

every-where – not many sacrifices. The sacrifice of Calvary took place once. We must look also for one given under the form of bread and wine and which is a “making present” or a “memorial”(in the biblical sense of the word), which fulfils the prophecy of Malachi. Only the Mass meets the requirements.

Priests

Calvary is perpetuated or “made present” in the Mass by “the one who presides” (the priest, “presbyter”, under the bishop) (Acts 13:2-3). Through baptism we are all priests, prophets and kings (1 Pet 2:9), but it is the ordained presbyter (priest) who “presides” at the Eucharist on behalf of all.

Although many influential women followed Jesus, including deaconesses (1 Tim 3:11, Rom 16:1), there is no mention of ordained “women” priests even in later Christian writings or in the later periods of the early development of the Church.

In 140 AD, St Justin Martyr wrote, in his “Apologia” a description of the form of the Mass at that time. It takes the same basic form of the Mass as celebrated today.

Quotations from the writings of the Fathers of the early Church (*Patristics*), on the True Presence and the celebration of the Mass as sacrifice abound. For lack of space three quotations will suffice:

1. “After the great and wonderful prayers have been completed, then the bread and wine have become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (St Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, “Sermons to the Newly Baptized”, delivered in 373 AD).

2. Tertullian, “The Crown”, 3, 3-5 (211 AD): “The sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord commanded us to be taken From the hands of none others except the presidents (priests) We offer sacrifice (the Eucharist) for the dead on their birthday anniversaries...”.

3. St Cyprian of Carthage, “Letter to his Clergy and all his People”, 39 (34), 3 (250AD): “We always offer sacrifices (the Mass) for them, as you will recall, as often as we celebrate the passions of the martyrs by commemorating their anniversary day”.

For Catholics the Mass from the 1st century until now is the “summit and source” of our faith.

Why is it that Satanists parody the Mass when they worship? Why is it that demons who know right doctrine but reject obedience to it, should foster hatred of the Catholic Mass if the Mass were merely a medieval superstition? If the Mass had not been instituted by Christ, then why should Satan worshippers make it the centerpiece of their rebellion? They do so precisely because the Mass WAS instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. Mockery of the Mass is mockery of its founder.

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Pamphlet 209

The Mass as a Sacrifice

The Real Presence

The Mass was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper. In Luke 22:19, Jesus is clear: “This is my body given for you; do this for a commemoration of me.” The Greek here, and in the parallel gospel passages (Mt 26:26 and Mk 14:22) reads: “*Touto estin to soma mou*” in Greek. The verb “*estin*” is the equivalent of the English “*is*” and can mean “*is really*” or “*is figuratively*”. The usual meaning of “*estin*” is the former. Since Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke has about three dozen words that can mean “*represents*”. Jesus would have no difficulty at all in giving us an unmistakable equivalent of “*this represents*” instead of “*this is*”, if that is what he meant.

As for the word “*body*”, the literal meaning cannot be avoided except through violence to the text and through rejection of the universal understanding of the Christians of the early Christian centuries. The writings of Paul and John reflect belief in a Presence that is real. Jesus did not use a “*trope*” (*figuratively*) here, as fundamentalists say. This is clearly precluded by Paul in 1 Cor 23-24 and by the whole tenor of John 6. No writer tried to force another interpretation until the Middle Ages.

The Greek word for “*body*” in John 6 is “*sarx*”, which can only mean physical flesh, and the word for eats “*tragon*” translates as “*gnaws*” or “*chews*”. This is vivid language, not the language of metaphor.

Interestingly, the Orthodox Christian Churches of the east, separated from Rome by a thousand years now, also believe in the True Presence of Christ as Catholics do. They also have the Mass as their central worship service, which they call the Divine Liturgy.

The Mass as Sacrifice

The Catholic Church also believes and teaches that the Mass is the continuation and representation, or “*making present*” of the once and for all sacrifice of Calvary (Heb 7:25).

Anti-Catholics try to use Heb 7:27, 9:12, 9:25-28 and 10:10-14 to substantiate their erroneous beliefs that Catholics “blaspheme and re-crucify Christ literally, making him a mockery” every time the Mass is celebrated, in contradiction of the Scriptures. But Heb 6:6, which is also quoted (*out of context*) has nothing to do with the Mass. It deals with those who fall away from faith after baptism. Forgiveness cannot come through another baptism since Christ has established only one baptism. Do they want a new baptism to be given through a new crucifixion, is what the writer asks, not what anti-Catholics try to make it mean.

Our critics also use 1 Cor 11:27-28 where Paul uses the words “*cup*” and “*bread*” instead of “*blood and body*” (*drunk unworthily*) in order to be “*guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*”. The fact that “*cup*” and “*bread*” are used, they say, proves that Paul did not believe in a literal meaning of the Eucharist.

However, to be “*guilty of the body and blood*” of someone, in eastern culture, means “to revile him” as well. One can hardly “*revile*” baked flour or fermented grape juice. The correct meaning can only be profanation of something serious (*sacramental*). Clearly the bread and wine becomes Christ himself.

Other critics accuse Catholics here of “*cannibalism*” as well. This actually backfires on these critics. The same heretical notion was brought up centuries ago by Tertullian and Minicius Felix. This proves in fact that these second century writers were attacking the belief in the True Presence clearly existing in the early Church, and not “*dreamt up*” later by the Catholic Church.

Critics also scoff at the “*idea*” that Christ could have held his own body in his hands at the Last Supper. However, that this is not impossible

for God can be seen just before Christ’s Sermon on the Eucharist, when he fed the five thousand.

Catholics believe that the Mass is a real “*unbloody*” sacrifice, bringing into the present time and place the “*once and for all*” crucifixion of Jesus, and its effects. The work of Christ on the cross is finished and it never need be repeated. But its benefits can be applied to me in today’s time frame to enable me also to partake of (*consume*) the unblemished Lamb, Christ.

The remembrance is a sacrifice

The Greek word for “*remembrance*” or “*memorial*” is much deeper in meaning than the English equivalent. It is also a very rare word in Scripture. Outside of its use by Christ at the Last Supper, it is used only one other time in the New Testament. This is in Hebrews 10:3 where the word “*remembrance*” is “the act of carrying out a sacrifice”. “Those sacrifices are an annual reminder (*remembrance*) of sins”. In the Greek Old Testament, the word, meaning sacrifice, is used only twice. Both times the “*remembrance*” is a sacrifice (Hebrew: *zikaron*). We read: “*put some pure incense as a memorial... to be an offering*” (Lev 24:7) and “*Sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and they will be a memorial for you*” (Nb 10:10). Also, in the headings of Psalms 37 and 69 the same word, meaning a “*sacrifice*” is used.

The Greek word meaning “*remembrance*” is much more than just “think about me by recalling this event to mind”. What a strange word for Jesus to use if he did not intend setting up the Eucharist (*the Mass*) as a sacrifice, “*The Sacrifice*”.

We must remember that Jesus was a Jew. The Jewish temple had a sacrificial liturgy, which the synagogue did not have. Besides the Passover sacrifice other temple sacrifices took place. One, the “*zebah todah*” (*zebah* = *sacrifice*; *todah* = *communion*) was a meal shared with God. Part of the *zebah todah* sacrifice was burnt up at the altar and part was consumed by the offerer and friends.

This sacrifice was also a meal. Anyone who does not consider the Mass as both a sacrifice and a meal has lost touch with his Jewish roots.

It is amazing that evangelicals and others really miss the meaning of an important messianic prophecy where the continuing sacrifice of Christ’s death (*even after his resurrection*) is foretold in the Old Testament. Look at Psalm 110:4: “*The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’*”. *Melchizedek, the priest-king offering sacrifice, offered bread and wine (the elements of the Mass), which he brought out to Abraham as an offering (Gen 14:18). Unless one can point to another time other than the Last Supper, this text fulfils perfectly the function of the priesthood of Melchizedek by Jesus.*

The sacrifice predicted by Malachi

The Mass, the “*making present*” for all time the New Covenant, is a fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices and covenants such as with Noah, Abraham and Moses, which were “*signs*” and “*shadows*” of the unblemished Sacrificial Lamb. These foreshadow the one eternal Sacrifice, perpetuated, but not repeated in the Mass.

See how the Mass was foreseen in Zech 14:20-21: “On that day ... all those who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them” Commenting on this verse, former fundamentalist Christian, David B Currie, tells of a student who asked: “If Jesus’ sacrifice is final and complete, why will there be sacrifices needed in Jerusalem after Jesus’ resurrection?” The evangelicals simply have no plausible explanation of this passage. It refers, of course, to the Mass. In foretelling the rejection of the Jewish priesthood, the prophet Malachi predicted a new sacrifice, offered in every place. “From the rising of the sun to the going down, my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is a sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation” (Mal 1:10-11). He speaks of one sacrifice, offered