

As a young kid, I used to love putting models together --- boats, cars, and especially airplanes.

They were really popular when I was a kid.

I used to buy them with my hard earned money from mowing lawns and shoveling snow for my neighbors.

They were sold all over the place, in all sorts of stores.

I always liked taking things a part and having to figure things out, so putting models together was a perfect activity for me and I spent a lot of time doing that.

I don't hear much models anymore, so I'm guessing that they are not as popular as they once were.

Maybe it had something to do with the glue being bad for you. I'm really not sure.

But each time I began a model I remember having the same reaction.

I would tear the plastic off the box, take off the cover, and would be amazed at the hundreds of tiny plastic pieces all lined up in rows waiting to be twisted off and glued together.

And I would usually just look at them and then stare at the box showing a great, completed picture of whatever I was trying to build, and I would think to myself, "How can that become THAT?"

There are lots of times I thought that as a child.

My dad loved to work with wood a lot and build things, and he still does.

He would start out with a pile of lumber and then he would cut, sand and nail together something.

I couldn't conceive how a pile of wood could be put together and emerge as something completely different.

To me, it was almost a kind of magic trick.

Or if I saw someone take a piece of paper and fold it up into some kind of elaborate airplane or animal, or saw someone grab a magic marker or a paint brush and quickly produce some sort artwork, I was always impressed, and a little jealous that I couldn't do the same.

For a minute, imagine if you'd never seen handwriting before, and then watched someone string together a bunch of meaningless shapes --- and then you were told that someone else could look at that and understand what it meant.

You probably wouldn't believe it.

That's just not possible.

I felt this way when I was in Japan years ago.

I watched somebody draw what to me looked like a house with smoke coming out of its chimney and then the guy writing this would tell me he just spelled my name.

I would look at that and say,,,,, how can that become THAT?

Nowhere does this question arise more often for me these days than each and every weekend as I gather with all of you around this sacred table.

And I know what you are all probably thinking --- that now I am going to talk about how the consecrated bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ because we are celebrating the most Holy Body & Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi.

"How does that become THAT?" we wonder.

And I imagine you expect me to talk about how this belief --- this Sacrament --- is central to our faith and to our identity --- it is the source of our lives as Catholics.

And I could do all of that --- for those things are all true, they are things we hold dearly, through faith.

Yet when I think of the question --- “How can that become THAT?” ---

I’m not thinking of how the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood.

That’s not it at all.

I’m actually thinking about . . . **us**.

Yes us, as in you and me.

The question “How can that become THAT?” makes me think of us ---

Because on this holy day and every single time Mass is celebrated, it is not only about what happens at this table.

It’s also about what happens TO us, FOR us, WITHIN us, and AMONG us as faithful Catholics.

I think what the question, “How can that become THAT?”

Is really asking, is how can WE become the Body of Christ,

How WE can be transformed,

How can we,, start out as one thing and become **something and someone** completely different when we walk out these doors.

That’s the miracle that God is trying to bring about.

The food he provides is his very self --- so that we all can become more like him.

We receive the Body of Christ in order **to become** the Body of Christ for a world in desperate need of Christ today.

But sometimes it is not that easy.

Because just like the way I would look **baffled at the pieces in the model box and not really be sure** how they could become something incredible,

we often look at ourselves in exactly the same way ---

we often look at ourselves and we are baffled.

We wonder how we could ever become something beautiful,

something more than we are today,

something life-giving,

a person full of love, mercy, compassion and kindness.

When we look at the pieces in the box --- we see our faults and failings, we see

our fears and doubts, our selfishness and suspicion,

and we often can't even picture the possibility that we can be much more,

we just can't see the finished product, the beautiful model.

But God does.

God knows and sees what is possible for each of us.

And it's beautiful.

And it's incredible.

And it's more than we can even imagine.

And so he gives himself to us as real food in the hope that we will be open to his grace ---

and allow ourselves to be transformed in something much more than we are today.

Do we believe these things?

Can we look at ourselves and not simply see our faults and limitations,

can we instead see the beautiful person God created each of us to be?

Can we, with faith, allow God to take,,, **what in our eyes looks like an un-built model**, and bring about real transformation --- real change --- bring us a little bit closer to seeing as He sees and loving as He loves.

How can that become THAT?

How can we become him?

Because God says so.

Because God wants it so.

Because God,,, see all the pieces of the model,,, and can put it together **for us**,

If we just let Him.