

# Communion: Spiritual Fellowship with the Lord, and the Roman Catholic Mass

by  
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## Introduction

Worshipping God is that communion that exists in true harmony between the Creator and the creature man. Before the Fall, there were no restraints on the relationship between God and Adam. God spoke to Adam, laying out for him his duties, instructing him concerning his environment<sup>1</sup>, and creating a help meet for him.<sup>2</sup> Adam had only external restraint, “*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*”<sup>3</sup> At the Fall, the relationship between God and Adam was severed by Adam’s sin.<sup>4</sup>

## The Biblical pattern for true worship

God took the initiative in restoring the Creator-creature relationship severed by Adam’s single act of rebellion. God’s taking the initiative involves both the negative, by showing them what is unacceptable, and the positive, by giving them a promise, which He will fulfill by means of His grace through faith. In initiating how restoration between God and man will take place, God first addresses the sin, metes out the punishment, promises restoration of relationship between Himself and man, and then initiates action that several thousand years later will fulfill the promise. The promise of restoration, or salvation, is given in Genesis 3:15, “*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*” Having made the promise, God initiates the action that at the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ will fulfill perfectly the promise of restoration of the relationship between the Creator and His creatures.

God’s first action after the promise is to slay animals to make covering for Adam and Eve, “*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*”<sup>5</sup> In so doing, God has set the pattern for how the restoration shall be accomplished, for this action on God’s part foreshadows the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. “*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*”<sup>6</sup>

In taking the initiative, God shows that one cannot approach God in his own way; Adam with his fig leaf, Cain with his grain offering, and Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire are examples. God sets the pattern for how He will fulfill His promise of salvation. Evident throughout the Scripture, God develops acceptable worship for His people. Since the thoughts of man are only evil from his youth<sup>7</sup>, God always approaches man by His grace through faith. In each step, it is God who takes the initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 2:21-22.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2:17.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 3:6-8.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 3:21.

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 9:12.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 6:5, 8:21

### **Justification: the basis for true worship**

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, no communion between God and man is possible except on the basis of conformity to God's specific requirements. He is the perfect All Holy God. The one who has fellowship with Him must also be perfect in His sight by means of God's own perfection having been credited to him. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*<sup>8</sup> God's imperative Word is that He is to be worshiped "in the beauty of holiness", *"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name...worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."*<sup>9</sup>

It is never possible to fulfill this command in the believer's own holiness which, because of one's nature, is always imperfect. This is a major reason that the constant theme of both the Old and New Testaments is that God has provided His perfect One, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is credited to the believer. Therefore, Isaiah could declare, *"Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength..."*<sup>10</sup> and *"...He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."*<sup>11</sup>

The praise of the Old Testament saints is of God's own righteousness in which they counted their salvation and strength. *"My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day...I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of Thine only."*<sup>12</sup> "The beauty of holiness" in which the believer approaches God is best summarized by the prophet Jeremiah, *"And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*<sup>13</sup> This basis of relationship whereby the believer may communicate with the All Holy God, while understood and applied under the Law and the prophets, is now made manifest in the New Testament. *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*<sup>14</sup> While the topic of the Lord's Supper is very important, it is secondary to and a consequence of salvation by grace through faith.

Once a person stands before the All Holy God accepted in the beloved<sup>15</sup> and clothed with the righteousness of Christ, that person has the basis of fellowship with God. In sanctification as He writes His law on the hearts of the believers, they strive to be holy as He is. He is then their God and they are His people, and they are privileged to call Him Abba Father. First comes the gospel of grace; then following on being accepted in the Beloved, the believer finds that the essence of the New Covenant is fellowship with the Father through fellowship with the Son, in fellowship in the Holy Spirit.

### **Real affectionate communication**

Such fellowship in the New Covenant was foretold, *"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach*

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:48.

<sup>9</sup> I Chronicles 16:29.

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 45:24.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 61:10.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 71:15-17.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 23:6.

<sup>14</sup> Romans 3:21, 22, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Ephesians 1:6.

*no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD....*<sup>16</sup> Such communion is the essential quality of the New Covenant. The Lord Christ Jesus is the mediator of this legacy, as declared, *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”*<sup>17</sup> The inheritance is the intimate knowledge of the Father and the Son. *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*<sup>18</sup>

Just as Moses in the old covenant declared, *“This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you,”*<sup>19</sup> so the Lord Christ Jesus declared, *“This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”*<sup>20</sup> Christ’s command in the institution of the His Supper is not simply “in memory of” but in an affectionate calling of the Person Himself to mind.<sup>21</sup> The root meaning of the word “remembrance” here entails the concept of communion with the Lord Himself.

The Apostle Paul puts stress on the key idea of togetherness with the Lord in His supper in I Corinthians 10:16 when he states, *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”* The essential identity in the Lord’s Table cannot be literally the physical presence of the Lord for reasons given in the scriptural accounts themselves, which will be addressed below. The oneness taught is that of spiritual communion with God and with His people and is celebrated in the Lord’s table. In the new Jerusalem, this communion will be face to face as outlined in I John 3:2, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”* But for now in the New Covenant, the reality of our togetherness with the Lord is celebrated in signs rather than face-to-face. *“This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*<sup>22</sup> His New Covenant observance is intimate communion with Him

### **Basis for confidence in the spiritual presence of the Lord**

Because the Lord desires the believers to have full assurance and consolation regarding what He has done and said, the authentication and pledge of His work is confirmed by an oath.<sup>23</sup> *“This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*<sup>24</sup> This is the legal declaration to the believers that Christ Himself belongs to them. Just as in ordinary human life (for example, marriage vows, title deeds for houses and cars, etc.), here also there are strict legal declarations regarding taking possession of what belongs to believers. In Scripture what had been foretold in the Old Testament took place in the New Testament. Christ has given to the believers possession of Himself in His blood and in His body. He has given them the formal legal declaration of the New Covenant in which they have His absolute promise and His assurance.

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<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah 31:33-34.

<sup>17</sup> Hebrews 9:15.

<sup>18</sup> John 17:3.

<sup>19</sup> Hebrews 9:20.

<sup>20</sup> I Corinthians 11:25.

<sup>21</sup> W. E. Vine, *And Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1940) #1. anamnesis, pp. 274-275.

<sup>22</sup> Luke 22:20.

<sup>23</sup> Hebrews 6:17 *“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath...”*

<sup>24</sup> Luke 22:20.

The believers have in this New Testament ordinance the title to all the blessings of Christ confirmed to them by His blood. As His words declare in I Corinthians 11, “*This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*”<sup>25</sup> The purpose is clearly given: it is to show forth Christ's death, to proclaim and publish it. It is not merely a remembrance of Christ, of what He has done and suffered, but rather it is for the believers to participate in His glorious giving of Himself to them. They are to declare His death to be their life, the cause of their comfort and hope. They show forth His death, and participate in its fruits. The New Covenant has to do with Him being their God and they His people, His decrees being the desire and the contentment of their minds and hearts—in a word, divine fellowship with Him. “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*”<sup>26</sup>

### **Spiritual communion taught by contrast**

In I Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul very forcefully teaches fellowship with the Lord by showing it in stark contrast to the well known occult practice of spiritual contact with devils. The strong teaching is for the purpose of outlawing the intolerable sacrilege of fellowship with idols. Such communication is real, highly dangerous and forbidden. “*I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*”<sup>27</sup> The dissimilarity is clearly seen in the command, “*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*”<sup>28</sup> It is most important to see that the apostle is insisting on an awareness of a real fellowship, a real and spiritual union between Christ and believers. What is being stressed is not mere memorial, as the contrast in such would not make sense. The direct contrast is between spiritual intimacy with devils and spiritual intimacy with the Lord. From this passage, therefore, it may be concluded that “*the communion of the blood of Christ*”<sup>29</sup> is that real togetherness that the believers have with the Lord in the celebration of His Supper. The Lord introduced the meal with His longing expressed as follows; “*With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you ... This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*”<sup>30</sup> Likewise with desire ought the believers to desire to share this meal with Him. This communion with Him is of the essence of the New Covenant, in His declaration it literally is the New Testament in His blood. In the context of true and false worship the Lord teaches of those ones to whom He looks, “*to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*”<sup>31</sup> To truly wish to worship Him worthily, the believer ought to thirst for His communion at the table of the Lord. When he does, he will by grace realize ever more deeply the words of the Lord, “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I Corinthians 11:25-26.

<sup>26</sup> Hebrews 8:10.

<sup>27</sup> I Corinthians 10:20.

<sup>28</sup> I Corinthians 10:21.

<sup>29</sup> I Corinthians 10:16.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 22:15, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 66:2.

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 5:6.

### Restrictions of true worship

The law in summary is the Ten Commandments, the first two of which deal explicitly with worship. Continued fellowship with God includes the keeping of His restrictions in worship of Him. Most importantly, in the First Commandment of the Decalogue, He sanctions Himself as the only object of true worship. This is crucial because what is excluded is all religious veneration of beings not God, all objects not God and all superstition. *“I am the LORD thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”*<sup>33</sup>

The Second Commandment is also of uttermost importance, for it forbids practices that negate one’s worshipping God by faith. What is excluded from communion with the true God sanctioned in the First Commandment is the making and bowing down to any graven images of Him. This includes the making or bowing to any likeness or art form of God. Thus, all divination is forbidden. This includes all looking to material things (and the rituals by which they must be attended) as if they were able to convey God’s favor (or disfavor), and conversely, all looking to material things and rituals as instruments able to convey praise and worship to Him.<sup>34</sup>

The believers’ worship and service to God is as part of a spiritual house to offer spiritual sacrifices to God acceptable only in the person of Jesus Christ *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”*<sup>35</sup> This is in fact how the believers lived, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* (Acts 2:42) The Gospel was always the spiritual message of repentance and faith, as was the fellowship the breaking of bread and prayers. The continued theme is communion with the Father in the Holy Spirit because the believer is accepted in Christ. No hint is ever given of trusting material signs to give life. The stress is always on the blessings in Christ in the heavenly places. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”*<sup>36</sup>

### The one sacrifice, once offered

Christ’s sacrifice marked the fulfillment and end of the priestly ordinances of the Old Testament, *“there is no more offering for sin.”*<sup>37</sup> Through His priestly offering on the cross, Christ *“by Himself purged our sins”* and *“sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*<sup>38</sup> The Holy Spirit’s clear instruction is that Christ’s sacrifice was one, in contrast to the many sacrifices of the Old Testament. *“But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice** for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”*<sup>39</sup> *“For by **one offering** he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”*<sup>40</sup>

The unique oneness of Christ’s sacrifice is in this very fact that it was one offering once

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<sup>33</sup> Exodus 20:2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Even in the Old Testament, worshipping God was by faith resting on Him and His promise and His righteousness. The ceremonial law was merely of sign value to remind the believer of the promise, the Passover meal was a memorial alone and a shadow of what was to come in Christ. The continued theme of worship in the midst of the ceremonial details of the Old Testament was God Himself, and nothing of the paraphernalia. *“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”* (Psalm 18:2)

<sup>35</sup> 1 Peter 2:5.

<sup>36</sup> Ephesians 1:3.

<sup>37</sup> Hebrews 10:18.

<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>39</sup> Hebrews 10:12.

<sup>40</sup> Hebrews 10:14.

made. The concept “once” is deemed so important that it is asserted seven times by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The perfection of Christ’s sacrifice is contrasted to the daily repeated sacrifices of the Old Testament. The excellence of Christ’s sacrifice is highlighted by the word “once”. For example, the Apostle Paul teaches, “*For in that he died, he died unto sin **once**: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*”<sup>41</sup> The Apostle Peter likewise declares, “*For Christ also hath **once** suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*”<sup>42</sup> The same truth is taught in the book of Hebrews five times with the conclusion, “*So Christ was **once** offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*”<sup>43</sup>

### **The one sacrificial Priest**

Clear as the midday sun is the difference that the Holy Spirit makes visible by contrasting Christ’s priesthood to the Old Testament priesthood. The Levitical priests were mortal and, therefore, needed successors. Christ is an eternal priest and His priesthood is untransferable, needing no successor. “*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable*”<sup>44</sup> *priesthood.*”<sup>45</sup> Most important is the fact that Christ Jesus, having nothing more precious than Himself, offered Himself. As He said, “*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*”<sup>46</sup> He alone had the absolutely unique qualifications to offer Himself. As the Holy Spirit teaches, “*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*”<sup>47</sup>

The Lord Jesus is the sole sacrificial Priest of the New Testament. He finished the work of our salvation by one sole offering. The Scriptures repeatedly establish this truth. The substance of this is found in the Lord’s declaration from the Cross, “*Tetelestai.*” “*It is finished.*”<sup>48</sup>

A summary of the Scriptural truth presented here regarding communion with God is that He alone initiates the pattern of such worship. His own righteousness credited to the believer by grace through faith alone is the only basis of true worship. His restrictions are to be taken most seriously so that worship of Him remains both truthful and spiritual, as He is Spirit. The wonder of the greatest comfort that believers have in true worship is that they have Jesus Christ, Lord and Master in Whom they are accepted, as their intercessor. He is their High Priest, “*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*”<sup>49</sup> This is the presence of God that believers now have, and the fulfillment of which they look forward to in celestial glory, in the words of the Lord Himself, “*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and*

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<sup>41</sup> Romans 6: 10.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Peter 3:18.

<sup>43</sup> Hebrews 9:28.

<sup>44</sup> Aparabatos (Greek) meaning: Untransferable, not passing on to others. In the New Testament, no sacrificial priests are mentioned, only elders and pastors. In Christ Jesus, **all** believers are part of the royal priesthood of Christ in spiritual praise, but no one has a share in His sacrificial priesthood.

<sup>45</sup> Hebrews 7:23-24.

<sup>46</sup> John 10:17-18.

<sup>47</sup> Hebrews 7:26.

<sup>48</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>49</sup> Hebrews 8:1.

*we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”*<sup>50</sup>

### **False worship in the Roman Catholic Church**

Since true righteousness and its fruit are unavailable through a false gospel, the only means for worshipping Holy God through a false gospel are also those devised by man himself.<sup>51</sup> These means, taking the form of outward rituals and other religious paraphernalia, fall under the Second Commandment. Even a simple overview of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) on the Lord's supper shows that the RCC is no exception. Because the Roman Catholic Church promotes a false gospel, she must somehow establish a showing of the fruit of her own righteousness.<sup>52</sup> The Church of Rome officially claims that in her ritual, the Mass, is the culmination of the worship men offer to Christ and through Him to the Father. She declares that the Mass is also the source and summit of her life. The sacrifice of Calvary, she alleges, is in her control since she declares her ritual, the Mass, to be one and the same sacrifice with that of the Lord Jesus Christ's.

In contrast to the biblical Christ, Who is now reigning King of Kings and Lord of Lords and sitting at the right hand of God the Father, Rome consistently portrays the dying Christ, “the sacred victim”. Using the ritual of the Mass as her center of worship, which all the faithful on pain of mortal sin are required to attend, Rome teaches and dramatizes her false gospel by having her faithful offer themselves, together with the dying Christ, to Holy God of the Bible. She teaches that in the round white wafer, i.e., her Eucharist, is contained the physical Christ and His soul and divinity. This wafer is to receive worship due to Holy God alone.

### **The claim that Christ is immolated in the Mass.**

The Vatican Council II Documents of the Roman Catholic Church teach,

“For in the sacrifice of the Mass **Our Lord is immolated**<sup>53</sup> **when** ‘he begins to be present sacramentally as the spiritual food of the faithful under the appearances of bread and wine.’

It was **for this purpose that Christ entrusted this sacrifice to the [Roman Catholic] Church**, that the faithful might share in it both spiritually, by faith and charity, and sacramentally, through the banquet of Holy Communion. Participation in the Lord's Supper is always communion with Christ offering himself for us as a sacrifice to the Father.”<sup>54</sup>

The present day RC Church, which has officially ratified the Council of Trent, continues to curse all who do not hold that her Mass is indeed a propitiatory sacrifice. What she presently ratifies is the following,

“If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and

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<sup>50</sup> John 14:23.

<sup>51</sup> Biblical examples of this include Cain bringing the wrong offering, the people of Israel attempting to worship Holy God through the golden calf, and Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire.

<sup>52</sup> Roman 10:3 applies, “*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*” Conversely, Ephesians 2:8-10 shows the establishment of true righteousness and its fruit. See also Galatians 5:19-23.

<sup>53</sup> *The American College Dictionary* defines to immolate as: 1) to sacrifice, 2) to kill as a sacrificial victim, to offer sacrifice.

<sup>54</sup> *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, No. 9, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 25 May 1967, Austin Flannery, O. P., Gen. Editor (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) Vol. I, Sec. 3, pp. 102-103. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema.”<sup>55</sup> The clarity of Christ’s command stands diametrically opposed to such teaching. Christ’s words, “*Take and eat*”, were addressed not to His Father in heaven but rather to the apostles. He did not command them to “offer and propitiate”. Rather, such an offering was His own unique office as the one Mediator.

The center of Roman Catholic worship and life is the Mass. The Roman Church teaches her faithful that they are to offer themselves with “the sacred victim”, Jesus Christ, and to receive the same “sacred victim”. Thus she declares,

“Consequently the **eucharistic sacrifice is the source and the summit of the whole of the [Roman Catholic] Church’s worship and of the Christian life**. The faithful participate more fully in this sacrament of thanksgiving, propitiation, petition and praise, not only when **they whole-heartedly offer the sacred victim, and in it themselves, to the Father** with the priest, but also when they receive this same victim sacramentally.”<sup>56</sup>

Christ was never a victim and the idea of His being victimized is nowhere in Scripture. Rather it was of His own free will that He chose to go to the cross. This erroneous doctrinal base is so highlighted by Rome that it focuses the mind on a tragic Christ as victim and not the Victor as he now is—Lord of Lords and King of Kings. An example of the way this is worded in the worship of the Mass is the following from Eucharistic Prayer No. 3, “Look with favor on your Church’s offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself.”<sup>57</sup> The whole idea of offering this “Sacred victim” is sacrilegious.

As Rome repeats her commands, the false gospel of offering one’s self to cooperate in one’s salvation is dramatized in their worship. So Rome proclaims,

“Therefore the **eucharistic celebration is the center of the assembly of the faithful over which the priest presides**. Hence priests teach the faithful to offer **the divine victim** [Jesus Christ] to God the Father in the sacrifice of the Mass and **with the victim to make an offering of their whole life**...”<sup>58</sup>

The simple truth of Scripture is “*there is no more offering for sin.*” (Hebrews 10:18)

While purporting that she is doing what the Lord commanded, Rome further claims that the sacrifice of Calvary and the Mass are the same—“one single sacrifice”. Thus she teaches,

“**The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: ‘The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different.’ ‘This divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.**”<sup>59</sup>

Three things are claimed in the pronouncement just cited. First, Christ is contained; second, He is offered; and finally, the offering is in an unbloody mode.

The claim that Christ is contained in the bread is directly opposed to Scripture. The New Testament stressed the opposite as facts, “*Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself.*”<sup>60</sup> The Church of Rome in each

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<sup>55</sup> *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Tr. by Rev. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (Rockford, IL 61105: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1978) Canon 3, p. 149.

<sup>56</sup> Vatican Council II Documents, No. 9, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, Vol. I, Sec. 3, p. 104.

<sup>57</sup> *New Saint Joseph People’s Prayer Book*, Rev. Francis Evans, General Editor (New York, NY: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1980) p. 120.

<sup>58</sup> Vatican Council II Documents, No. 63, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7 Dec. 1965, Vol. I, Sec 5, p. 871.

<sup>59</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), Para. 1367. Hereafter CCC.

<sup>60</sup> Hebrews 9:24.



Mass insists on saying that its bread, i.e., her Eucharist, is that into which Christ is claimed to have changed. His substance is claimed to be in what is “made with hands”. Thus she states “we have this bread to offer which earth has given and human hands have made.”<sup>61</sup> This is in stark contrast to the Scripture that declares the fact that Christ is ministering in heaven itself and “is not entered into the holy places made with hands.”<sup>62</sup> Further He himself warned us, “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”<sup>63</sup>

Second, Rome alleges that Christ is offered in her Mass. The Word of God declares seven times that His perfect sacrifice was once offered as is stated, “Nor yet that he should offer himself often...for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”<sup>64</sup> For anyone to deem himself fit to offer immortal Christ Jesus in His perfect sacrifice is blasphemous pride. Were such a human offering of Christ possible, Christ in His own oblation of Himself would have suffered so cruel a torment in vain. Rather, His sacrifice is perfect and He is now in glory as declared so distinctly by the Holy Spirit, “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”<sup>65</sup> Measured by the biblical terms of worship given by God, the idea that Christ ought to offer Himself more than once is blasphemous. Such a concept attempts to reduce Christ’s sacrifice to imperfection, since it assumes that His one offering made once was not good enough to make complete atonement. What is absolutely perfect and consummated cannot be repeated since repetition is a proof of imperfection. To this end the Holy Spirit teaches precisely, “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”<sup>66</sup>

The third facet of Rome’s claim is that that Christ “is offered in an unbloody manner.” Note that in the quotation under discussion, Rome claims “Christ...**is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.**” Scripture equates offering and suffering. In a propitiatory sacrifice, to offer and to suffer are the same thing. This truth is so important that it is given in Scripture as an absolute principle, “without shedding of blood is no remission.”<sup>67</sup> Hence in this context to propose a bloodless sacrifice is to claim as sacrifice that which cannot be a sacrifice as defined by Scripture. A bloodless sacrifice is a senseless contradiction that can have no purpose other than to deceive.

### **The offense of idolatry**

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the communion bread is to be worshipped AS GOD. Thus she teaches,

“There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind ‘that all the faithful ought to show **to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God**, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. **Nor is it to be adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten.** For even in the reserved sacrament he is to be adored because he is sub-

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<sup>61</sup> *New Saint Joseph’s People’s Prayer Book*, Selection #88, p. 98.

<sup>62</sup> Hebrews 9:24.

<sup>63</sup> Matthew 24:26-27.

<sup>64</sup> Hebrews 9:25-26.

<sup>65</sup> Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>66</sup> Hebrews 7:27.

<sup>67</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

stantially present there through that conversion of bread and wine...”<sup>68</sup>

The Lord’s words are spoken in precise and clear terms, “*Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*” (I Corinthians 11:24) “*Take, eat*” is not “offer and adore.”

Most serious in the above teaching of Rome is idolatry. The Lord Jesus Christ repeats the commandment of old when He declares in His Word, “*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*” (Matthew 4:10) Believers must truly worship Him in spirit and truth. To command worship of the communion bread is idolatry. It is an absurd and impious doctrine that by necessity imposes worship of something that is eaten and carried into the stomach. Not without the dreadful crime of idolatry can the worship due to the true God alone be transferred to the communion bread.

### **Actual words of Scripture in context**

The actual words of Scripture must be seen in context. In the passages of Scripture concerning the Last Supper, the elements retain the same name after the Lord’s words as before he spoke, “*Take, eat; this....*” The demonstrative pronoun “this” means this bread. There is nothing else that it can mean. The Scripture continually calls that which Christ gave to his disciples bread, “*For as often as ye eat this bread*”, “*whosoever shall eat this bread*”, “*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread.*” (I Corinthians 11:26, 27, 28) The relative pronoun “this” limits the element spoken about to the same that Christ took; no other explanation is possible.

Similarly Christ calls that which he gave the disciples to drink “wine”. “*For this is my blood of the new testament,...but I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*”<sup>69</sup> “*This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*”<sup>70</sup> “*Fruit of the vine*” limits the element spoken about to the same that Christ took; no other description is possible.

### **The application of Rome’s idolatry**

In face of the clarity of Scripture, Rome insists that the elements are actually the body and the blood of Christ. On top of this, Rome claims that power effectively flows from the elements themselves. Thus the Church of Rome declares,

“*Holy Communion separates us from sin.*” The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is ‘given up for us,’ and the blood we drink ‘shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins.’”<sup>71</sup>

In this the “Eucharist” is looked upon as uniting a person to Christ and at the same time cleans-

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<sup>68</sup> Vatican Council II Documents, No. 9, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, Vol. I, Sec. 3, p. 104. Exodus 20:4-5 states, however, that graven images are not to be made nor are they to be bowed down to. The new *Catechism* explains the mechanism of idolatry in Para. 2132, “The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment [*sic*] which proscribes idols. Indeed, the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype, and whoever venerates [worships] an image venerates the person portrayed in it.” Exodus 20:4-5 explicitly prohibits **all** practices of idolatry, including those taught in official Roman Catholic doctrine, and including the practice of worshipping the communion bread. See also Jeremiah 10:14-15. For excellent study see *Graven Bread: The Papacy, the Apparitions of Mary, and the Worship of the Bread of the Altar* by Timothy F. Kauffman (Huntsville, AL: White Horse Publications, 1995) 170 pp. Contact Rob Zins, [Robzins@Cox.net](mailto:Robzins@Cox.net) or P. O. Box 32, Herndon, VA 20172.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew 26:28, 29.

<sup>70</sup> Mark 14:24, 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Catechism*, Para. 1393.

ing from sin. To attempt to claim causative effects for that which was given to testify to encourage one in the Lord Himself is divination, as one's hope is directed to center on the physical object. The Catholic Church teaches its faithful to practice the same kind of grave error into which Aaron fell. Aaron made the golden calf as a medium through which the Israelites were to worship Holy God. "*These be thy gods, O Israel....*"<sup>72</sup> The official rite of the Mass shows that at each Mass the priest does and says the following.

"The priest genuflects. Holding the host elevated slightly above the paten the Priest says: This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper."<sup>73</sup>

The people are to look to the actual physical substance as if it were indeed the Lamb of God. This is both gross idolatry and a false gospel.

Likewise concerning the same "Eucharist" Rome teaches, "By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist *preserves us from future mortal sins.*"<sup>74</sup> Rome here teaches her people to look to physical things as a means of conveying God's grace, to look to the physical element as if it had supernatural power. This is exactly the Roman Catholic mindset as is declared, "Sacraments are 'powers that comes forth' from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving...."<sup>75</sup> Such teachings as these come under the eternal curse of perverting the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9). Christ's words are spirit and life, "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*" (John 6:63) To propose an oral ingesting of Christ's flesh is bad enough, but what is asserted is much more. Rome holds that "...the Eucharist *preserves us from future mortal sins.*"<sup>76</sup> These are enticing words of human philosophy teaching the age-old worship of an idol in order to procure life. What makes the doctrine all the more repulsive is that the very teaching that speaks of preserving from serious sin is itself a gross sin.

### **Communion is through faith**

As has been shown earlier, because there is indeed intimate fellowship with the Lord in a spiritual sense, communion with the Lord is the heart of the message in the biblical texts. The believer's faith is focused on Him. The believer receives from His hand what He gives in a spiritual way. As the Apostle Paul explained, "*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*"<sup>77</sup> Thus continuing with the Apostle's word's, "*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*"<sup>78</sup> The communication of the Spirit of God is the most proper to convey His meaning. So likewise the believer's contact with the Lord is by the Holy Spirit of God, in the words of the Apostle, "*God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*"<sup>79</sup> The believer's intercommunication with the Lord in His supper is according to His own instruction and, therefore, "*in spirit and in truth*".

The teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in John 6:25-71 confirms the spiritual

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<sup>72</sup> Exodus 32:4.

<sup>73</sup> *New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book*, Rev. Francis Evans, Ed. (New York: Catholic Book Publ. Co., 1980) p. 104.

<sup>74</sup> *Catechism*, Para. 1395.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, Para. 1116.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Para. 1395.

<sup>77</sup> I Corinthians 2:12.

<sup>78</sup> I Corinthians 2:13.

<sup>79</sup> I Corinthians 2:10.

union of Himself and the believer and not “*for the meat which perisheth*” but rather “*for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.*” (John 6:27) When the Jews asked what they were to do that they might partake of “the bread of life”, Christ answered, “*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*” (John 6:29) The whole theme of John Chapter Six is believing on Him, the Christ, as the true means of allaying spiritual hunger and slaking spiritual thirst. Thus the Lord teaches, “*I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*”<sup>80</sup> “*He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*”<sup>81</sup>

The Lord’s words, “*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*” (John 6:55), show how serious is the command to believe on Him. The Lord Himself has commanded worship “*in spirit and in truth*”. It is the absurd to suggest that He might have been advocating physical eating of flesh and drinking of blood. The clear principle of interpretation that He gives of His own words is, “*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*”<sup>82</sup> His words are the true food of the mind rather than of the stomach, they are received through faith rather than by means of the mouth. They are received with full faculties of mind and will to believe on Him rather than by any ingesting any physical substance.

John Chapter Six is an evangelistic message spoken first to the Jews, and the Lord’s supper is a message to believers, yet there is some affinity between them. Once the principle of “comparing spiritual things with spiritual”<sup>83</sup> is strictly maintained, the believers will see a secondary deep sanctification message in the passage. The Lord declared, “*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*”<sup>84</sup> The same Lord also said at the Last Supper, “*With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*”<sup>85</sup> The believers’ participation in the Lord’s Supper, taken spiritually and with desire, can indeed be a dwelling in Him. It can also be an excellent preparation for sufferings and trials as they suffers persecution for His name.

Believers in remembrance of the Lord must take the elements of the Lord’s Supper with great respect in order to deepen their spiritual union with Him. To confuse signification, which is a remembrance, with identification, which holds that the elements have become the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, is serious sin against the Lord in His First and Second Commandments. God forbids not only the worshiping of images and the regard of them as the dwelling place of His divinity. He forbids also the use of objects as mediums through which it is claimed that His power can come. “*For there one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*”

Under the New Covenant, it is important that the Church be both reformed and reforming. While the idolatry and divination of Roman Catholicism shock the believer, it is important in not to react to such errors. The opposition to such in past has caused many true believers to refrain from enjoying a profound appreciation the real spiritual presence of the Lord in the Supper that He has given to them. The Scripture teaches that the Lord expects reverence and desire for the intimate communion with Him in this ordinance. Taking His words most seriously the

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<sup>80</sup> John 6:35.

<sup>81</sup> John 6:47.

<sup>82</sup> John 6:63.

<sup>83</sup> I Corinthians 2:13.

<sup>84</sup> John 6:55-57.

<sup>85</sup> Luke 22:15.

believer ought to desire with intense desire deep fellowship with Him, to draw from Him mightily at each celebration of His Supper. All this is by Him and Him alone, *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*<sup>86</sup>

Our prayer to the Father for each believer in the celebration of the Lord supper is *“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*<sup>87</sup> ♦

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<sup>86</sup> Romans 5:2.

<sup>87</sup> Ephesians 3:16-21.