

Jesus, the Eternal High Priest and Perfect Sacrifice in the New Covenant Passover



Jesus said to them, “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. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. (John 6:52-56.)

There is a primal instinct in humankind to confront the truth that we are not the creators of our own life, nor of the universe and its order, and that there is a higher Being Who rules over all. That higher Being is “I Am,” the One True God Who always was, is and will be, the All-Holy, Transcendent One Who alone is self-sufficient, beyond all time and without limitations. Acknowledging our subservient creaturehood impels us to prostrate before God and pay Him homage.

Worship is the highest form of homage we can give to God. It is expressed in sacrifice, the offering of a tangible gift as a manifestation of our inner veneration in order to restore a right order of the human with the divine, and to attain communion with God through the atonement for sin. In a true religious sacrifice, a change must be effected in the gift, e.g., slaying, shedding blood, burning, pouring it out, etc. Sacrifice needs a victim, an altar and a priest. In times past, God chose a particular people, divided them into twelve tribes and made a covenant with them so all might see how God cares for those who are faithful to the covenant He made with them. Their greatest sacrifice was the holocaust, or burnt offering, in which the slain animal, belonging solely to God, was consumed by fire. The priest sprinkled some of its blood on the altar as a sign of atonement for sin. On Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year, a goat burdened with the sins of the priests and people was sent off into the desert to carry them away, while a second goat was sacrificed as an offering to God. What a vivid image of Jesus, the scapegoat for our sins, Who bears them away while giving us new life to drink from the chalice of His Blood. <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/holocaust>

The Jewish people were forbidden to eat the blood of the animal, for it was the life of the soul of the animal and could be used only for atonement, as life belongs to God. At the first Passover, they marked their doorposts with the blood of the sacrificial lamb so the Angel of Death would pass them by. Christians, however, drink the Blood of the Lamb to preserve them from the second death and as a pledge of eternal life. In Jesus we have

a new Moses, a new Covenant, a new temple, a new Passover and a new Jerusalem where the only sacrifice that remains is the Thanksgiving sacrifice, the wedding feast of the Lamb of God, the Eucharist.

When the Son of God became man, He established this New Covenant in the Church He founded upon the foundation of the 12 apostles. He gave us the one perfect



Jesus, the Lamb of God

sacrifice that does what the former could only signify--truly forgive sin and reconcile us to the Father. In the Christian Covenant Jesus Himself is the High Priest Who offers Himself, the unblemished Lamb of God, as Victim upon the altar of the cross for the forgiveness of sin and communion with God. In the Jewish Passover the people remembered their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. In the Christian Passover, the very same Sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the altar of the cross is made present on every altar where Mass is celebrated as a memorial of Him for our deliverance from slavery to sin. There are no other sacrifices. When Jesus poured out every drop of His Blood on Calvary and breathed forth His Spirit, His new Mystical Body, His new temple, was formed. Jesus is truly the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. He calls us and knows each of us by name.

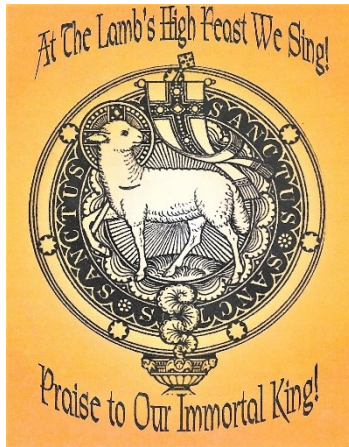
The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the Eucharist "the source and summit of the Christian life" because everything in life is oriented towards it; it contains the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself, our Pasch."

The Jewish temple held three heavenly realities—the **Ark of the Covenant** with the 10 Commandments, manna and the rod of Aaron; **the golden table with the golden candelabra or Menorah**; and **the Bread of the Presence**, 12 cakes for the 12 tribes of Israel, in which they saw the Face of God and believed in His abiding Presence. In the Christian Covenant, our tabernacle holds, not merely the signs of God's saving grace and law, but the Savior Himself Who is the new Moses and gives us the New Law of love. The people are not sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, but are commanded to drink of His blood, the cup of salvation. In the Eucharist we see God with the eyes of faith and touch the risen Lord in His glorified Body. Jesus is truly a supernatural bread that has come down from heaven to feed us. This Bread is the Real Presence, God Himself, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ Who makes our bodies His temple, His dwelling place, living tabernacles for the living God. In this revolutionary new Passover Meal of the Lord's Supper, Jesus asks us to memorialize His sacrifice by eating His Body and drinking His Blood so we may have life everlasting.

The Jewish Passover meal has four blessing cups, the cup of sanctification or Kiddush in which the father blesses the Lord of Creation for the fruit of the vine; the cup of proclamation in which the father reads the Scriptures on the Exodus and explains the Passover; the berakah or cup of blessing, and the fourth cup of salvation, a thanksgiving sacrifice. It was the third cup Jesus consecrated at the Last



Supper as He blessed His apostles and consecrated the bread and wine and gave them to eat of His flesh and drink of His Blood before entering into His agony. Jesus does not drink the fourth cup; He tells His apostles He will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until He drinks it new in the kingdom of His Father. According to St. Matthew, Jesus was offered wine (vinegar) on the cross but did not drink it, but in the Gospel of John, when Jesus cries out “I thirst,” he is offered wine by the soldier and accepts it, then immediately says “It is finished” and bows His head and gave up His Spirit. What is finished? The



Jewish Passover meal! He has drunk the fourth cup! It is here on the cross that Jesus joins the former Passover meal of remembrance with the Passover memorial of the New Covenant in which He makes present on every altar the one and same sacrifice He offered on Calvary as atonement for all sin. All mankind, all creation, has been restored to its God, its right order. As His side is pierced open with the soldier’s lance, so also are the gates of heaven thrown open with the flaming sword of Divine Love so all might enter through the door that is Jesus into the wedding feast of the Lamb. All praise and all thanksgiving to our Immortal King. **In short, by means of the Last Supper, Jesus transformed the Cross into a Passover, and by means of the Cross, he transformed the Last Supper into a sacrifice.**

Reference: Brant Pitre, “The Jewish Roots of the Eucharist. [The Eucharist is both the sacramental meal of the Last Supper and the sacrifice on Calvary made present on every Christian altar until the end of time.]

How little we understand and appreciate this great sacrament and sacrifice of the Holy Mass where we offer back to God His very best gift to us, His Beloved Son, along with our own lives and become, with Jesus, priest and victim through participation in His redemptive act for the salvation of all. Our Lady of America, our Immaculate Virgin, lamented to Sister Mildred how little we understand and appreciate what really takes place on every altar at every Holy Mass. We touch Jesus as surely as Thomas did when putting his hand into the glorious wound of the risen Lord’s side and into the nail wounds of His hands. Our Lady spoke these words to Sister Mildred Neuzil:

“Beloved daughter, to many the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass no longer has meaning. These have lost that spiritual sensitivity of reaching out and touching the wounded hand of my Son. In a special way, during the Holy Sacrifice Jesus comes in close contact with those who meet Him in a profound act of faith in a deep sense of His Divine and human presence. It is a great loss when one loses the spiritual sight of the Son that the Father sent to guide us into the Eternal Vision.” (Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, OH, Pg. 40.)

“Come, receive Me that you may live and enjoy everlasting happiness in the kingdom of My Father Who is your Father also. This I have obtained for you through My Body and Blood sacrificed for you on Calvary and become your Food and Drink in the Holy Mass offered constantly for you. Do not disappoint My hopes for I have waited long, oh so long for you. Bring joy to My Heart by letting Me come into yours. It is I alone Who can bring you happiness for only in Me is joy found in its fullness. Come, that you may have life.” (Jesus to Sister Mildred per her letter.)

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