



## Lenten Apologetics Bible Study Series



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## Weekly Topics



- **March 7th**
  - “Why do I need the Church when I have the Bible?”
- **March 14th**
  - “Is the Papacy in the Bible?”
- **March 21st**
  - “Why do Catholics Pray to Mary and the Saints?”
- **March 28<sup>th</sup>**
  - *“Is the Eucharist Truly the Body and Blood of Christ?”*
- **April 4<sup>th</sup>**
  - “Is Purgatory in the Bible?”
- **April 11<sup>th</sup>**
  - “Why the Catholic Church?”



## Is the Eucharist Truly the Body and Blood of Christ?



- Introduction – St. John Bosco's Dream
- What does the Church Teach about the Sacrament of the Eucharist?
- Biblical Basis for the Real Presence
  - Prefigured in the Old Testament
  - Fulfilled in the New Testament
- Historical Basis for the Real Presence
- Holy Mass – the Eucharistic Sacrifice
- Summary – The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of the Christian Life

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## St. John Bosco's Dream



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## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist?



- Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the Eucharist:
  - The “source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324)
  - The “sum and the summary of our faith” (CCC 1327)
- The Catholic Church has taught for 2,000 years that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist
- Under the appearance of bread and wine, Christ is completely present in his body, blood, soul, and divinity



## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist? (Cont.)



- God miraculously changes ordinary bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ when the priest says the words of consecration:
  - “**This is my body**”
  - “**This is my blood**”
- All outward appearances and sensible qualities of the bread and wine remain
- The substance of the bread and wine are changed into the substance of Christ’s living body and blood



## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist? (Cont.)



- Transformation of substance is called **transubstantiation**
  - The substance of the bread and wine are changed into the substance of Christ's living body and blood
  - The bread and wine are gone, replaced by the Real Presence of Christ
  - Only the appearances of bread and wine remain
- Jesus is present wholly and entirely in each of the Eucharistic elements (or species) as well as in each of its parts



## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist? (Cont.)



- We adore the Eucharist as God because Jesus is truly present:
  - We genuflect (or bow deeply) before the tabernacle
  - The Church reserves the consecrated hosts with great care and reverence
  - The Church carries the consecrated hosts in processions
  - The Church exposes the Blessed Sacrament for solemn adoration
- Christ's True Presence begins at the moment of consecration and lasts as long as the appearances of bread and wine remain



## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist? (Cont.)



- To receive Jesus in Holy Communion worthily we must:
  - Be in the state of grace (free from mortal sin)
    - If we are aware of a mortal sin we have committed we must first receive absolution in the Sacrament of Confession
  - Fast for one hour prior to receiving (except water and medicine)
  - Know who we are receiving (Jesus)
- We should receive Jesus often in the Eucharist (as a minimum once a year at Easter)



## What does the Church Teach on the Eucharist? (Cont.)



- **Eucharist** from the Greek word eucharistein which means “to give thanks”
- One of the Seven Sacraments
  - A Sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1131, 774)
- Also called by different names to reflect different aspects:
  - The Lord’s Supper, The Breaking of Bread, Eucharistic assembly, memorial of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection, Holy Sacrifice, Holy and Divine Liturgy, Most Blessed Sacrament, Holy Communion, Holy Mass



## What do Catholics Believe about the Real Presence?



- According to a 1992 Gallup poll:
  - **30%** believe they actually receive the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine
  - **29%** believe they receive bread and wine that symbolize the body and blood of Jesus
  - **10%** believe they receive bread and wine in which Jesus is also present
  - **24%** believe they are receiving what has become Christ's body and blood because of their personal belief



## What do Catholics Believe about the Real Presence? (Cont.)



- According to a more recent New York Times and CBS poll of Catholics who attend Mass regularly:

Age 65 and over: **51%** believe in the  
Real Presence

Age 45 – 64: **37%** believe in the  
Real Presence

Age 30 – 44: **28%** believe in the  
Real Presence

Age 18 – 29: **17%** believe in the  
Real Presence



## Three Ways Jesus is Present



- Natural Presence
  - Jesus is present everywhere (Omnipresent) as God through his knowledge, power and essence
- Spiritual Presence
  - Jesus is present spiritually in those who are in the state of grace
- Physical Presence
  - Jesus is present in his flesh and blood, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist



## Biblical Basis for the Real Presence



- Typology
  - OT persons and events are called “types” of the NT persons and events they prefigure
  - A type is a prophetic foreshadowing of its NT counterpart
    - **Melchizedek** - The bread and wine offered by the priest-king Melchizedek (Gen 14:18) prefigure the bread and wine offered by Jesus at the Last Supper
    - **Paschal Lamb** - Offered up to save the lives of the first-born of Israel was also consumed as food (Ex 12:1-20)
    - **Manna** – Bread from heaven which sustained the Israelites throughout their pilgrimage in the desert (Ex 16:35)



## Biblical Basis for the Real Presence (Cont.)



- The Ark of the Covenant

- Prefigures the tabernacles in our Catholic Churches
- Contents of the Ark prefigures the Eucharist:
  - **Written word of God** on tablets (Ex 25:16) prefigures the living word contained in the Eucharist
  - **Jar of manna** (Ex 16:34) - ordinary bread from heaven - prefigures the Eucharist where Jesus – “the living bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:51) comes to us under the appearance of bread
  - **Rod of Aaron** (Numbers 17:25) – flowered and bore ripe almonds as a sign of the true priesthood of the OT - prefigures the high priesthood of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant



## Prefigured in the Old Testament



- In the Old Covenant bread and wine were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits of the earth as a sign of grateful acknowledgment to the Creator
- Unleavened bread used by Israelites at Passover to commemorate their hasty departure from Egypt (Ex 12)
- Remembrance of the manna in the desert to recall that Israel lives by the bread of the Word of God (Deut 8:3)
- “Cup of blessing” at the end of the Jewish Passover meal represents the messianic expectation of the rebuilding of Jerusalem





## Prefigured in the Old Testament (Cont.)



- Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20)
  - King of Salem (identified with Jerusalem or Zion)
  - Priesthood earlier and greater than that of Aaron
  - Offered bread and wine in thanksgiving for Abram's victory in battle and gives him blessing
  - "You are a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4)
  - Abram apportioned to him a tenth of everything (tithing)
  - Melchizedek is identified as a type of Christ (Heb 7:1-3)



## Prefigured in the Old Testament (Cont.)



- The Paschal Lamb (Ex 12:1-20)
  - The victim will be a lamb, without blemish
  - The blood of the lamb smeared on doorposts signifies protection from dangers
  - The Passover is essentially sacrificial from the very start of the meal
  - It is necessary to consume the sacrificial lamb
  - The feast of the unleavened bread is directly connected to the Passover meal



## Prefigured in the Old Testament (Cont.)



- A lamb is prescribed as the sacrificial victim in other rituals:
  - Feast of Weeks (Num 28:26,27)
  - Feast of Tabernacles (Num 29:13-15)
  - Day of Atonement (Num 29:7-8)
  - Daily sacrifices (Ex 29:38-42)



## Prefigured in the Old Testament (Cont.)



- **Manna from Heaven**  
(Num 11:7-8; Deut 8:3-16; Ps 78:24)
  - Israelites lived off this food during their forty years in the desert
  - Like coriander seed, white in color and sweet to the taste
  - It fell each day of the week with the exception of the Sabbath
  - Not the *true* bread from heaven  
(Jn 6:32-34, 49-51)
  - Container filled with manna preserved in the Ark of the Covenant  
(Ex 16:33; Heb 9:4; Rev 2:17)



## Prefigured in the Old Testament (Cont.)



- Ark of the Covenant
  - Holiest of containers in the OT
    - **Tablets with the Ten Commandments**  
(written word of God)
    - **Jar of Manna**  
(bread from heaven sustained the Israelites in the desert for 40 years)
    - **Rod of Aaron**  
(flowered and bore ripe almonds – sign of true Old Covenant priesthood of Aaron)
  - Prefigures the tabernacles in our Catholic Churches  
(also prefigures Mary)



## Fulfilled in the New Testament



- The Eucharist Promised in John 6
  - Two major, interconnected themes:
    - Jesus' teaching about the *Eucharist*
    - Jesus' discussion about *faith* – the unique and special faith needed to accept his difficult teaching about the Holy Eucharist
  - Many of Jesus' own disciples lacked the faith required to believe in the Real Presence  
(Jn 6:41-42, 52, 60, 66)
  - Jesus stresses the theme of faith at the same time that he reveals his teaching on the Eucharist



## Fulfilled in the New Testament (Cont.)



- When he was among us it took great faith to believe Jesus was God
  - His humanity veiled his divinity
- To believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist requires even greater faith
  - Both His divinity and His humanity are veiled in the Eucharist
- Multiplication of the loaves and fish (Jn 6:1-15)
- Walking on the water (Jn 6:16-21)

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## Fulfilled in the New Testament (Cont.)



- Multiplication of the loaves and fish (Jn 6:1-15)
  - Miracle directly connected with the discourses at Capernaum in which Jesus presents himself as “the bread of life”
  - Connected to the Passover, which was “at hand”
  - Took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people (cf Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:25)
- Their faith is still imperfect
  - They recognize him as the promised Messiah (Deut 18:15) but in terms of an earthly, political messianism to free them from Roman domination

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## Fulfilled in the New Testament (Cont.)



- Jesus walks on the water (Jn 6:16-21)
  - The disciples were concerned because it was dark, the sea was getting rough, and Jesus had still not appeared
  - Our Lord does not abandon them
  - Jesus walks on the water to strengthen their faith, which was still weak
- The boat symbolizes the Church
- The disciples symbolize the members
- Darkness and rough seas symbolize the many difficulties we will face as a people and Church
- Jesus will not abandon us or His Church



## Fulfilled in the New Testament (Cont.)



- Discourse on the Bread of Life (Jn 6:22-71)
  - No accident that Jesus performs two of His most famous miracles, both of which emphasize faith:
    - Test Phillip's faith with the multiplication of the loaves and the feeding of the 5000 (Jn 6:6)
    - Test Peter's faith by calming the storm at sea (Mt 14:31)
  - Jesus clearly teaches that we must consume his flesh and blood as real food
  - Jesus was speaking literally and not symbolically about his real flesh and blood



## Jesus was Speaking Literally not Symbolically



- Jesus turns five loaves and a couple of fish into a seemingly inexhaustible food supply
- This miracle prefigures the inexhaustible gift of Christ's own flesh and blood
  - Received by millions without being divided or diminished
- Jesus claims that this miracle of ordinary bread is nothing compared to the miracle he will give us with the extraordinary bread of his own flesh



## Jesus was Speaking Literally not Symbolically (Cont.)



- Jesus claims the **superiority** of his bread over the manna given to the Israelites
- The miracle of the manna was enormous
- Jesus says that he will perform an even greater miracle than the manna
- Mere earthly, natural bread serving as a symbol of Christ would be *inferior* to the heavenly, supernatural manna
- The bread Christ gives us must be *more real* and *more miraculous* than even the manna



## Jesus was Speaking Literally not Symbolically (Cont.)



- Everyone who heard Jesus understood him to be speaking **literally** of his own body and blood
- Many of these disciples had lived, eaten and walked with Jesus for nearly two years
  - They spoke the same language and dialect
  - They heard him use different figures of speech
  - They heard him speak symbolically, using parables, allegories, and analogies
  - They also heard him speak literally, meaning exactly what he said
- Understood perfectly that he meant what he said



## Jesus was Speaking Literally not Symbolically (Cont.)



- Jesus emphatically repeats the literalness of this teaching six times in six verses
  - “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” (Jn 6:53)
  - “My flesh is **real food** and my blood **real drink**” (Jn 6:55)
- This is not the language of symbolism



## Jesus was Speaking Literally not Symbolically (Cont.)



- Many of Jesus' own disciples can't accept the literalness of his teaching and leave him (Jn 6:66)
  - Jesus does not call them back to explain that he is only speaking figuratively as he does elsewhere (cf. Jn 4:31-34; Mt 16:5-12)
- Even the twelve Apostles are shaken
  - “Will you also go away?” (Jn 6:67)
- We can either doubt like the unbelieving Jews and disciples, or believe like Peter that somehow Christ will accomplish his promise



## Historical Basis for the Real Presence



- Evidence from the Early Church Fathers
  - They are our only bridge to Christ and his Apostles
  - That bridge is unmistakably, undeniably Catholic
  - Virtually every distinctively Catholic doctrine is clearly found in the writings of the early Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - This includes the **Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist**, the Mass as a sacrifice, apostolic succession, the primacy of Peter, intercessory prayer to the saints, devotion to Mary, purgatory, and confession to a priest





## Historical Basis for the Real Presence (Cont.)



- St. Ignatius of Antioch (around 110 AD)
  - “Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God... 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.”  
(Letter to Smyrnaeans 6, 2: Jurgens, page 26, #64)



## Historical Basis for the Real Presence (Cont.)



- St. Ignatius in his Letter to the Romans:
  - “I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire His Blood, which is love incorruptible.”
- St. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* (about 195 AD)
  - “He [Jesus] 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.”



## Historical Basis for the Real Presence (Cont.)



- Other Early Church Fathers
  - St. Justin Martyr (Apology, around 150 AD)
  - St. Cyril of Jerusalem (catechetical lecture, 350 AD)
- Virtually all Christians accepted the doctrine of the Real Presence until the Protestant Reformation
- All the churches that broke away from the Catholic Church before the Reformation still believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
  - Nestorians, Eutychians, Coptic, and Armenian (5<sup>th</sup> century)
  - Orthodox Churches (11<sup>th</sup> century)



## Holy Mass – Eucharistic Sacrifice



- The divine sacrifice made “once for all” (Heb 7:27) is a unique historical event
- Jesus’ sacrifice, though occurring in the past to us, is nevertheless always present to God
  - God himself does not exist in time as we do
- The presentation of Jesus as “Lamb” to the Father is an ongoing occurrence (from God’s perspective, timeless), long after the death of Jesus (see Rev 5:6; 13:8)
- Jesus “has a priesthood that does not pass away” (Heb 7:24)



## Holy Mass – Eucharistic Sacrifice (Cont.)



- The Mass is a re-presentation of Jesus' historical, one-time sacrificial death on the cross
- The priest re-enacts Jesus' priestly actions at the Last Supper, offering once more his Body and Blood
- Jesus is not sacrificed again in the Eucharist
- His unique sacrifice is made real and present to us here and now, because it is a divine reality that transcends space and time



## Holy Mass – Eucharistic Sacrifice (Cont.)



- The Mass is truly a sacrifice offered by a priest upon an altar
- The elements of priests and altars also play a role in the New Covenant in Christ's blood (see Lk 22:20)
- Book of Revelation tells us of the "altar" with a "gold censer" in the "temple" where the sacrificed Lamb, Jesus, reigns (Rev 5:6; 6:9; 8:3; 9:13)
- Jesus is the Lamb who was slain for our sins
  - The sacrificial Paschal Lamb must be consumed



## Holy Mass – Eucharistic Sacrifice (Cont.)



- In presenting us a vision of heaven, Revelation also provides us a glimpse of the Mass, our foretaste on earth of heaven’s “wedding feast of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9)



## Source and Summit of Christian Life



- Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the Eucharist:
  - The “source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324)
  - The “sum and the summary of our faith” (CCC 1327)
- The Catholic Church has taught for 2,000 years that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist
- Under the appearance of bread and wine, Christ is completely present in his body, blood, soul, and divinity



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## Question and Answer



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