

THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS IS TRULY PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST

By Bro. Peter Dimond

John 6:53- "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Protestants do not believe that the Eucharist is the actual body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that after the consecration at Mass, "the Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really, and substantially contained" in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine (*Council of Trent*, Decree on the Eucharist). The Catholic view of the Eucharist was unanimously held for the first 1500 years of Christianity. The biblical support for the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist is overwhelming and undeniable.

IN JOHN CHAPTER 6, JESUS CLEARLY SAYS THAT HIS FLESH IS FOOD AND HIS BLOOD IS DRINK, AND THAT YOU MUST EAT HIS FLESH AND DRINK HIS BLOOD

John 6:51-58- "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and **the bread that I will give is my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. **Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life**; and I will raise him up at the last day. **For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Jesus says over and over again, in the clearest terms, that His flesh is food and His blood is drink. He says that unless you eat His flesh and drink His blood you shall not have life in you.

THE JEWS SCOFFED AT THE NOTION OF EATING HIS FLESH; IN RESPONSE, JESUS CONFIRMS THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HE MEANT

Non-Catholics claim that the words of Jesus in John 6 are not meant to be understood literally. They claim that Jesus was speaking only metaphorically or symbolically. Such an interpretation is not justified by the context of John 6. Furthermore, it is clearly refuted by what Jesus said to the Jews immediately after they expressed their disbelief at the idea of eating His flesh.

John 6:52-53- "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, **How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.**"

The Jews did not believe that it was possible (or that Jesus could really mean) that He would give them His flesh to eat. They said exactly what the Protestants are saying today. If Jesus had been speaking in purely metaphorical (rather than literal) terms, as the Protestants say, then here was the perfect opportunity for Him to assure them that their fears were unfounded. It was the perfect moment for Jesus to explain that He didn't really mean that people would eat His flesh, but that He meant something else.

So what does Jesus say to them? In response to their disbelief, we see that Jesus repeats the same message, that it's necessary to actually eat His flesh and drink His blood, but in even stronger terms. He tells them that if they don't eat His flesh and drink His blood they will not have life in them (John 6:53).

THERE'S MORE: IN JOHN 6:54, THE BIBLE SWITCHES FROM THE WORD *PHAGO* (MEANING "EAT") TO *TROGO* (MEANING "CHEW" OR "GNAW") TO LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT JESUS ACTUALLY MEANS EATING HIS FLESH

The word *phago* (meaning "to eat" or "consume") is used nine times in the original Greek text of John 6:23-53. *Phago* is sufficient to convey the idea of eating Jesus' flesh. Immediately after the Jews expressed their disbelief that Jesus could mean such a thing, we read (in John 6:54) that Jesus switched to an even stronger and more graphic word. **The word He then used (in John 6:54 and following) is *trogo*. This word literally means "to gnaw, chew or crunch,"** as even a Protestant study bible accessible on the internet will confirm.¹ Therefore, to eradicate all doubt about the necessity to eat His flesh, Jesus switches to a word which means nothing but literal eating ("gnawing, chewing"). The same word *trogo* is used to mean literal eating in Matthew 24:38 and John 13:18.

John 6:54-56- "Whosoever eateth [*trogo*] my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth [*trogo*] my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

In light of this evidence, it is absurd to argue that Jesus didn't mean that people would actually eat His flesh and drink His blood.

WHAT ABOUT JOHN 6:63?

Faced with the overwhelming evidence in John 6 that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus, certain non-Catholics will look for anything to combat it. They will point to John 6:63.

John 6:63- "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

They claim this indicates that Jesus didn't really mean that people will eat His flesh. This claim does not hold up, however. It is refuted by the following points.

First, we know that Jesus is not talking about His flesh in the part of the verse where He says "the flesh profits nothing." Consider this question: is the flesh of Jesus of no profit? What about His Incarnation? How could He speak of His own flesh as profiting nothing, when He just said over and over (John 6:51, etc.) that His flesh is the life of the world?

If Jesus was speaking of His flesh when He said that the flesh profits nothing, then He was contradicting Himself. Jesus would have been saying that His flesh is the life of the world (John 6:51, etc.) just before telling them that "it profits nothing." That's impossible and ridiculous. Jesus was not speaking of His flesh when He said "the flesh profits nothing."

Second, Jesus says that people need to eat His flesh and drink His blood (and that His flesh is food) approximately ten times in this chapter. Not once does He indicate that His meaning is not literal; nor does He do so here.

Rather, by emphasizing to them that what He said about His flesh and blood is "spirit and life," Jesus was dispelling their notion that all they should be concerned with is having flesh to eat for the sustenance of physical life. **The Eucharist is the actual flesh and blood of Jesus (as He makes clear), as well as His soul and divinity, but it primarily brings a spiritual endowment.** It is spirit and life. It is primarily for the sustenance of spiritual life and having eternal life.

It is not received for the purpose of filling a hungry stomach, but for the inestimable spiritual life and graces that it brings. That's what Jesus was telling them. This is confirmed by the next point, which shows that *even after His words in John 6:63*, many of Jesus' followers left Him over the "hard saying"

¹ <http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/view.cgi?number=5176>

about His flesh and blood. They realized that Jesus was telling them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, but they simply refused to accept it.

AFTER TELLING THEM THAT THEY MUST EAT HIS FLESH AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES LEFT HIM; THIS PROVES THAT IT WAS CLEAR TO ALL PRESENT THAT JESUS SAID AND MEANT THAT PEOPLE MUST EAT HIS FLESH

John 6:60-68- "**Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?** When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?... **From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

If Jesus did not really mean that people would eat His flesh and drink His blood, then He would have clarified His meaning and stopped these disciples from leaving Him over a misunderstanding. He would have said something like this: "*Wait, you misunderstood me. I was only speaking symbolically. I didn't really mean that people would eat my flesh and drink my blood.*" But He doesn't do anything of the sort. He lets everyone who cannot accept His message walk away. This is an overwhelming contextual indication that everyone understood that Jesus was speaking literally of the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood. They simply couldn't accept it, and Jesus wasn't going to deny the truth or modify what He had told them.

The fact that many of Jesus' followers left Him over the necessity to eat His flesh and drink His blood is sadly illustrative of how this issue would, at different times in Church history, be a prime cause of people leaving the true faith of Jesus. It happened again in the 16th century, when many left Jesus and His true faith because they refused to believe that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

PROTESTANTS ADMIT THAT THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB MENTIONED IN EXODUS 12, WHICH THE HEBREWS HAD TO MARK THEIR DOORS WITH, SIGNIFIES JESUS AS THE LAMB OF GOD SLAIN FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD; THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT GOD ALSO COMMANDED THE HEBREWS **TO EAT** THE PASSOVER LAMB

In Exodus 12 we read that God commanded the Jews to mark their doors with the blood of a lamb. The angel of death, passing through Egypt, would pass over the doors of the Hebrews which were marked with the blood.

Exodus 12:13- "And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and **I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you:** and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt."

Protestants and Catholics readily acknowledge that the blood of the Passover lamb (a real event) was also a type (a foreshadowing) of Jesus Christ, the true Passover Lamb. He is the true Lamb who was slain. His blood was poured out to save the world. People must receive the merit of His passion to be saved. The New Testament repeatedly declares that Jesus is the "Lamb of God" who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 15:3; etc.). St. Paul specifically describes Jesus as the Passover lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7.

1 Corinthians 5:7- "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us."

John 1:29- "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world."

There can be no doubt that the blood of the Passover lamb is a type of the blood of Jesus Christ, and that **the Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ.** Now here's the interesting part as it pertains to this issue.

The Hebrews were not only commanded to mark their doors with the blood of the lamb; but they were also commanded to eat the lamb!

Exodus 12:7-8- "And they shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein **they shall eat it**. And they shall eat the flesh in that night..."

Exodus 12:11- "And thus **shall ye eat it**; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover."

The necessity to consume the Passover lamb shows us the necessity to eat the flesh of the Son of man in the Eucharist. It isn't enough to be marked with the blood of the Lamb; one must also consume the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, to be saved. It's necessary to receive Him in the Eucharist. He becomes present at a valid Catholic Mass. It's also interesting that no one who was not of the family of God could eat the lamb (Exodus 12:43-45), just like no one who is not of the true faith can receive the Eucharist.

JESUS WORKED THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES THE DAY BEFORE TELLING THEM OF THE EUCHARIST IN ORDER TO SHOW EVERYONE THAT MIRACULOUS SUPERABUNDANCE IS POSSIBLE

In the very same chapter that Jesus speaks so clearly of receiving His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, we read that He performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

John 6:9-14- "... five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down... So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."

5000 people miraculously ate from what began as five barley loaves and two fishes. Jesus performed this miracle the very day before He told them that they must receive His flesh and blood in the Eucharist. By working this miracle just before He told them that they must receive His flesh and blood in the Eucharist, Jesus intended to show them that such a thing is possible. For the concept of eating Jesus' flesh and blood was completely new and mind-boggling to them. In the same way, the idea that He would miraculously become present for people in many places was astonishing. The miraculous multiplication of the food was intended to dispel their doubt, to win their complete confidence in His words before telling them about the miracle of the Eucharist. The multiplication of the food indeed signified the miraculous food of the Eucharist, which is not bread but the body and blood of Christ.

THE EUCHARIST CANNOT BE JUST ORDINARY BREAD; OTHERWISE IT WOULD BE INFERIOR TO ITS OLD TESTAMENT TYPE, THE MANNA IN THE DESERT, WHICH APPEARED SUPERNATURALLY

There can be no doubt that the manna in the desert (Exodus 16) prefigured the Eucharist. Jesus makes a connection between the two in John chapter 6.

John 6:48-51- "I am that bread of life. **Your fathers did eat manna** in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **I am the living bread** which came down from heaven... and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Jesus makes reference to the manna in the desert, and then says that His flesh is the true manna from Heaven. The manna in the desert was bread, but bread which appeared miraculously. It fell every day, except Saturday, for the 40 years that the Hebrews were in the desert. It showed up as if it had fallen from Heaven.

Exodus 16:15- "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: Manhu! which signifieth: What is this! for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them: This is the bread, which the Lord hath given you to eat."

The New Testament fulfillment is greater than the Old Testament type. If, as the Protestants say, the Eucharist is just ordinary bread, then it would be inferior to the manna in the desert, which appeared miraculously. It would be inferior to its Old Testament type. That doesn't make sense; it cannot be the case. The Eucharist must be supernatural and miraculous in some way.

JESUS SAYS: "THIS IS MY BODY" AND "THIS IS MY BLOOD";
HE DOESN'T SAY: THIS IS JUST A SYMBOL OF MY BODY AND BLOOD

Matthew 26:26-28- "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; **this is my body**. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for **this is my blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Mark 14:22-24- "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: **this is my body**. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, **This is my blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Luke 22:19-20- "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, **This is my body** which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood**, which is shed for you."

The translations above are from the Protestant King James version of the Bible. Even the Protestant translations show that Jesus proclaims the Eucharist to be His body and His blood. There were many ways in Hebrew or Aramaic for Jesus to say "this represents my body," or "this is a symbol of my body," but He doesn't. He says "this is my body" and "this is my blood."

Moreover, contrary to what some think, the words "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19) do not suggest that the Eucharist is just a symbol. The Greek word for "remembrance" is *anamnesis*. It has a sacrificial meaning. It's one of the sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament. It means to make present again as a sacrificial offering. Jesus is telling them to offer His actual body and blood to the Father as a memorial sacrifice.

JESUS' LANGUAGE CORRESPONDS TO THAT OF MOSES IN EXODUS 24, IN THE FOUNDING OF
THE FIRST COVENANT, WHICH HAD REAL BLOOD

The institution of the Eucharist (which we read about in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22) clearly corresponds to the institution of the first covenant in Exodus 24.

Exodus 24:8- "And **Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you** concerning all these words."

Matthew 26:26-28- "And as they were eating, **Jesus took bread**, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. **And he took the cup**, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **for this is my blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Notice the similarity of language between the institutions of the two covenants. Jesus institutes the New Covenant in His blood on the same pattern that Moses instituted the first covenant. The New Covenant of Jesus takes the place of the Old, and it will be the New and Everlasting covenant. But if the blood referred to by Jesus isn't real blood – but just a symbol, as the Protestants say – then the New Covenant would be inferior to the Old; for the institution of the Old Covenant involved real blood.

1 CORINTHIANS 10 CLEARLY TEACHES THAT THE EUCHARIST IS A PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTUAL BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 10:16- **“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?”**

St. Paul is clear that the Eucharist is the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 11 SAYS THAT TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST UNWORTHILY IS TO SIN AGAINST THE ACTUAL BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD

1 Corinthians 11:26-29- **“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore **whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**”**

According to the clear teaching of the Bible, one who receives the Eucharist unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. St. Paul says that a person eats and drinks damnation by receiving the Eucharist without the proper dispositions and discernment. If the Eucharist is just a piece of bread and some wine, taken in memory of Christ, how could one who receives it improperly be found guilty of the body and blood of the Lord? One would obviously not be held guilty of the body and blood of Christ unless the Eucharist is indeed the body and blood of Christ.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH UNANIMOUSLY BELIEVED THAT THE EUCHARIST IS THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Besides the clear biblical evidence we've seen, the witness of the ancient Church unanimously supports Catholic teaching on the Eucharist. Anyone who takes time to consult the fathers of the Church on this point will discover that they all believed that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The fathers of the Church are the Christian writers from the earliest centuries. They are those who received the tradition of the Apostles.

The Protestant view of the Eucharist was foreign to the entire Christian Church for the first 1500 years of its existence. I could quote many passages from the fathers of the Church on this matter, but I will only quote three. In 110 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch (one of the apostolic fathers generally acknowledged by Protestants) said the following about a group of heretics who denied that the Eucharist is the flesh of Christ. He was referring to the Docetists, who also denied the reality of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chapter 7, 110 A.D.- **“They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ,** which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again.”

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 5, Chap. 2, 185 A.D.- **“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?"

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Discourses, Mystagogic 1*, 19:7, 350 A.D.- "For as the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist before the invocation of the Holy and Adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, while after the invocation the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ..." (<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txuc/cyiril48.htm>)

To deny the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist is simply to deny the clear teaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

© 2008 Most Holy Family Monastery.

www.mostholyfamilymonastery.com
www.vaticancatholic.com