

"But tell me," continued Rufinus, who could not take his eyes off the fresco, "how do the bread and the wine change into this heavenly food, into JESUS-CHRIST, Son of God, our Saviour, the divine Ichthus? Thou dost hesitate, my daughter, ah! I conjure thee, help me to penetrate still deeper into this most august of mysteries."

"Father," replied the girl trembling with emotion, "pardon me if my weakness makes me stop to recollect myself to speak of so great a mystery, the most divine of all. One word, pronounced over the bread and the wine, by mortal lips which have become all-powerful under the breath of God, does violence to the Eternal, and changes death into life, the terrestrial into the celestial, the fruit of our earth into divine food, and under the veil of the bread and of the wine, Our Lord JESUS is found on the Altar. The Church stands before the Son of God, before the Saviour, but with uplifted hands, trusting and animated with a lively faith in His words: "*Take and eat, this is my body.*"

Rufinus, overpowered by the greatness of the mystery, strove in silence to support the weight.

At last he cried:

"How pure and holy must your priests be, since from their lips, so to say; the Son of God is born, how immaculate must be the hands to which He entrusts Himself. How great is the love of the Eternal to give to the son of the lowest dust, to the weakness of man, such a power in himself that one single word from his lips suffices to change the nature of the bread, not only into a man, into an angel, but into the divine nature! No no, human intelligence can neither understand nor embrace so profound, a marvel. My daughter," he continued, after a