

Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Commonly Called the *Didache*, [ca. 70 / 80 A. D.].

Saint Justin Martyr, an early Church Father (105-165 A. D.) is the first person to furnish us with a complete description of the Eucharistic celebration (c. 150). He speaks of it twice, first in regard to the newly-baptized and secondly in regard to the Sunday celebration. St. Justin said, "And this food is called among us Eucharisti'a [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn" (I *Apol.* 66).

St. Irenaeus of Lyons said, "And just as the wooden branch of the vine, placed in the earth, bears fruit in its own time-and as the grain of wheat, falling into the ground and there dissolved, rises with great increase by the Spirit of God, who sustains all things, and then by the wisdom of God serves for the use of men, and when it receives the

Word of God becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ-so also our bodies which are nourished by it, and then fall into the earth and are dissolved therein, shall rise at the proper time, the Word of God bestowing on them this rising again, to the glory of God the Father" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, [Inter A. D. 180 / 190]).

It is clear from the words of Jesus, St. Paul, and the Early Church Fathers that Jesus meant it when He said that we must eat His body and drink His blood.

There is an avalanche of evidence in support of the Catholic understanding and absolutely none to support the erroneous contention that he was speaking symbolically. The only refutation offered by non-believers is opinion, as no proof exists.

To be fully Christian is to believe in these words of Jesus and reside in the Catholic Church. There is no greater intimacy than eating His flesh and drinking his blood.

I invite all who have left the Church to return to your Catholic roots and invite all "Bible Christians" to explore the truth of Catholicism.

Jesus came that we may have life, and have it abundantly. This can only be fully experienced in the Catholic Church.

Scripture quotes from RSVCE

The Evangelization Station

Hudson, Florida, USA

E-mail: evangelization@earthlink.net

www.evangelizationstation.com

Pamphlet 582

We must eat His body and drink His blood!

Victor R. Claveau, MJ

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever." (John 53-59).

Would Jesus command us to do something impossible? Jesus would have had to have made some provision for His followers to carry out the command to "eat His flesh and drink His blood".

One of the fundamental differences between Catholics and the hundreds of different denominations and store-front churches is how the above verses are understood.

Isn't it true that all Christians are taught to interpret the Bible literally, except where the use of symbolic or figurative language is obvious? So the issue is: "Did Jesus really mean that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood?"

"The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John 6:52).

The fact that the Jews questioned the words of Jesus tells us that they understood Jesus' words literally.

The Catholic Church has always taught that Jesus was speaking literally, and this can be proved by the Bible and Church history.

Let us begin with the creation story in Genesis 1:1-31:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. *And it was so.*

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." *And it was so.*

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." *And it was so.*

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." *And it was so.*

Everything God said came to pass.

"So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is the Word, and the Word was and is God (John 1:1).

As God, Jesus performed numerous miracles. He cured the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the deaf to hear, and raised people from the dead. Whatever He declared came to pass.

Jesus declared that His flesh is real food: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*" (Jn. 6:51; 53-55).

During the Last Supper, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" (Lk. 22:19-20).

Who, *not what*, was Jesus holding in His sacred hands at that moment? He was holding Himself! At that moment, the bread became His Body, simply because He said it was His Body.

He then took a cup of wine and declared it to be His Blood.

Once again, Jesus held Himself in His own hands! At that moment, the wine became His Blood, simply because He said it was so.

I repeat, As soon as he declared the bread and wine to be His Body and Blood, they became His Body and Blood. As you may know, Catholics call this food Eucharist.

He then commanded His disciples to do the same, "Do this in remembrance of me", thereby empowering them to do so. This was the beginning of the New Covenant Priesthood.

St. Paul was certainly a believer in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist:

And St. Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

And St. Paul said, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an

unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27).

Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostle John for over thirty years, before suffering a martyr's death in the arena in Rome said, "Pay close attention to those who have wrong notions about the grace of Jesus Christ, which has come to us, and note how at variance they are with God's mind. They care nothing about love: they have no concern for widows or orphans, for the oppressed, for those in prison or released, for the hungry or the thirsty. They hold aloof from the Eucharist and from services of prayer, because they refuse to admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which, in his goodness, the Father raised [from the dead]. Consequently those who wrangle and dispute God's gift face death" (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 6, 19-20, [ca. A. D. 104 / 107])... "You should regard that Eucharist as valid which is celebrated either by the bishop or by someone he authorizes. Where the bishop is present, there let the congregation gather, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church". (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 8, [ca. A. D. 104 / 107])... "Be careful, then, to observe a single Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and one cup of his blood that makes us one, and one altar, just as there is one bishop along with the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow slaves. In that way whatever you do is in line with God's will" (*Letter to the Philadelphians*, 4, [ca. A. D. 104 / 107])... "Try to gather together more frequently to celebrate God's Eucharist and to praise him. For when you meet with frequency, Satan's powers are overthrown and his destructiveness is undone by the unanimity of your faith" (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 13, [ca. A. D. 104 / 107]).

The Teaching: "You must not let anyone eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized in the Lord's name. For in reference to this the Lord said, 'Do not give what is sacred to dogs'" (*The*