

The Eucharist and the Conversion of Souls
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Eucharistic Convention 2004
Auckland, New Zealand
Sunday, April 18th, 2004

I was born and raised in Utah, the oldest of two children. We were brought up in a nominally religious home, and yet religion played a major part in our lives as we were growing up. My parents were also born and raised in Utah in families with connections back to the early Mormon pioneers who settled the Great Salt Lake Valley in the mid-1800's.

My great-great-great grandfather on my mother's side was probably the first in my family to join the Mormon church on February 14, 1832, less than two years after Joseph Smith founded the church. Grandpa Alva Benson convinced his wife, father, mother, and the rest of his father's family to join the church in the winter of 1832. They moved to Jackson County, Missouri, in November of 1832 but were driven out of the County by a mob because they were Mormons. In 1834 they moved to Clay County to join with the main body of the church. Four years later, they were forced out of Missouri by a combination of militia troops and vigilantes after Governor Boggs issued his infamous EXTERMINATION ORDER on October 27th, 1838. The order described the Mormons as being in "open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state." It stated that "the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace - their outrages are beyond all description." My family eventually settled in Utah in 1852, five years after the first Mormon Pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley under the leadership of Brigham Young, the successor to Joseph Smith.

My grandmother on my father's side was the last of my family to be converted to Mormonism and relocate to Utah from Switzerland. My great grandparents left for Utah to join seven of their children who had already emigrated, but they were forced to leave my grandmother, Marie Kauffman, behind in the "Old Country" because she was infected with tuberculosis. Grandma eventually made the journey with her sister, but only after her TB symptoms had subsided enough for her to slide past the U.S. Immigration authorities in New York Harbor.

My family was directed by Brigham Young in 1852 to settle in a high mountain area of the Wasatch Range in northern Utah called Cache Valley. According to my great-great-great grandfather's account, "We met the Apostle Ezra T. Benson at the point of the mountain. We asked him what the privileges were in the valley and he said, 'Find the best place you can.'" They found a place on the southeast side of the valley called Hyrum and established their 20-acre farm with about 12 or 15 other families. All of my extended family since those early pioneer ancestors were born and raised as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormons, as they are more commonly known). It was only natural that my sister and I were brought up in the religion as well.

Mormonism in Utah was not just practiced on Sundays; it was a way of life. School, social activities, scouting, dancing, music, theater, sports, and much more revolved around the church. My parents did not go to church regularly, but they were very adamant that my sister and I not miss out on anything the church had to offer. They paid their Fast Offerings and welcomed the visiting Home Teachers in an effort to maintain their ties with the church and thereby remain in good standing. In those days, anyone who was less than an active member of the church was ostracized by the majority. Approximately 77% of the population of Utah was Mormon, and my parents did not want me or my sister to become one of those unmentionable, disenfranchised "others".

Mormonism is still thriving in Utah and growing all over the world. The LDS have a very carefully groomed image of family togetherness and steadfast moral values. Mormons believe that strong families make a strong nation, and strong nations make a strong world. They have a program called "Family Home Evening", in which each participating family sets aside one evening per week to gather and discuss issues concerning the church. The goal of every faithful Mormon is to go to the temple and to be sealed for time and eternity as a family unit. In order to enter the temple, each individual needs a temple recommend from his Bishop and Stake President. The recommend is only granted to Mormons in good standing with the church (i.e. those who live the Word of Wisdom, pay 10% tithing, attend church regularly, etc.).

In addition to ministering to their own members, there are over 60,000 men and women missionaries around the world who dedicate two years of their lives, at personal expense and great sacrifice, to spread the word about Mormonism to others. The missionary's appeal comes from his or her youthful appearance and enthusiasm and from the social programs the church offers, such as dancing, sports, scouts, and genealogy.

Most members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have complete and unquestioning trust in all that is Mormon. They believe with all their hearts that their faith represents the only true church on earth, and it is their goal (and responsibility) to spread that belief to everyone else.

As I was growing up, I had very little contact with people outside the LDS church. The few non-Mormons I knew were viewed as outsiders and were treated differently than the members. Even Mormons who did not attend church regularly or who did not live according to the teachings of the church were still considered "better" than non-members. I experienced this social exclusion first-hand when I decided not to attend the church-sponsored seminary program during my first year of high school. Although it was outside the normal curriculum and even located across the street from the school, almost everyone who was Mormon attended the seminary classes. It was difficult for me to relate to my friends as they exchanged stories about the things they were learning in seminary and the activities in which they were involved. I did not make that mistake again! I participated in the three-year seminary program rather than the normal four

years and was once again content to find myself included in conversations with my friends.

Mormons consider the "Standard Works" to be the basis of their doctrine. These four books are the Bible (King James Version), the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. They believe the Bible to be incomplete, because many "plain and precious parts" have been taken away by the "great and abominable church". The Book of Mormon is regarded as a volume of holy scripture. It supposedly contains the fullness of the everlasting gospel. Joseph Smith described the Book of Mormon as "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion". The Doctrine and Covenants consists primarily of revelations given to Joseph Smith and is full of instruction for the church regarding Mormon beliefs and practices involving baptism for the dead, celestial marriage, priesthood, and polygamy. The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of smaller writings and contains the 13 Articles of Faith, a summary of the beliefs of the LDS church.

From the Mormon perspective, there are three basic classifications of Christian churches. First is the Catholic Church, which claims it has had an uninterrupted existence since it was originally founded by Jesus Christ. Second are the Protestant churches, founded by reformers who believe that the original church fell into apostasy and that the Gospel can be returned to the teachings and practices of the early church through an intense study of the Bible. The third classification consists of those who believe that the church fell into total apostasy and could not be reestablished through reformation, but only through a restoration.

I was taught that the Catholic Church was the "great and abominable church" mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, the Catholic Church had intentionally removed the "plain and precious parts" from the Bible that were essential for a full understanding of the teachings of Christ. As a result, there was a "Great" or "Total Apostasy" of the Gospel, and it became necessary for the church to be restored by Jesus Christ to Joseph Smith. As a Mormon, it was easier to relate to members of the Protestant churches because they had a common disdain for the Catholic Church. I agreed with the Protestants in their recognition of the Catholic Church as an apostate church, but felt that they had only the incomplete Bible as their source for doctrine. It was easy to use the Bible to support the Mormon position where possible and then to claim that it was not translated correctly when it conflicted with what I was taught to believe as a Mormon.

When I left Utah in 1968 to join the military, the Mormon bishop gave me a metal dog tag. Engraved on one side was a picture of the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City. On the reverse side were the words, "I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints". When times were hard, I would often wear my dog tags with the Mormon medal as a reminder of my roots and my heritage. It gave me comfort to recall that I was at heart just a simple Mormon boy from Utah, protected from the evils of the world by my family, friends, and church.

Despite the consolation it provided, I became inactive in the Mormon church. About a year later, I met Anne, a Catholic, and we were married by a Catholic priest in Germany in 1971. Our two daughters were raised Catholic under my wife's instruction. For many years I attended Catholic Mass, often as a musician with the choir. While stationed in San Francisco, I played the guitar at the local Army chapel along with a Baptist piano player. We often joked that we knew the words to the Mass better than most Catholics in attendance.

I continued to proudly proclaim my Mormon affiliation although I did not attend their services. I had no intention of joining any other church, especially not the Catholic Church. I knew how much it meant to my family back in Utah that I remain a member of the Mormon church. I dreaded visits from the Home Teachers, but I always made sure that my church records followed me to my new duty station. I did not let the Mormons get too close to me, afraid that they would talk me into coming back to church again. I made good friends with another Mormon service member who kept me informed with the latest news from the church. Otherwise, I kept my distance from the Mormons, comfortable to just sit on the fence.

We moved to Virginia in January of 1993 for an assignment at the Pentagon, and I began attending Mass regularly. I joined the contemporary choir because I enjoyed the music, and I thought it was a nice, neutral way to worship God. When asked to do a newsletter for the Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign, I jumped at the opportunity to display my computer talents. Through the preparation of the newsletter, I was first introduced to the Rosary and to Mary's special role in the life, suffering, and death of Jesus. I could not help but be touched by the things I was reading. I began to ask questions. Anne was, of course, excited about my interest and began dropping Catholic literature around the house for me to find.

In the early part of November, I asked Anne if she was trying to convert me. She said she was not and reminded me that she had NEVER pressured me to become a Catholic. For over 22 years of married life, I had gladly called myself a Mormon, and I told Anne that I had no intention of becoming a Catholic. "I was born a Mormon, I was raised a Mormon, and I'm going to die a Mormon!", I exclaimed. But something was happening to me. The power of all the prayers that were being said for me by Anne and by many others was having an effect. The Holy Spirit was working on me.

On November 20th, 1993, I sacrificed a Saturday to attend a seminar given by Scott and Kimberly Hahn. Scott told his story of assuming the role of detective in an attempt to prove once and for all that the Catholic Church was wrong. In the process of his studies, he became a Catholic. I remember thinking to myself that obviously he did not research very well, or he would have become a Mormon instead of a Catholic. I decided to try the detective thing myself, just to prove the Catholics wrong and the Mormons right.

I began reading and researching like there was no tomorrow. I read books on Mormonism, Protestantism and Catholicism. I listened to audio tapes and watched

videos. I grabbed at anything I could get my hands on to confirm beyond a shadow of a doubt that the only true church on earth was the one restored by Jesus Christ to the "Prophet" Joseph Smith and his followers. Much to my chagrin, every direction I turned and on each point I investigated, I found overwhelming evidence against the Mormon position. The more I researched, the more problems I found with the Mormon doctrines I had been taught.

I discovered that the Mormon teaching of a "Total Apostasy" in the early Church established by Jesus Christ was simply not true. The overwhelming historical evidence available supports the Catholic teaching on Apostolic succession. It was first demonstrated in the replacement of Judas by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). The chain has been unbroken from Peter to Pope John Paul II (Matthew 16:18). Without a great and total apostasy, there is no need for a restoration.

Another truth I uncovered through my research is that there is only one God. I could no longer accept basic Mormon principles, such as the plurality of gods made of flesh and bones, God's humanity, and man's progression to an exalted god of his own world. Through the mystery of the Holy Trinity, I began to understand the one divine nature of God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, I came to know that God is the "first cause" of everything and that our souls and bodies are created at the moment of conception. I could no longer accept the Mormon plan of eternal progression, consisting of a pre-mortal existence where each person is born into this world according to his previous merits in the spirit world. I started to believe that nothing exists that does not owe its existence to God the Creator. The next logical step was to realize that Mary was created as the most exalted creature on earth. I began to see her as the daughter of God the Father, the spouse of God the Holy Spirit, and the mother of God the Son. I saw that through a better understanding of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, we can more nearly follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

By Christmas, I was absolutely convinced that the Mormons were wrong. I was devastated! How could so many good people be deceived? What about all the sacrifices my ancestors had made for the church? How could I turn my back on my heritage, my upbringing, my family and my childhood friends? I wanted to pretend that I had never started on this journey. I wished I could go back to the way things were, but it was too late. I had found the truth.

Once I had decided that I wanted to become a Catholic, I had a wonderful feeling of peace because I knew that I was doing the right thing. I was certain that God was prompting me along the way and giving me the grace to open my mind and heart to accept the truth of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

At the same time there was a tremendous battle raging about me that left me wondering what was going to happen next. I was challenged from all directions in what seemed like a concerted effort to prevent me from trusting in God. The spiritual warfare even manifested itself physically. One morning, about two weeks before my baptism, another

driver ran into the back of my car on the way to work. I was verbally attacked by members of my family in Utah and some of my co-workers at the Pentagon. On Ash Wednesday, I was heckled by my supervisor for having "dirt" on my forehead. The distractions and obstacles seemed constant and unrelenting. I just kept reminding myself that I must be on the right track since all these bad things were being thrown at me. I accepted my sufferings as the devil's desperate attempt to steer me away from the Church.

Not to be outdone, God gave me some loving affirmations that He was there with me. One evening at church, I was overcome with joy and drawn almost uncontrollably to an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. I genuflected toward the tabernacle and made the sign of the cross for the first time in my life. Also on Ash Wednesday, just days before my baptism, I had a very moving experience confirming the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During my first confession the next day, I had another nudge that assured me of the authority of the Pope as the successor to Peter and the Vicar of Christ. By that time, I had no problem discerning which combatant was sending the good messages and which was sending the negative ones.

On the 19th of February, 1994, I received the Holy Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, First Communion, and validation of the Sacrament of Matrimony performed over 22 years earlier. It was a sacred day that I will cherish forever.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Mormonism)

Mormons believe that Jesus instituted the sacrament (or ordinance of the gospel) as the symbol of His atoning sacrifice. The bread of the sacrament is a symbol of the Savior's broken flesh; the wine is a symbol of His spilled blood. Mormons do not believe that the bread is the actual flesh of Christ nor do they believe the wine is His actual blood.

In partaking of the sacrament the Mormons renew solemn covenants made with the Lord. It is blessed by members of their lesser Aaronic priesthood, usually young men between the ages of 16 and 18. The sacrament is only for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Liquids other than wine and food other than bread may be used as emblems in the observance of the sacrament. Even though they could use virtually any matter, the Mormons use regular leavened bread. They have substituted water for the wine because of their health restrictions on the use of alcohol. These health restrictions are contained in Doctrine and Covenants Section 89 – called the Word of Wisdom.

As a young boy I was a member of the lesser Aaronic Priesthood. The greater priesthood is called the Melchizedek Priesthood. Within the Aaronic Priesthood there are three levels: deacons, teachers, and priests. Within the Melchizedek Priesthood there are elders and high priests. It is a male-only priesthood. Members of the Aaronic Priesthood attend to matters pertaining to the temporal welfare of the people, such as baptizing new members, administering the sacrament, attending to the tithing and fast

offerings, looking after the poor, and taking care of the properties of the church. Members of the Melchizedek Priesthood are the ruling, presiding, and governing authority in the church. They administer primarily in the spiritual matters of the church. As a member of the Aaronic Priesthood I prepared the bread and water for the sacrament, I distributed the sacrament to other members, I collected Fast Offerings (a monetary contribution to be given in place of the food not eaten as a result of fasting) once a month, I visited the homes of members along with a Melchizedek Priesthood holder, and as a 16-year-old priest I would pray the words that were used for the blessing of the emblems of the sacrament. The bishop (the Mormon equivalent to our parish priest) would listen very carefully to make sure that we said the words exactly as they were written. If we missed something he would shake his head and we had to begin the prayer over again.

The Holy Eucharist (Catholicism)

In John Chapter 6 we can read about a well-documented apostasy that actually took place in the presence of Our Lord. Understanding the reason for this apostasy is extremely important. The true meaning of this particular chapter is one of the key differences between the Catholic Church and the LDS church. After hearing what Jesus said, many of His disciples refused to believe His discourses at Capernaum and no longer went with him. Had this simply been a misunderstanding, Jesus surely would have explained Himself more clearly to His friends rather than to let them walk away from Him. Martin Luther also rejected this doctrine which had been believed by all Christians for fifteen hundred years prior to the Protestant revolt against the Catholic Church. It is still taught and believed by the Catholic Church today.

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fish. (John 6:1-15)

Jesus asks His disciples how they will buy bread so that the people can eat. The only thing available was five barley loaves and two fish from a young lad. Jesus took their simple offering. Using almost the exact same words ("gave thanks" or "eucharistia" in Greek) as are used in Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, to describe the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, He performed a miracle and provided enough for five thousand to eat. He then instructed them to pick up the leftovers to show them (and us) that material resources are gifts of God and should not be wasted. Through this miracle, Jesus teaches His disciples to trust in Him whenever they meet up with difficulties in their apostolic endeavours in the future. He is also preparing them for what He is going to reveal to them in the discourses at Capernaum in which Jesus presents Himself as "the Bread of Life".

The Discourse on the Bread of Life. (John 6:25-58)

Jesus starts out by telling the people that their attitudes are wrong. He indicates that if they have the right attitude they will be able to understand His teachings yet to come. He tells them that He is the Bread of Life, come down from heaven to give Himself sacramentally as genuine food. Through this discourse, Christ promised that He would give Himself, His own flesh and blood, in a real sense, as food and drink. Jesus is telling them many months prior to the Last Supper, that it will be His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity truly present in the Holy Eucharist. He made it abundantly clear that His flesh

was true food and His blood was true drink. He told them over and over again that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have life within them. This terminology was not being used simply as a figure of speech. To the Jews, the phrase "to eat someone's flesh" meant to hate and vengefully persecute, and "to drink someone's blood" meant to visit severe punishments on them. Neither of these meanings would make any sense in the context of what Jesus was saying to them. Please read John 6:25-58 very carefully again and ponder in your heart what Jesus meant by speaking these words. Was He speaking about a symbolic action to be done in remembrance of Him or did He actually mean what He was saying?

"This Saying is Hard" (John 6:60-70)

Here's where the apostasy took place even as Jesus was speaking to the people. The disciples' reaction was one of disgust. How can He give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink? "This saying is hard; who can listen to it?" Many of His disciples simply could not accept what He was saying to them and they walked away, never to follow Him again. Rather than calling them back or trying to explain that He didn't really mean it the way they interpreted His words, He turned to the Twelve and asked them, "Will you also go away?" That same piercing question from Jesus applies to us as much today as it did back then. Do we also find this saying hard to accept? Will we also turn and walk away from Our Lord? Do we not have the faith necessary to believe these words?

The Catholic Church has always taught that Jesus Christ is truly present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Eucharist through the mystery of Transubstantiation. Compare this with the Mormon teaching that the bread and wine (water) are merely emblems or symbols (Moroni 4 and 5). However, to complicate things, (3 Nephi 18:28-29) warns us not to partake of the flesh and blood of Christ unworthily. So which is it in the LDS church, a symbolic action to be done in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ, or is the bread and wine (water) His true flesh and blood?

Death came into the world through the sin of Adam. Bread is first mentioned in the Old Testament when God gives punishment to Adam. "In the sweat of your brow, you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). Scripture again uses the word bread in conjunction with the word wine, "Then Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Jerusalem), brought out bread and wine; for he was a priest of the Most High God" (Genesis 14:18). It is significant that God mentions bread in his punishment of Adam, because the new Adam, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22), identifies Himself as "The Bread of Life". In the Book of Hebrews we read that, "Jesus has - become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:20) Like Melchizedek, Jesus is the King of Jerusalem, and a High Priest of God who offers bread and wine. Christ continues through His Catholic priests to offer the sacrifice of His body and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine, according to the order of Melchizedek. It is at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23-29) that Jesus clarifies what He spoke of earlier during His ministry. He is the true "bread of angels" (Psalms 78:23-25). Christ gives us His body, blood, soul and divinity under the taste and appearance of a meal of bread

and wine. Through faith we recognize that the Holy Eucharist only appears to be bread, "they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:35)

Why is there such strong language about the true nature of the Eucharist, both in the Bible and in the writings of the Early Church Fathers? The Eucharist is not, as many denominations believe, "just a symbol" but truly what Christ said it is: "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood" (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25) and "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35,48). He said, "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 for ever." (John 6:53-58) Clearly Jesus is not speaking in symbolic terms here. He meant what He said. Christ fulfilled His promise to give us His Flesh and Blood at the Last Supper when He instituted the Eucharist. Thus we have the constant teaching of the Catholic Church that Jesus Christ is truly present, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Eucharist through the mystery of Transubstantiation. History also supports this early Christian understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The earliest Christians were often accused of being cannibals because they were gathering together and eating "flesh" and drinking "blood" during their offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Here are some examples from the Early Church Fathers concerning their understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist:

St. Ignatius of Antioch

I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God (John 6:33), which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David (John 7:42; Romans 1:3); and for drink I desire His Blood, which is love incorruptible.

Take care, then, to use one Eucharist, so that whatever you do, you do according to God: for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the union of His Blood; one altar, as there is one bishop with the presbytery and my fellow servants, the deacons.

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His goodness, raised up again.

St. Justin the Martyr

We call this food Eucharist; and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration, and is thereby

living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus.

St. Irenaeus

They are vain in every respect, who despise the entire dispensation of God, and deny the salvation of the body and spurn its regeneration, saying that it is not capable of immortality. If the body be not saved, then, in fact, neither did the Lord redeem us with His Blood; and neither is the cup of the Eucharist the partaking of His Blood nor is the Bread which we break the partaking of His Body (1 Corinthians 10:16). . . . As we are His members, so too are we nourished by means of created things, He Himself granting us the creation, causing His sun to rise and sending rain as He wishes. He has declared the cup, a part of creation to be His own Blood, from which He causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, He has established as His own Body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

When, therefore, the mixed cup and the baked bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life - flesh which is nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord, and is in fact a member of Him?

In this regard the blessed Paul says in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Because we are members of His Body, from His flesh and His bones." . . . In the same way that the wood of the vine planted in the ground bears fruit in due season; or as a grain of wheat, falling on the ground, decomposes and rises up in manifold increase through the Spirit of God who contains all things; and then, through the Wisdom of God, comes to the service of men, and receiving the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of Christ; so also our bodies, nourished by it, and deposited in the earth and decomposing therein, shall rise up in due season, the Word of God favoring them with resurrection in the glory of God the Father.

Tertullian

No soul whatever is able to obtain salvation, unless it has believed while it was in the flesh. Indeed, the flesh is the hinge of salvation. In that regard, when the soul is deputed to something by God, it is the flesh which makes it able to carry out the commission which God has given it. The flesh, then, is washed, so that the soul may be made clean. The flesh is anointed, so that the soul may be dedicated to holiness. The flesh is signed, so that the soul too may be fortified. The flesh is shaded by the imposition of hands, so that the soul too may be illuminated by the Spirit. The flesh feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ, so that

the soul too may fatten on God. They cannot, then, be separated in their reward, when they are united in their works.

Origen

I wish to admonish you with examples from your religion. You are accustomed to take part in the divine mysteries, so you know how, when you have received the Body of the Lord, you reverently exercise every care lest a particle of it fall, and lest anything of the consecrated gift perish. You account yourselves guilty, and rightly do you so believe, if any of it be lost through negligence. But if you observe such caution in keeping His Body, and properly so, how is it that you think neglecting the word of God a lesser crime than neglecting His Body?

St. Ephraim

Our Lord Jesus took in His hands what in the beginning was only bread; and He blessed it, and signed it, and made it holy in the name of the Father and in the name of the Spirit; and He broke it and in His gracious kindness He distributed it to all His disciples one by one. He called the bread His living Body, and did Himself fill it with Himself and the Spirit. And extending His hand, He gave them the Bread which His right hand had made holy: "Take, all of you eat of this, which My word has made holy. Do not now regard as bread that which I have given you; but take, eat this Bread, and do not scatter the crumbs; for what I have called My Body, that it is indeed. One particle from its crumbs is able to sanctify thousands and thousands, and is sufficient to afford life to those who eat of it. Take, eat, entertaining no doubt of faith, because this is My Body, and whoever eats it in belief eats in it Fire and Spirit. But if any doubter eat of it, for him it will be only bread. And whoever eats in belief the Bread made holy in My name, if he be pure, he will be preserved in his purity; and if he be a sinner, he will be forgiven." But if anyone despise it or reject it or treat it with ignominy, it may be taken as a certainty that he treats with ignominy the Son, who called it and actually made it to be His Body.

After the disciples had eaten the new and holy Bread, and when they understood by faith that they had eaten of Christ's body, Christ went on to explain and to give them the whole Sacrament. He took and mixed a cup of wine. Then He blessed it, and signed it, and made it holy, declaring that it was His own Blood, which was about to be poured out. ...Christ commanded them to drink, and He explained to them that the cup which they were drinking was His own Blood: "This is truly My Blood, which is shed for all of you. Take, all of you, drink of this, because it is a new covenant in My Blood. As you have seen Me do, do you also in My memory. Whenever you are gathered together in My name in Churches everywhere, do what I have done, in memory of Me. Eat My Body, and drink My Blood, a covenant new and old."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Let us, then, with full confidence, partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. For in the figure of bread His Body is given to you, and in the figure of wine His Blood is

given to you, so that by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, you might become united in body and blood with Him. For thus do we become Christ-bearers, His Body and Blood being distributed through our members. And thus it is that we become, according to the blessed Peter, sharers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and the Wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but - be fully assured by the faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ.

St. Hilary of Poitiers

When we speak of the reality of Christ's nature being in us, we would be speaking foolishly and impiously - had we not learned it from Him. For He Himself says: "My Flesh is truly Food, and My Blood is truly Drink. He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will remain in Me and I in him." (John 6:56-57) As to the reality of His Flesh and Blood, there is no room left for doubt, because now, both by the declaration of the Lord Himself and by our own faith, it is truly Flesh and it is truly Blood. And These Elements bring it about, when taken and consumed, that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. Is this not true? Let those who deny that Jesus Christ is true God be free to find these things untrue. But He Himself is in us through the flesh and we are in Him, while that which we are with Him is in God.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

He offered Himself for us, Victim and Sacrifice, and Priest as well, and "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) When did He do this? When He made His own Body food and His own Blood drink for His disciples; for this much is clear enough to anyone, that a sheep cannot be eaten by a man unless its being eaten be preceded by its being slaughtered. This giving of His own Body to His disciples for eating clearly indicates that the sacrifice of the Lamb has now been completed.

There are many more examples from the Early Church Fathers concerning the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine. The Early Church Fathers used such strong language in describing the Eucharist because they truly believed what they wrote. It was not merely symbolic as Mormons believe.

LDS indifference to the actual "substance" of the Eucharist has made possible the variation in the Mormon sacramental practice of substituting water for wine. Mormons claim that this was initially done because of the threat of poisoning by persecutors. I'm not sure how water can be considered less susceptible to poisoning than wine. Doctrine and Covenants 27:2 indicates that it "mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory..." I suppose there is no prohibition against using cookies and milk or

some other substitute for the sacrament, either. According to the Mormon canon it doesn't really matter what ingredients are used for the "sacrament".

Another reason given for the Mormon change from wine to water was the subsequent institution of the Mormon "health code" which forbids the use of alcohol. On the surface this all sounds well and good, but let's take a closer look at the "health code". It is called the "Word of Wisdom" and it is contained in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 89. The "Word of Wisdom" forbids the use of "wine or strong drink" except "in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him (the Father)." Verse 6 states that this offering should be "wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make." The health code specifically allows for the use of wine in the sacrament. This is not the only incident of conflicting advice in the health code. The Word of Wisdom states that "tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle..." Do Mormons really use tobacco as an herb for bruises? Next comes the hardest leap to make. The Word of Wisdom states that "hot drinks are not for the body or belly." Somehow Mormons have extracted from this prohibition against hot drinks the idea that caffeine is the ingredient to be avoided, whether in hot or cold drinks. While Mormons will abstain from drinking coffee or iced tea, they have no problems with drinking a mug of hot chocolate! Lastly, the Word of Wisdom suggests that "flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air...should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine." Do Mormons abstain from eating meat and poultry except in winter or famine? Nope! Rather than the noble reason of the "health code", Mormons have arbitrarily changed the matter of their sacrament from wine to water with no Scriptural basis for doing so.

Brigham Young gave some interesting insights into the reason why the Word of Wisdom was revealed to Joseph Smith. Young said, "I think I am as well acquainted with the circumstances which led to the giving of the Word of Wisdom as any man in the Church, although I was not present at the time to witness them. The first school of the prophets was held in a small room situated over the Prophet Joseph's kitchen, in a house which belonged to Bishop Whitney, and which was attached to his store, which store probably might be about fifteen feet square. In the rear of this building was a kitchen, probably ten by fourteen feet, containing rooms and pantries. Over this kitchen was situated the room in which the Prophet received revelations and in which he instructed his brethren. The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen. When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco, and the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry."

The Catholic Church teaches that in order to have a licit and valid celebration of the Eucharist, the Sacrifice of the Mass must be celebrated with bread and wine. Any celebration of the Eucharist that does not use bread and wine of the type described in the Code of Canon Law is illicit, meaning it is not permitted. If the deviation from the requisite type of bread and wine is substantial enough, the celebration of the sacrament will be invalid, meaning that the elements do not become the Body and Blood of Christ when the priest says the words of consecration. We do this in order to be faithful to the Lord's command that the Church continue to do, in His memory and until His glorious return, what He did on the eve of His Passion: "Jesus took bread..." (Matthew 26:26) "He took a cup... of this fruit of the vine (wine)..." (Matthew 26:27-29) (CCC 1333-1336)

Let us give thanks to God for His Mercy and Love. He has given His Church the greatest gift imaginable: the Sacrament of the Altar, the very own Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our dearly beloved Lord, Jesus Christ. This gift unites us to Christ and unites us to one another in Christ's mystical body, the Church. However, it comes with a great responsibility on the part of Catholics: we must teach its truths to others (Mormons, Protestants, non-Christians) so that we may *all* share in the Heavenly Banquet and "break bread" together for all of eternity. As St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:17, "Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."