were approved, quite similar to the Eucharistic Miracles found 2006 in Tixla, Mexico [42], 2008 in Sokolka, Poland [43] and 2013 in Legnica, Poland [44], all three also Church-approved. Currently, several “new” Eucharistic Miracles are under discussion. The individual reports on Eucharistic Miracles seem to be endless, however. Among these, a Eucharistic Miracle has been postulated that happened in the church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Zapotlanejo, Jalisco, Mexico, by church-goers who recorded the event on video [45]. In this case, a consecrated Eucharistic wafer kept in a vessel in a monstrance during adoration has been palpating like a human beating heart. May God use methods of the twenty-first century to show how our faith can be proven through Eucharistic Miracles with scientific precision? Does the appearance of “extraordinary Eucharistic Miracles” have any sense at all when elaborating the theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas? What sense does it have if we know the blood group of a bleeding host, and would this really represent the person Jesus when he still was on Earth? or the DNA composition of his body cells on Earth? Is the individual Eucharistic interaction not with the resurrected Jesus instead of the earthly one?. The discussion on the “Real Presence of Jesus Christ” in the consecrated host brings us to Jesus’s declaration, after he had worked the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes at the mountain of Capernaum, when he said “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6, 5). The two miracle events reveal that nature is subject to Jesus and that material boundaries are no constraint upon Jesus. John relates Jesus’ multiplication of the loaves and Jesus walking on the water immediately before we see the bread and wine becoming His flesh and His blood. Thus, Jesus Himself first speaks about His “Real Presence in the Eucharist”, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day“. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real

drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them (John 6: 53-56)“. Jesus reassures „The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” (John 6:63) - but many of his disciples abandoned him as with their materialistic mind-set they could not understand him (John 6:66).

Furthermore, the Risen Christ was hardly recognized by even his closer disciples but was only realized when breaking the bread such as with the two disciples from Emmaus after his resurrection ((Luke 24:31), and this was an “un-bloody” situation which resulted in a „heart feeling“ by the disciples. Jesus illustrates that he is no longer with them as he once was on earth, but will now remain with them sacramentally in the form of the Eucharist. He has demonstrated the Eucharistic formula for the disciples starting with the Last Supper and the disciples continued this by devoting themselves “to the breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42) until today. Only at the Council of Trent [8] the doctrine of Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist was reaffirmed in precise language. „Transubstantiation“is ultimately the term to define what happens in the mystical sacrament of the Eucharist. Under the veiled appearance of bread and wine “the whole of Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained”. Jesus becomes spiritual food, and “medicine of immortality”. Receiving Holy Communion thus brings the believer into intimate union with Christ. During the COVID pandemic Pope Francis on March 27, 2020 [46] alone in the lockdown went into Saint Peter’s basilica and prayed in front of the Holy Sacrament, Jesus still present in the pandemic. Jesus claims to share his divine life in the Holy Eucharist, his saving power through His death and resurrection. The Eucharist itself is the mysterious miracle, the “Highway to Heaven” according to Beato Carlo Acutis [5], the “Medicine of Immortality” according to Saint Ignatius of Antioch [47]. Still, the debate upon „extraordinary Eucharistic Miracles“may help us to go beyond the visible and the perceptible. A miracle should not have an explanation by scientific facts or reasoning. Somehow, unexplainable Eucharistic Miracles represent a humble reminder of the very essence of the Eucharist, regardless of the discussion around them, especially in our age where we want to explain everything. Finally, we want to mention one further aspect when discussing on the “Real Presence” of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic host. This regards the numerous Church-approved apparitions of the Virgin Mary. In terms of the Holy Eucharist we acknowledge the third apparition of the Angel of Peace at Fatima and Beato Francisco’s motions [48]. In the description, Beato Francisco had accepted a mystic communion similar to the type of communion many of Catholics received during the COVID crises - remembering Pope Francis’ Prayer [49]. The one receives a mystic communion, another a communion in form of a sacramentally consecrated real wafer. It is known that in the province of Tyrol there might be more churches and crosses placed on the tops of the mountains than in other countries, and people talk of the “Holy Land of Tyrol”. On the Feast of the Holy

Eucharist, traditionally the Eucharist is taken in procession along the streets in almost all parts of Tyrol along with traditional folk groups, prayers and blessings. In former times, the Powerful such as the Emperor Franz Joseph went along behind the Holy Eucharist, as still does the Governor of Tyrol with the local bishop and a bunch of people walking on the streets, with them, Jesus hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist. Nowadays, the modern TV show “The Chosen” produced by Angel Studios with its director Dallas Jenkins and main actor Jonathan Roumie [50] has gained attraction and interested millions of Christians around the globe. Over more than 40 years the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Medjugorje, Bosna-Herzegovina [51], though not yet Church-approved, have pointed to the importance of the Holy Eucharist repeatedly. Eucharistic congresses are organized for revival [52], and last but not least the increased evidence of supernatural signs and wonders such [53] in various Christian churches are in sharp opposition to the ongoing secularization, God-less education of our children, and demonstrate the very need - if not to say, cry to God, to help against pandemics, wars or natural catastrophes.

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Supplement 1 (translation from German into English by the authors)

Affidavit of Brother Petrus Maria Rhomberg

Monk Petrus was born October 8, 1977 in Imst, Tyrol. He was working as a tiler before he joined the Franciscan order in 2000. Later he was trained in tailoring and served at the altar at the monastery in Schwaz, Tyrol, until 2021.

Change of the Eucharist in Water

On Saturday, the 16th of April 2016, the guardian Father Jakob handed over to me a host, which a woman was said to have given to him. I should dissolve the host in water. Thus, I put the host into the vasculum and left it there next to the tabernacle. Two weeks later, when after the Holy Mass I was about to close with the key the tabernacle, I realized that the host had not yet been dissolved in the water but had turned a little red. Also around the host it was a little bit red. Since Father Jakob was not in the immediate vicinity, I showed the vasculum immediately to Father Gotthard who was in the sacristy.

Brother Petrus Maria Rhomberg Schwaz, on July 20, 2021 (signed)

Supplement 2 (translation from German into English by the authors)

Affidavit of Father Gotthard Maria Thöny

Monk Father Gotthard was born December 25, 1933, in Taxenbach, Salzburg. After his training as locksmith, he studied Catholic Theology in Stams and Schwaz, Tyrol, being ordained to priesthood on September 12, 1970. Later Father Gotthard served as catholic priest in Villach, Carinthia, in Salzburg and then in the Franciscan monastery in Telfs, Tyrol. Since 2003 he is serving at the Franciscan monastery in Schwaz, Tyrol.

Testimony of the Eucharistic Miracle in the Franciscan Church in Schwaz, Tyrol on April 16, 2016

After the mass on April 16, 2016, a woman enters the sacristy and handles a host over to Father Jakob, which she claims to have found on the ground at the back part of the church. Father Jakob handles the host over to Brother Petrus so that he could place it in a vasculum. The vasculum is a glass jar with water standing near to the tabernacle in which the host could dissolve and then be poured out behind the altar. Fourteen days later, on May 1, 2016,

after the Holy Mass, Brother Petrus looks after the host to find out if it has already been dissolved, and he is surprised at what he sees! He comes into the sacristy and asks me to look into the vasculum. I see the half-dissolved host in the vasculum and underneath something like blood! My first reaction in thought was: “Jesus, You give us this sign of your presence in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar!” The second thought was, “What’s in store for us?” - From Jesus’ s first announcement about this mystery in Capernaum (Joh.6/51ff) until today, it was the separation of the spirits that people took offense at. We informed Father Jakob, who in turn informed Father Oliver, the Provincial. Father Oliver has determined to keep it a secret until we have a bishop. In order to help the upcoming bishop, I kept taking photos with my cell phone and camera at intervals. On May 21, 2021, Father Jakob and I took the blood from the vasculum, which had turned into brown in the meanwhile, put it into a small glass tube and this in a small monstrance, which is now kept in the tabernacle!

My testimony, Schwaz on May 22, 2021, Brother Gotthard M. Thöny OFm (signed)

Supplement 3 (translation from German into English by the authors)

Affidavit of Father Jakob Wegscheider, (Schwaz, July 21, 2021)

Father Jakob was born on September 9, 1964, in Grinzens, North Tyrol. His original profession was in restauration. On September 19, 1993, he joined the Franciscan Order, which was followed by the study of Catholic Theology in Salzburg, Austria. He was ordained as Catholic Priest on June 23, 2002. Then Father Jakob served in Lienz, East Tyrol, later as Guardian there, and was ordained as Guardian again in 2014 at the Monastery in Schwaz. In 2021 he was called to Brixen, South Tyrol, also as Guardian again.

Host Changes Into Blood Red Substance

As far as I can remember, it was Saturday, April 16, that a woman I didn’t know came into the sacristy after Holy Mass and handed over to me a host, which the woman claimed she had found in the back part of our church (under the empore) lying on the ground. It was a host in the form of a wafer and not, as used with us a host made of bread!

I, Father Jakob, then asked Brother Petrus to put the host into the vasculum (which is a jar with water) that was, or is, next to the tabernacle at the high altar.

On Sunday, May 1, after Holy Mass (it was Pentecost Sunday), Brother Petrus taking the key from the tabernacle he noticed that the water in the vasculum was colored reddish. To be sure, he lifted the metal lid of the vasculum to see if the host had been dissolved in the meantime. Brother Petrus saw that the host was not completely dissolved, but was amazed to see that a bright red substance had formed around the host and a viscous blood-red sub-

stance under the host at the bottom of the vasculum had been built.

Brother Petrus then informed Father Gotthard, who was still in the sacristy, and asked him - as a second eye witness, so to speak - to get an idea of the extraordinary sight of the host in the vasculum. Deeply affected by what was shown, the first thought that came to Father Gotthard was: “You, o Jesus, give us this great sign of your presence in the most Holy Sacrament of the altar!” Father Gotthard then transferred the vasculum from the church to the Bonaventura Chapel (side chapel in the cloister) and took the first photo for proof of evidence. Then he put the vasculum in the tabernacle of the Bonaventura chapel.

On the next day, Father Gotthard and Brother Petrus reported again how they had found the host that had partially turned to blood the day before. (I wasn’t present, since I had held the “40-hour prayer” over Pentecost in the Parish of Reith, in the Alpbachtal. I then informed our Provincial Father Oliver and reported to him by telephone about this wondrous event in our monastery. He instructed me to transfer the vasculum to a tabernacle on the first floor of our monastery, to the so-called winter oratory, and to maintain silence among the other brothers for the time being. Since I was going to Rome on Tuesday the upcoming week (I could play in a music band in a Papal audience) and would only return Friday evening the Provincial and I agreed that we would think over further steps (notice to the diocese administrator Magister Fr. Jakob Bürgler) after my return from Rome (after the Feast of Corpus Christi). Finally, our Provincial decided to wait and entrust the future diocesan bishop of Innsbruck with the further procedure and investigation of the phenomenon.

Further Development: In February 2018 I had the opportunity to meet our then newly consecrated Bishop Magister Hermann Glettler at the Day of “Consecrated Life” in Wilten Abbey. I informed our bishop about what was happening here in the Franciscan Church in Schwaz. I also submitted my report to him and asked him to come in for an on-site inspection. Our Bishop then also accepted this and was able to form his own picture of the host that had been transformed into a red substance. Our bishop also promised to conduct an investigation. Since, despite repeated reminders to initiate an investigation, nothing was done by the diocese, Father Gotthard and I became active ourselves. Without an official order, Univ. Prof. Dr. Irene Virgolini from the University Clinic of Nuclear Medicine in Innsbruck was contacted. In turn, she was able to persuade Prof. Cornelia Lass-Flörl to carry out an examination of the water in which the jelly-like substance had been located since 2016. This finding speaks of bacterial contamination of the host. However, no sample was taken of the jelly-like substance and therefore not examined. Therefore, subsequently, Dr. Bettina Zelger was appointed with taking samples from the jelly-like mass and examining these. These laboratory works are currently ongoing and the samples are scheduled for further testing.