



New Covenant Worship **by Joe Sixpack**

I sure hope you're keeping track of this series. Last week we looked at how God established the worship He demands from His human creatures. This week we'll begin to look at how that consistently continues under the new and everlasting covenant.

It was at the last supper that Jesus established the New Covenant with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But how did that effect the Old Covenant and how God was to be worshipped? Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them." But how did He do that?

First, Jesus did something very profound. He said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then, after His resurrection from the dead, He told the apostles, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." Thus he passed on to them his own mission. And repeatedly He told His apostles, "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." So Christ has given his divine authority to Peter and all his successors.

Since Jesus gave us the new, ultimate sacrifice for divine worship at the first Mass when He said, "Do this in memory of me," and since he gave his divine authority to Peter and his successors, then the Church speaks in Christ's name and determines how the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is to be done.

Since Jesus gave his apostles his divine authority, and since the new covenant is merely a fulfillment of the old as Jesus said, the Church speaks in Jesus' name to regulate the Mass. Just as God told Moses how he wanted his old covenant priests to dress, so too does the Church tell new covenant priests how to dress (alb, stole, chasuble, etc). The levitical priests had to dress worthily to stand in God's presence in the Ark of the Covenant. Likewise, Catholic priests have to dress worthily to re-present Jesus' sacrifice to the Father (a perfected culmination of all the old covenant sacrifices) while before the tabernacle. Under the new covenant, the sacrifices of bread, wine and flesh were replaced with the Holy Eucharist, which is at one and the same time perfected bread, wine and flesh—perfected because it is the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Because the Eucharist is in fact Jesus, when we go to Mass we worship Him there

truly present. But is the Eucharist really the living flesh and blood of Jesus Christ as the Church claims? Can it be proven?

At the first Mass during the last supper, he took bread in his sacred hands, gave the Father thanks and praise, broke the bread and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup of wine, gave thanks and said, “drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

And that’s the basis for the Catholic Church’s teaching about the Real Presence—that Jesus is really and truly present on our altars at Mass. But that’s not the proof of It.

We’ll begin by looking at the last supper narrative in Luke 22:15. Jesus said, “I have *earnestly desired* to eat this passover with you before I suffer.”

Jesus knew he’d be on the cross dying in a matter of hours. We have to ask ourselves, “Would a man on death row would be anxious to have his last meal?” Certainly not! But this is what Jesus, who knew he was essentially on death row, appears to be saying. So the next logical question is, “Why?”

To learn the answer to that question we have to look at John 6. Before we get to the pertinent passages, let’s first set the stage with three miracles performed by Jesus. As John 6 opens, we see Jesus feeding 5000 from a few loaves and fishes—miracle #1. After this, Jesus went into the hills to pray while He sent his disciples across the sea in their boat. But that night the sea became stormy and the apostles were afraid they would perish. Then they saw Jesus walking on the water to them—miracle #2. Once he got into the boat, they suddenly found themselves at the shore on the other side of the sea—miracle 3.

While the second and third miracle were taking place, the people from the day before spent the night going to the other side the Sea of Galilee to catch up with the apostles. They were in search of Jesus, but they didn’t know where he was. They knew he didn’t get into the boat with the apostles the night before, but they did know wherever the apostles were, Jesus would turn up.

They were amazed to find Jesus waiting for them on the other side of the sea. They said, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” But Jesus cut right to the chase. And that’s where we’re going to pick up in next week’s *What We Believe... Why We Believe It*, to find out exactly what Jesus had to say to them, and what it means to us today.

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