

A statute with glowing eyes – two statutes in fact. One of Mary and one of Jesus – made of stone but with eyes aglow, they say – eyes aglow and Mary's heart aglow.

People gather.

I read about it in the Plain Dealer this week there was a picture of this statute of Mary in Campbell, Ohio – recently a thousand people gathered to see a sign from God. Some gather in faith – certain they will see. More gather in hope – wanting to see. Some gather in skepticism – wanting to prove that no one can see.

And if they see what will it mean? That God can communicate with this world? That Mary is a go-between for God and humans? Or will it mean whatever people want it to mean?

What about you? Would you drive to Campbell to see such a sign? Would you encounter God there?

A piece of bread, a taste of wine.

Will God suddenly appear in these?

Hear Jesus' words: Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day, for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.

How Jesus does not mention bread & wine, his death for you given to you

Jesus speaks of consuming his flesh and blood as very powerful. Those who eat and drink his flesh and blood have eternal life, will be raised up, and are promised that Jesus will dwell in them and they in him.

You would think if all of that is happening that we would witness some change in the bread – in the wine. Maybe like the statute's eyes, a little glow – or a change in taste or in texture. But no – nothing but this word.

In the catechism Luther asks the question: How can eating and drinking do such a great thing? And then Luther answers: Eating and drinking certainly do not do it, but rather the words that are recorded: "given for you and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin. These words, when accompanied by the physical eating and drinking,

are the essential thing in the sacrament and whoever believes in these very words has what they declare and state, namely the forgiveness of sin.

Luther like to make clear that God can be anywhere but that we should seek God where God has promised to be present for our good. God could be in the glow of a statue's eyes or in a sunset or in a baby's smile – but Christ has promised to be present for you in this bread and in this cup. His flesh and his blood – to be received by faith.

Jesus enters you in bread and wine – he enters every cell of your body as the bread and wine are digested and are carried through the blood to nourish you. He abides in you – has become a part of you. He gives you faith to abide in him.

at what some hope is a miracle
begin talking about a variable - type of stone glowing
The real miracle that happen in this world and in your life are not to be found in the astounding and the unexplainable but the real ~~miracle~~ ^{miracles} happens in the common and everyday living by faith that you do. Christ in you – being faithful to your friends and neighbors and family – forgiving those who sin against you – sharing with those who have need – paying your taxes - giving to the church - voting – encouraging better government – Christ in you entering into every part of this world where you are – that you touch – Christ in you. Now to your neighbor Christ is no more visible in you that in this bread and in this wine. But though Christ many not appear as a glow on your face – when through faith the love of Christ shines through your deeds and your words Christ has been truly present and we all are blessed.

I think of a conversation I had this week. A man told me how every morning he prayed that he would be like Jesus in all his dealings.

And every morning when he arrived at work he prayed the same prayer again.

I always thought he was just a good guy, naturally a fine man. But as he spoke to me he said, "So many times I caught myself not being like Jesus but praying helped change me." I thought I was just seeing him – when all the while it was Christ in him I saw.

Bread and wine – Christ's flesh and blood. He will enter you this day – and abide in you and you will have life, eternal life – and you will be his life in this world now, and he will give you life in God's presence forever.

Amen.