

# *The Eucharist in the Bible*

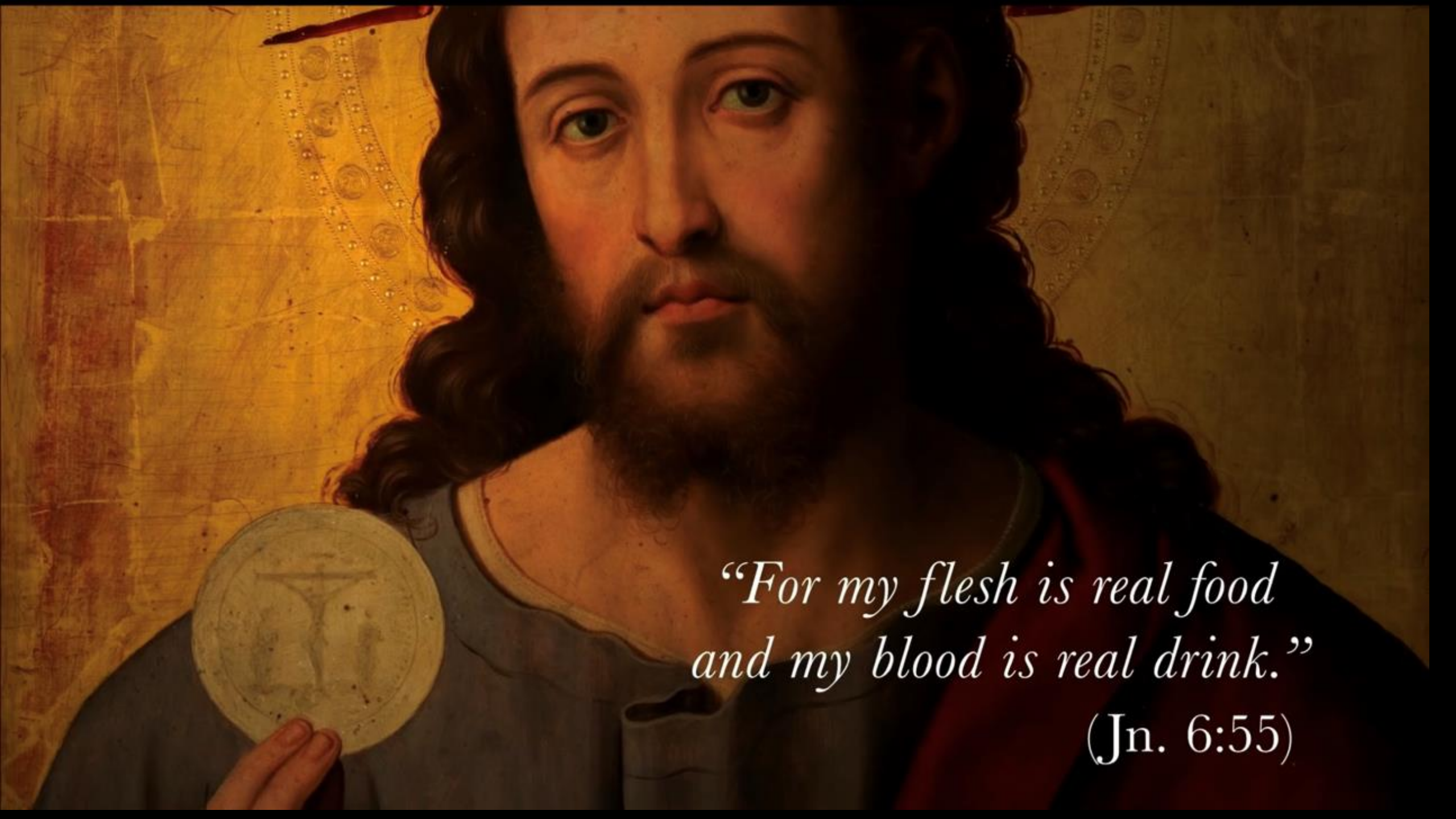
*The source and summit of the Christian life*





*Amen, amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.*



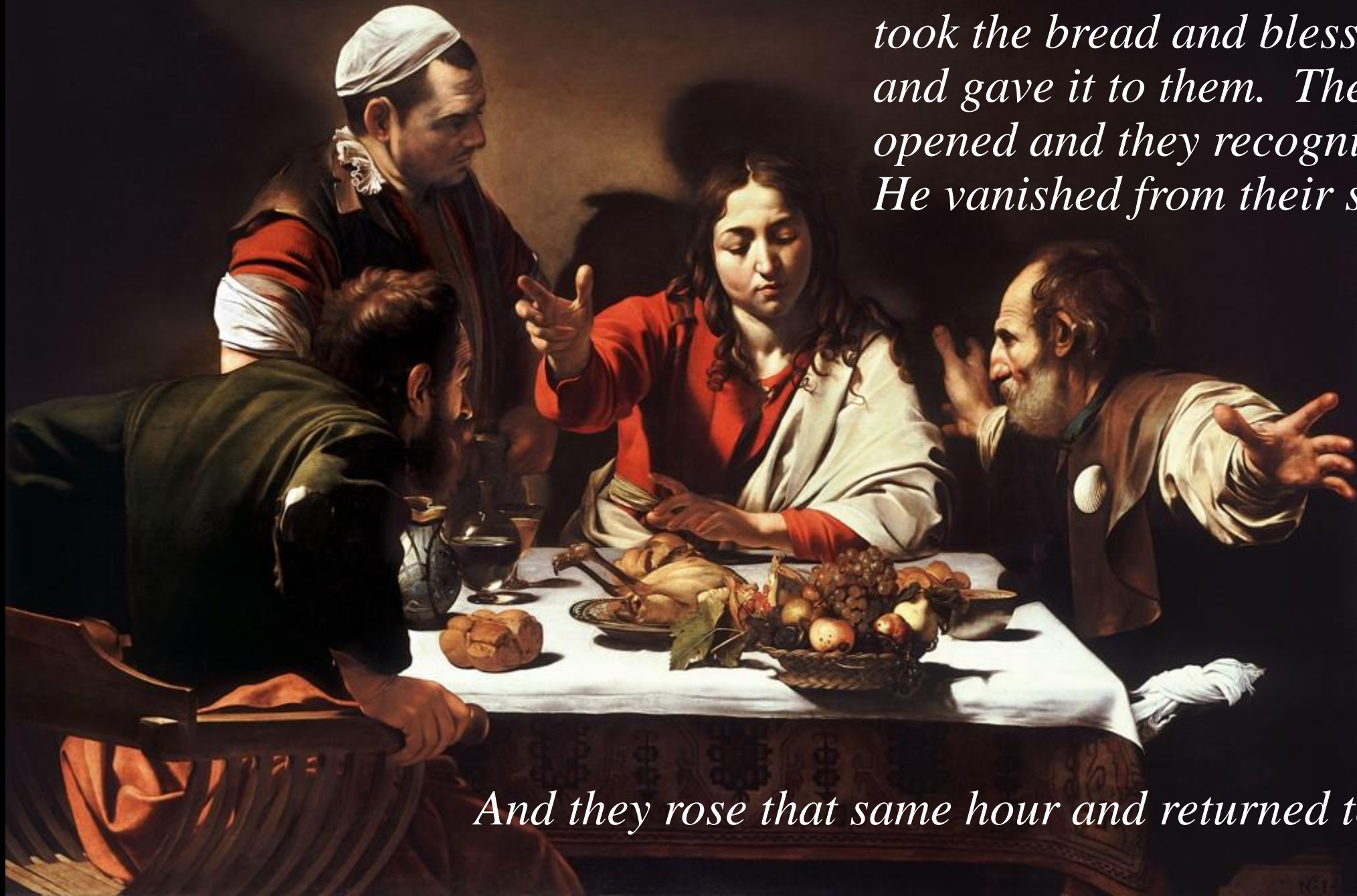


*“For my flesh is real food  
and my blood is real drink.”*

*(Jn. 6:55)*



*When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.*



*And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem*



*“If it’s only a symbol,  
to Hell with it.”*

- FLANNERY O’CONNOR

**1345** As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

- On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.
- When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.
- Then we all rise together and offer prayers\* for ourselves . . . and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.
- When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.
- Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.
- He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.
- When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'
- When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.