



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone
who asks you for a reason for your hope"
1 Peter 3:15

The Sacraments:

What are they and why do
we need them?

What is a Sacrament?

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us sacraments are “*efficacious signs of grace perceptible to the senses*”. They were “*instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church*” and through them “*divine life is bestowed upon us*”
- The sacraments are “*perceptible to the senses*”, meaning they have an external aspect that can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled.
- As efficacious signs of grace they really confer the grace they signify.
- *CHOSEN Lesson 8, Seg 2: What is a Sacrament?*
<https://youtu.be/roeOjX0m6zc>

What Do They Do?

- The Sacraments were “*instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church*” to give us His grace.
- Grace is Supernatural gift of God to intellectual creatures (human beings, angels) for their eternal salvation
- We don’t “*Earn*” God’s grace through the sacraments, his grace is a gift, and sacraments do not make us deserving of it.

Who Invented the Sacraments?

- Sacraments are part of our covenant with Jesus: He promised that if we do certain things, He will give us the gift of his grace and thereby the gift of salvation
- Although some are described in the more detail than others, references to all of the sacraments can be found in the New Testament.
- **1) Baptism** - *Gospel of John 3:5*
- **2) Confirmation** - *Acts of the Apostles 8:14-17*
- **3) Eucharist** - *Gospel of John 6:51-58*
- **4) Confession** - *Gospel of John 20:21-23*
- **5) Holy Orders** - *1 Corinthians 11:23-25*
- **6) Holy Matrimony** - *Gospel of Matthew 19:4-6*
- **7) Anointing of the Sick** - *James 5:14*

Can we change the Sacraments?

- The sacraments have been entrusted to the Church to preserve and administer them but the Church does not have the authority to add or abolish any of those that exist or change the essence of the seven that Jesus instituted.
- Some examples in recent years have been Women's ordination to the priesthood, same sex couples mimicking a marriage does not constitute the sacrament of matrimony. Or the priest does not have the ability to change rice cakes into the body of Christ.

Did they have Sacraments in the OT?

1. OT Circumcision – NT Baptism
2. OT Burnt Offerings – NT Confession/Reconciliation
3. OT Passover Meal – NT Holy Eucharist
4. OT Bar Mitzvah – NT Confirmation
5. OT Marriage – NT Holy Matrimony
6. OT Levitical Priesthood – NT Holy Orders
7. OT - Healing the Sick - NT - Anointing of the Sick

What Do Protestants Believe?

Most Protestant denominations only believe in two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

- HOWEVER, even they refer to them as “Sacraments”
- most of them believe that although they may be pious rituals, they don't believe that they provide us with grace.

“Sacraments are only symbolic and have no efficacy. They are simply memorials of Christ – signs and testimonies of God’s good will and nothing else.”

- The Bible shows us that this is a false claim and that the Sacraments are indeed efficacious: **John 6:25-68, Mark 16:16, John 3:5, 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38, James 5:13-16**

“Drinking blood is condemned in Lev. 17”

- Consuming the blood of animals because the life of all flesh is in the blood (**Leviticus 17:13-14**). However, there is **ONE** person whose life we want to have in us – and that is our Lord Jesus Christ (**John 6:53-54**).

“Only God can forgive sins”

- As we read in Scripture – Jesus transferred this power to His Church – to forgive sins in His name: **Matt. 16:19, Matt. 18:15-18** and especially in **John 20:21-23**.

“The Bible never mentions “Sacraments”

- However - they don't mention the fact that the word “**Trinity**” is not in the Bible either. You won't find the word, “**Incarnation**” either. Yet, the **Trinity** and the **Incarnation** are very basic, universally-held tenets of Christianity.

For that matter – the word “**Bible**” isn't even in the Bible and neither is there a canonical Table of Contents.

“Christ only instituted TWO Sacraments. The rest are traditions of men.”

- Speaking of **“Traditions of men”** – the two main Pillars of Protestantism, **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture is our sole authority) and **Sola Fide** (we are saved by faith alone) are traditions of men in the 16th century.
- There are many others including **Perspicuity of Scripture, Double Predestination, Limited Atonement, Eternal Security, Accepting Jesus as “Personal Lord and Savior”** – and the list goes on . . .

“Water baptism is unnecessary – it is the Baptism of the Spirit that is important.”

- The following verses of Scripture **refute** this false claim:

Mark 16:16 - **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved**; whoever does not believe will be condemned.

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.”

1 Peter 3:21 - **This prefigured baptism, which saves you now**. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God* for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ ***for the forgiveness of your sins***; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.

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“Sacraments aren’t necessary for Salvation.”

- Once again, this claim is debunked by the Bible . . .

John 6:53-58, Mark 16:16, John 3:5, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 2:38, James 5:13-16, John 6:53-57, John 20:21-23, 2 Cor. 5:18-20, 2 Cor. 2:10

Early Church Fathers on the Sacraments

It is imperative that Catholics know the writings of the **Early Church Fathers**, who were the great Christians of the Early Church after the Apostolic era and who carried on the oral and written Traditions of the Catholic Church. These are the Early Christians who were among those who were put to death for their beliefs – and by whose example and witness we model our lives.

It is also important to understand that they were unashamedly **Catholic**. We must take seriously their testimonies of faith because our Protestant brethren take their writings out of context to support their man-made doctrines – and they deserve to know the truth.

BAPTISM

Hermas

“‘I have heard, sir,’ said I [to the Shepherd], ‘from some teacher, that there is no other repentance except that which took place when we went down into the water and obtained the remission of our former sins.’ He said to me, ‘You have heard rightly, for so it is’” (*The Shepherd* 4:3:1–2 [A.D. 80]).

Justin Martyr

“As many as are persuaded and believe that what we [Christians] teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly . . . are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Except you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:3]” (*First Apology* 61 [A.D. 151]).

Tertullian

“Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life. . . . (*Baptism* 1 [A.D. 203]).

“Without baptism, salvation is attainable by none” (ibid., 12).

“We have, indeed, a second [baptismal] font which is one with the former [water baptism]: namely, that of blood, of which the Lord says: ‘I am to be baptized with a baptism’ [Luke 12:50], when he had already been baptized. He had come through water and blood, as John wrote [1 John 5:6], so that he might be baptized with water and glorified with blood. . . . This is the baptism which replaces that of the fountain, when it has not been received, and restores it when it has been lost” (ibid., 16).

Origen

“It is not possible to receive forgiveness of sins without baptism” (*Exhortation to the Martyrs* 30 [A.D. 235]).

Hippolytus

“Perhaps someone will ask, ‘What does it conduce unto piety to be baptized?’ In the first place, that you may do what has seemed good to God; in the next place, being born again by water unto God so that you change your first birth, which was from concupiscence, and are able to attain salvation, which would otherwise be impossible. For thus the [prophet] has sworn to us: ‘Amen, I say to you, unless you are born again with living water, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Therefore, fly to the water, for this alone can extinguish the fire. He who will not come to the water still carries around with him the spirit of insanity for the sake of which he will not come to the living water for his own salvation” (*Homilies* 11:26 [A.D. 217]).

Cyprian of Carthage

“The baptism of public witness and of blood cannot profit a heretic unto salvation, because there is no salvation outside the Church.” (*Letters* 72[73]:21 [A.D. 253]).

Cyprian of Carthage (*cont'd.*)

“[Catechumens who suffer martyrdom] are not deprived of the sacrament of baptism. Rather, they are baptized with the most glorious and greatest baptism of blood, concerning which the Lord said that he had another baptism with which he himself was to be baptized [Luke 12:50]” (ibid., 72[73]:22).

Cyril of Jerusalem

“If any man does not receive baptism, he does not have salvation. The only exception is the martyrs, who even without water will receive the kingdom. . . . For the Savior calls martyrdom a baptism, saying, ‘Can you drink the cup which I drink and be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized [Mark 10:38]?’ Indeed, the martyrs too confess, by being made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men [1 Cor. 4:9]” (*Catechetical Lectures* 3:10 [A.D. 350]).

Gregory Nazianz

“[Besides the baptisms associated with Moses, John, and Jesus] I know also a fourth baptism, that by martyrdom and blood, by which also Christ himself was baptized. This one is far more august than the others, since it cannot be defiled by later sins” (*Oration on the Holy Lights* 39:17 [A.D. 381]).

Pope Siricius

“It would tend to the ruin of our souls if, from our refusal of the saving font of baptism to those who seek it, any of them should depart this life and lose the kingdom and eternal life” (*Letter to Himerius* 3 [A.D. 385]).

John Chrysostom

“Do not be surprised that I call martyrdom a baptism, for here too the Spirit comes in great haste and there is the taking away of sins and a wonderful and marvelous cleansing of the soul, and just as those being baptized are washed in water, so too those being martyred are washed in their own blood” (*Panegyric on St. Lucian* 2 [A.D. 387]).

Ambrose of Milan

“But I hear you lamenting because he [the Emperor Valentinian] had not received the sacraments of baptism. Tell me, what else could we have, except the will to it, the asking for it? He too had just now this desire, and after he came into Italy it was begun, and a short time ago he signified that he wished to be baptized by me. Did he, then, not have the grace which he desired? Did he not have what he eagerly sought? Certainly, because he sought it, he received it. What else does it mean: ‘Whatever just man shall be overtaken by death, his soul shall be at rest [Wis. 4:7]’?” (*Sympathy at the Death of Valentinian* [A.D. 392]).

Augustine

“There are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptism, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance; yet God does not forgive sins except to the baptized” (*Sermons to Catechumens on the Creed* 7:15 [A.D. 395]).

“That the place of baptism is sometimes supplied by suffering is supported by a substantial argument which the same blessed Cyprian draws from the circumstance of the thief, to whom, although not baptized, it was said, ‘Today you shall be with me in paradise’ [Luke 23:43]. Considering this over and over again, I find that not only suffering for the name of Christ can supply for that which is lacking by way of baptism, but even faith and conversion of heart [i.e., baptism of desire] if, perhaps, because of the circumstances of the time, recourse cannot be had to the celebration of the mystery of baptism” (*ibid.*, 4:22:29).

Pope Leo I

“And because of the transgression of the first man, the whole stock of the human race was tainted; no one can be set free from the state of the old Adam save through Christ’s sacrament of baptism, in which there are no distinctions between the reborn, as the apostle [Paul] says, ‘For as many of you as were baptized in Christ did put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . ‘ [Gal. 3:27–28]” (*Letters* 15:10[11] [A.D. 445]).

Fulgentius of Ruspe

“From that time at which our Savior said, ‘If anyone is not reborn of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:5], no one can, without the sacrament of baptism, except those who, in the Catholic Church, without baptism, pour out their blood for Christ, receive the kingdom of heaven and life eternal” (*The Rule of Faith* 43 [A.D. 524]).

Infant Baptism

Irenaeus

“He [Jesus] came to save all through himself; all, I say, who through him are reborn in God: infants, and children, and youths, and old men. Therefore he passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a child for children, sanctifying those who are of that age . . . [so that] he might be the perfect teacher in all things, perfect not only in respect to the setting forth of truth, perfect also in respect to relative age” (*Against Heresies* 2:22:4 [A.D. 189]).

Hippolytus

“Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them” (*The Apostolic Tradition* 21:16 [A.D. 215]).

Origen

“Every soul that is born into flesh is soiled by the filth of wickedness and sin. . . . In the Church, baptism is given for the remission of sins, and, according to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to infants. If there were nothing in infants which required the remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous” (*Homilies on Leviticus* 8:3 [A.D. 248]).

Origen

“The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants. The apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of the divine sacraments, knew there are in everyone innate strains of [original] sin, which must be washed away through water and the Spirit” (*Commentaries on Romans* 5:9 [A.D. 248]).

Cyprian of Carthage

“As to what pertains to the case of infants: You [Fidus] said that they ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, that the old law of circumcision must be taken into consideration, and that you did not think that one should be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day after his birth. In our council it seemed to us far otherwise. No one agreed to the course which you thought should be taken. Rather, we all judge that the mercy and grace of God ought to be denied to no man born” (*Letters* 64:2 [A.D. 253]).

“If, in the case of the worst sinners and those who formerly sinned much against God, when afterwards they believe, the remission of their sins is granted and no one is held back from baptism and grace, how much more, then, should an infant not be held back, who, having but recently been born, has done no sin, except that, born of the flesh according to Adam, he has contracted the contagion of that old death from his first being born. For this very reason does he [an infant] approach more easily to receive the remission of sins: because the sins forgiven him are not his own but those of another” (*ibid.*, 64:5).

Gregory of Nazianz

“Do you have an infant child? Allow sin no opportunity; rather, let the infant be sanctified from childhood. From his most tender age let him be consecrated by the Spirit. Do you fear the seal [of baptism] because of the weakness of nature? Oh, what a pusillanimous mother and of how little faith!” (*Oration on Holy Baptism* 40:7 [A.D. 388]).

“‘Well enough,’ some will say, ‘for those who ask for baptism, but what do you have to say about those who are still children, and aware neither of loss nor of grace? Shall we baptize them too?’ Certainly [I respond], if there is any pressing danger. Better that they be sanctified unaware, than that they depart unsealed and uninitiated” (ibid., 40:28).

John Chrysostom

“You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and some think its heavenly grace consists only in the remission of sins, but we have enumerated ten honors [it bestows]! For this reason we baptize even infants, though they are not defiled by [personal] sins, so that there may be given to them holiness, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, and that they may be his [Christ’s] members” (*Baptismal Catecheses in Augustine, Against Julian* 1:6:21 [A.D. 388]).

Augustine

“What the universal Church holds, not as instituted [invented] by councils but as something always held, is most correctly believed to have been handed down by apostolic authority. Since others respond for children, so that the celebration of the sacrament may be complete for them, it is certainly availing to them for their consecration, because they themselves are not able to respond” (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists* 4:24:31 [A.D. 400]).

“The custom of Mother Church in baptizing infants is certainly not to be scorned, nor is it to be regarded in any way as superfluous, nor is it to be believed that its tradition is anything except apostolic” (*The Literal Interpretation of Genesis* 10:23:39 [A.D. 408]).

“By this grace baptized infants too are ingrafted into his [Christ’s] body, infants who certainly are not yet able to imitate anyone. Christ, in whom all are made alive . . . gives also the most hidden grace of his Spirit to believers, grace which he secretly infuses even into infants. . . . It is an excellent thing that the Punic [North African] Christians call baptism salvation and the sacrament of Christ’s Body nothing else than life. Whence does this derive, except from an ancient and, as I suppose, apostolic tradition, by which the churches of Christ hold inherently that without baptism and participation at the table of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and life eternal? This is the witness of Scripture, too. . . . If anyone wonders why children born of the baptized should themselves be baptized, let him attend briefly to this. . . . The sacrament of baptism is most assuredly the sacrament of regeneration” (*Forgiveness and the Just Deserts of Sin, and the Baptism of Infants* 1:9:10; 1:24:34; 2:27:43 [A.D. 412]).

Council of Carthage V

“Item: It seemed good that whenever there were not found reliable witnesses who could testify that without any doubt they [abandoned children] were baptized and when the children themselves were not, on account of their tender age, able to answer concerning the giving of the sacraments to them, all such children should be baptized without scruple, lest a hesitation should deprive them of the cleansing of the sacraments. This was urged by the [North African] legates, our brethren, since they redeem many such [abandoned children] from the barbarians” (Canon 7 [A.D. 401]).

Council of Mileum II

“Whoever says that infants fresh from their mothers’ wombs ought not to be baptized, or say that they are indeed baptized unto the remission of sins, but that they draw nothing of the original sin of Adam, which is expiated in the bath of regeneration . . . let him be anathema [excommunicated]. Since what the apostle [Paul] says, ‘Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so passed to all men, in whom all have sinned’ [Rom. 5:12], must not be understood otherwise than the Catholic Church spread everywhere has always understood it. For on account of this rule of faith even infants, who in themselves thus far have not been able to commit any sin, are therefore truly baptized unto the remission of sins, so that that which they have contracted from generation may be cleansed in them by regeneration” (Canon 3 [A.D. 416]).

Confession/Reconciliation

The Didache

“Confess your sins in church, and do not go up to your prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life . . . On the Lord’s Day gather together, break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure” (*Didache* 4:14, 14:1 [A.D. 70]).

The Letter of Barnabas

“You shall judge righteously. You shall not make a schism, but you shall pacify those that contend by bringing them together. You shall confess your sins. You shall not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light” (*Letter of Barnabas* 19 [A.D. 74]).

Ignatius of Antioch

“For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of penance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ” (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 3 [A.D. 110]).

“For where there is division and wrath, God does not dwell. To all them that repent, the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop” (*ibid.*, 8).

Irenaeus

“[The Gnostic disciples of Marcus] have deluded many women. . . . Their consciences have been branded as with a hot iron. Some of these women make a public confession, but others are ashamed to do this, and in silence, as if withdrawing from themselves the hope of the life of God, they either apostatize entirely or hesitate between the two courses” (*Against Heresies* 1:22 [A.D. 189]).

Tertullian

“[Regarding confession, some] flee from this work as being an exposure of themselves, or they put it off from day to day. I presume they are more mindful of modesty than of salvation, like those who contract a disease in the more shameful parts of the body and shun making themselves known to the physicians; and thus they perish along with their own bashfulness” (*Repentance* 10:1 [A.D. 203]).

Hippolytus

“[The bishop conducting the ordination of the new bishop shall pray:] God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Pour forth now that power which comes from you, from your royal Spirit, which you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and which he bestowed upon his holy apostles . . . and grant this your servant, whom you have chosen for the episcopate, [the power] to feed your holy flock and to serve without blame as your high priest, ministering night and day to propitiate unceasingly before your face and to offer to you the gifts of your holy Church, and by the Spirit of the high priesthood to have the authority to forgive sins, in accord with your command” (*Apostolic Tradition* 3 [A.D. 215]).

Origen

“[A final method of forgiveness], albeit hard and laborious [is] the remission of sins through penance, when the sinner . . . does not shrink from declaring his sin to a priest of the Lord and from seeking medicine, after the manner of him who say, ‘I said, “To the Lord I will accuse myself of my iniquity””” (*Homilies on Leviticus* 2:4 [A.D. 248]).

Cyprian of Carthage

“The apostle [Paul] likewise bears witness and says: ‘ . . . Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord’ [1 Cor. 11:27]. But [the impenitent] spurn and despise all these warnings; before their sins are expiated, before they have made a confession of their crime, before their conscience has been purged in the ceremony and at the hand of the priest . . . they do violence to [the Lord’s] body and blood, and with their hands and mouth they sin against the Lord more than when they denied him” (*The Lapsed* 15:1–3 (A.D. 251)).

“Of how much greater faith and salutary fear are they who . . . confess their sins to the priests of God in a straightforward manner and in sorrow, making an open declaration of conscience. . . . I beseech you, brethren, let everyone who has sinned confess his sin while he is still in this world, while his confession is still admissible, while the satisfaction and remission made through the priests are still pleasing before the Lord” (ibid., 28).

“Sinners may do penance for a set time, and according to the rules of discipline come to public confession, and by imposition of the hand of the bishop and clergy receive the right of Communion. [1 Cor. 11:27]” (*Letters* 9:2 [A.D. 253]).

Aphraahat the Persian Sage

“You [priests], then, who are disciples of our illustrious physician [Christ], you ought not deny a curative to those in need of healing. And if anyone uncovers his wound before you, give him the remedy of repentance. And he that is ashamed to make known his weakness, encourage him so that he will not hide it from you. And when he has revealed it to you, do not make it public, lest because of it the innocent might be reckoned as guilty by our enemies and by those who hate us” (*Treatises* 7:3 [A.D. 340]).

Basil the Great

“It is necessary to confess our sins to those to whom the dispensation of God’s mysteries is entrusted. Those doing penance of old are found to have done it before the saints. It is written in the Gospel that they confessed their sins to John the Baptist [Matt. 3:6], but in Acts [19:18] they confessed to the apostles” (*Rules Briefly Treated* 288 [A.D. 374]).

John Chrysostom

“Priests have received a power which God has given neither to angels nor to archangels. It was said to them: ‘Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose, shall be loosed.’ Temporal rulers have indeed the power of binding; but they can only bind the body. Priests, in contrast, can bind with a bond which pertains to the soul itself and transcends the very heavens. Did [God] not give them all the powers of heaven? ‘Whose sins you shall forgive,’ he says, ‘they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.’ What greater power is there than this? The Father has given all judgment to the Son. And now I see the Son placing all this power in the hands of men [Matt. 10:40; John 20:21–23]. They are raised to this dignity as if they were already gathered up to heaven” (*The Priesthood* 3:5 [A.D. 387]).

Ambrose of Milan

“For those to whom [the right of binding and loosing] has been given, it is plain that either both are allowed, or it is clear that neither is allowed. Both are allowed to the Church, neither is allowed to heresy. For this right has been granted to priests only” (*Penance* 1:1 [A.D. 388]).

Jerome

“If the serpent, the devil, bites someone secretly, he infects that person with the venom of sin. And if the one who has been bitten keeps silence and does not do penance, and does not want to confess his wound . . . then his brother and his master, who have the word [of absolution] that will cure him, cannot very well assist him” (*Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 10:11 [A.D. 388]).

Augustine

“When you shall have been baptized, keep to a good life in the commandments of God so that you may preserve your baptism to the very end. I do not tell you that you will live here without sin, but they are venial sins which this life is never without. Baptism was instituted for all sins. For light sins, without which we cannot live, prayer was instituted. . . . But do not commit those sins on account of which you would have to be separated from the body of Christ. Perish the thought! For those whom you see doing penance have committed crimes, either adultery or some other enormities. That is why they are doing penance. If their sins were light, daily prayer would suffice to blot them out. . . . In the Church, therefore, there are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptisms, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance” (*Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed* 7:15, 8:16 [A.D. 395]).

Communion

The Didache

“Assemble on the Lord’s day, and break bread and offer the Eucharist; but first make confession of your faults, so that your sacrifice may be a pure one. Anyone who has a difference with his fellow is not to take part with you until he has been reconciled, so as to avoid any profanation of your sacrifice [Matt. 5:23–24]. For this is the offering of which the Lord has said, ‘Everywhere and always bring me a sacrifice that is undefiled, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is the wonder of nations’ [Mal. 1:11, 14]” (*Didache* 14 [A.D. 70]).

Pope Clement I

“Our sin will not be small if we eject from the episcopate those who blamelessly and holily have offered its sacrifices. Blessed are those presbyters who have already finished their course, and who have obtained a fruitful and perfect release” (*Letter to the Corinthians* 44:4–5 [A.D. 80]).

Ignatius of Antioch

“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” (*Letter to the Romans* 7:3 [A.D. 110]).

“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 that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes” (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 6:2–7:1 [A.D. 110]).

“Make certain, therefore, that you all observe one common Eucharist; for there is but one Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one cup of union with his Blood, and one single altar of sacrifice—even as there is also but one bishop, with his clergy and my own fellow servitors, the deacons. This will ensure that all your doings are in full accord with the will of God” (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 4 [A.D. 110]).

Justin Martyr

“God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [minor prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: ‘I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord, and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands; for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great among the Gentiles . . . [Mal. 1:10–11]. He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us [Christians] who in every place offer sacrifices to him, that is, the bread of the Eucharist and also the cup of the Eucharist” (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 41 [A.D. 155]).

“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 [i.e., has received baptism] and is thereby living as Christ 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 nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus” (*First Apology* 66 [A.D. 151]).

Irenaeus

“He took from among creation that which is bread, and gave thanks, saying, ‘This is my body.’ The cup likewise, which is from among the creation to which we belong, he confessed to be his blood. He taught the new sacrifice of the new covenant, of which Malachi, one of the twelve [minor] prophets, had signified beforehand: ‘You do not do my will, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is my name among the Gentiles, says the Lord Almighty’ [Mal. 1:10–11]. By these words he makes it plain that the former people will cease to make offerings to God; but that in every place sacrifice will be offered to him, and indeed, a pure one, for his name is glorified among the Gentiles” (*Against Heresies* 4:17:5 [A.D. 189]).

“If the Lord were from other than the Father, how could he rightly take bread, which is of the same creation as our own, and confess it to be his body and affirm that the mixture in the cup is his blood?” (*Against Heresies* 4:33–32 [A.D. 189]).

“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 unto our bodies. When, therefore, the mixed cup [wine and water] 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?” (*ibid.*, 5:2).

Clement of Alexandria

“‘Eat my flesh,’ [Jesus] says, ‘and drink my blood.’ The Lord supplies us with these intimate nutrients, he delivers over his flesh and pours out his blood, and nothing is lacking for the growth of his children” (*The Instructor of Children* 1:6:43:3 [A.D. 191]).

Tertullian

“The flesh, indeed, is washed [in baptism], in order that the soul may be cleansed . . . the flesh is shadowed with the imposition of hands [in confirmation], that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh feeds [in the Eucharist] on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may be filled with God” (*The Resurrection of the Dead* 8 [A.D. 210]).

Hippolytus

“‘And she [Wisdom] has furnished her table’ [Prov. 9:2] . . . refers to his [Christ’s] honored and undefiled body and blood, which day by day are administered and offered sacrificially at the spiritual divine table, as a memorial of that first and ever-memorable table of the spiritual divine supper [i.e., the Last Supper]” (Fragment from *Commentary on Proverbs* [A.D. 217]).

Origen

“Formerly there was baptism in an obscure way . . . now, however, in full view, there is regeneration in water and in the Holy Spirit. Formerly, in an obscure way, there was manna for food; now, however, in full view, there is the true food, the flesh of the Word of God, as he himself says: ‘My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink’ [John 6:55]” (*Homilies on Numbers* 7:2 [A.D. 248]).

Cyprian of Carthage

“If Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, is himself the high priest of God the Father; and if he offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father; and if he commanded that this be done in commemoration of himself, then certainly the priest, who imitates that which Christ did, truly functions in place of Christ” (*Letters* 63:14 [A.D. 253]).

“He [Paul] threatens, moreover, the stubborn and forward, and denounces them, saying, ‘Whosoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord’ [1 Cor. 11:27]. All these warnings being scorned and contemned—[lapsed Christians will often take Communion] before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest, before the offense of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, [and so] violence is done to his body and blood; and they sin now against their Lord more with their hand and mouth than when they denied their Lord” (*The Lapsed* 15–16 [A.D. 251]).

Serapion

“Accept therewith our hallowing too, as we say, ‘Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth is full of your glory.’ Heaven is full, and full is the earth, with your magnificent glory, Lord of virtues. Full also is this sacrifice, with your strength and your communion; for to you we offer this living sacrifice, this unbloody oblation” (*Prayer of the Eucharistic Sacrifice* 13:12–16 [A.D. 350]).

Council of Nicaea I

“It has come to the knowledge of the holy and great synod that, in some districts and cities, the deacons administer the Eucharist to the presbyters [i.e., priests], whereas neither canon nor custom permits that they who have no right to offer [the Eucharistic sacrifice] should give the Body of Christ to them that do offer [it]” (Canon 18 [A.D. 325]).

Aphraahat the Persian Sage

“After having spoken thus [at the Last Supper], the Lord rose up from the place where he had made the Passover and had given his body as food and his blood as drink, and he went with his disciples to the place where he was to be arrested. But he ate of his own body and drank of his own blood, while he was pondering on the dead. With his own hands the Lord presented his own body to be eaten, and before he was crucified he gave his blood as drink” (*Treatises* 12:6 [A.D. 340]).

Cyril of Jerusalem

“The bread and the wine of the Eucharist before the holy invocation of the adorable Trinity were simple bread and wine, but the invocation having been made, the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ” (*Catechetical Lectures* 19:7 [A.D. 350]).

“Do not, therefore, regard the bread and 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. . . . [Since you are] fully convinced that the apparent bread is not bread, even though it is sensible to the taste, but the body of Christ, and that the apparent wine is not wine, even though the taste would have it so, . . . partake of that bread as something spiritual, and put a cheerful face on your soul” (*ibid.*, 22:6, 9).

“Then, having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth his Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before him, that he may make the bread the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ, for whatsoever the Holy Spirit has touched is surely sanctified and changed. Then, upon the completion of the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless worship, over that propitiatory victim we call upon God for the common peace of the churches, for the welfare of the world, for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted; and in summary, we all pray and offer this sacrifice for all who are in need” (*Catechetical Lectures* 23:7–8 [A.D. 350]).

Gregory Nazianzen

“Cease not to pray and plead for me when you draw down the Word by your word, when in an unbloody cutting you cut the Body and Blood of the Lord, using your voice for a sword” (*Letter to Amphilochius* 171 [A.D. 383]).

Ambrose of Milan

“We saw the prince of priests coming to us, we saw and heard him offering his blood for us. We follow, inasmuch as we are able, being priests, and we offer the sacrifice on behalf of the people. Even if we are of but little merit, still, in the sacrifice, we are honorable. Even if Christ is not now seen as the one who offers the sacrifice, nevertheless it is he himself that is offered in sacrifice here on Earth when the body of Christ is offered. Indeed, to offer himself he is made visible in us, he whose word makes holy the sacrifice that is offered” (*Commentaries on Twelve Psalms of David* 38:25 [A.D. 389]).

“Perhaps you may be saying, ‘I see something else; how can you assure me that I am receiving the body of Christ?’ It but remains for us to prove it. And how many are the examples we might use! . . . Christ is in that sacrament, because it is the body of Christ” (*The Mysteries* 9:50, 58 [A.D. 390]).

John Chrysostom

“When you see the Lord immolated and lying upon the altar, and the priest bent over that sacrifice praying, and all the people empurpled by that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and on earth? Or are you not lifted up to heaven?” (*The Priesthood* 3:4:177 [A.D. 387]).

“Reverence, therefore, reverence this table, of which we are all communicants! Christ, slain for us, the sacrificial victim who is placed thereon!” (*Homilies on Romans* 8:8 [A.D. 391]).

John Chrysostom (cont'd)

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not communion of the blood of Christ?”

‘If therefore you desire blood,’ he [the Lord] says, ‘do not redden the platform of idols with the slaughter of dumb beasts, but my altar of sacrifice with my blood.’ What is more awesome than this? What, pray tell, more tenderly loving?” (*Homilies on First Corinthians* 24:1(3) [A.D. 392]).

“Thus there is one sacrifice. By this reasoning, since the sacrifice is offered everywhere, are there, then, a multiplicity of Christs? By no means! Christ is one everywhere. He is complete here, complete there, one body. And just as he is one body and not many though offered everywhere, so too is there one sacrifice” (*Homilies on Hebrews* 17:3(6) [A.D. 403]).

Augustine

“Christ was carried in his own hands when, referring to his own body, he said, ‘This is my body’ [Matt. 26:26]. For he carried that body in his hands” (*Explanations of the Psalms* 33:1:10 [A.D. 405]).

“I promised you [new Christians], who have now been baptized, a sermon in which I would explain the sacrament of the Lord’s Table. . . . That bread which you see on the altar, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what is in that chalice, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ” (*Sermons* 227 [A.D. 411]).

“What you see is the bread and the chalice; that is what your own eyes report to you. But what your faith obliges you to accept is that the bread is the body of Christ and the chalice is the blood of Christ. This has been said very briefly, which may perhaps be sufficient for faith; yet faith does not desire instruction” (*ibid.*, 272).

Theodore of Mopsuestia

“When [Christ] gave the bread he did not say, ‘This is the symbol of my body,’ but, ‘This is my body.’ In the same way, when he gave the cup of his blood he did not say, ‘This is the symbol of my blood,’ but, ‘This is my blood’; for he wanted us to look upon the [Eucharistic elements] after their reception of grace and the coming of the Holy Spirit not according to their nature, but receive them as they are, the body and blood of our Lord. We ought . . . not regard [the elements] merely as bread and cup, but as the body and blood of the Lord, into which they were transformed by the descent of the Holy Spirit” (*Catechetical Homilies* 5:1 [A.D. 405]).

Council of Ephesus

“We will necessarily add this also. Proclaiming the death, according to the flesh, of the only-begotten Son of God, that is Jesus Christ, confessing his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, we offer the unbloody sacrifice in the churches, and so go on to the mystical thanksgivings, and are sanctified, having received his holy flesh and the precious blood of Christ the Savior of us all. And not as common flesh do we receive it; God forbid: nor as of a man sanctified and associated with the Word according to the unity of worth, or as having a divine indwelling, but as truly the life-giving and very flesh of the Word himself. For he is the life according to his nature as God, and when he became united to his flesh, he made it also to be life-giving” (Session 1, *Letter of Cyril to Nestorius* [A.D. 431]).

CONFIRMATION

Theophilus of Antioch

“Are you unwilling to be anointed with the oil of God? It is on this account that we are called Christians: because we are anointed with the oil of God” (*To Autolytus* 1:12 [A.D. 181]).

Tertullian

“After coming from the place of washing we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction, from the ancient discipline by which [those] in the priesthood . . . were accustomed to be anointed with a horn of oil, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. . . . So also with us, the unction runs on the body and profits us spiritually, in the same way that baptism itself is a corporal act by which we are plunged in water, while its effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from sins. After this, the hand is imposed for a blessing, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit” (*Baptism* 7:1–2, 8:1 [A.D. 203]).

“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. . . . The flesh, then, is washed [baptism] 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 may be fortified. The flesh is shaded by the imposition of hands [confirmation] so that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit. The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ [the Eucharist] so that the soul too may feed on God. They cannot, then, be separated in their reward, when they are united in their works” (*The Resurrection of the Dead* 8:2–3 [A.D. 210]).

Hippolytus

“The bishop, imposing his hand on them, shall make an invocation, saying, ‘O Lord God, who made them worthy of the remission of sins through the Holy Spirit’s washing unto rebirth, send into them your grace so that they may serve you according to your will, for there is glory to you, to the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, both now and through the ages of ages. Amen.’ Then, pouring the consecrated oil into his hand and imposing it on the head of the baptized, he shall say, ‘I anoint you with holy oil in the Lord, the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.’ Signing them on the forehead, he shall kiss them and say, ‘The Lord be with you.’ He that has been signed shall say, ‘And with your spirit.’ Thus shall he do to each” (*The Apostolic Tradition* 21–22 [A.D. 215]).

Cyprian of Carthage

“It is necessary for him that has been baptized also to be anointed, so that by his having received chrism, that is, the anointing, he can be the anointed of God and have in him the grace of Christ” (*Letters* 7:2 [A.D. 253]).

Cyprian of Carthage (cont'd)

“Some say in regard to those who were baptized in Samaria that when the apostles Peter and John came there only hands were imposed on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and that they were not re-baptized. But we see, dearest brother, that this situation in no way pertains to the present case. Those in Samaria who had believed had believed in the true faith, and it was by the deacon Philip, whom those same apostles had sent there, that they had been baptized inside—in the Church. . . . Since, then, they had already received a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, it was not necessary to baptize them again. Rather, that only which was lacking was done by Peter and John. The prayer having been made over them and hands having been imposed upon them, the Holy Spirit was invoked and was poured out upon them. This is even now the practice among us, so that those who are baptized in the Church then are brought to the prelates of the Church; through our prayer and the imposition of hands, they receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected with the seal of the Lord” (ibid., 73[72]:9).

“Are not hands, in the name of the same Christ, laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit?” (ibid., 74[73]:5).

“One is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first has an existence. But . . . the birth of Christians is in baptism” (ibid., 74[73]:7).

Council of Carthage VII

“In the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with his divine voice, saying, ‘Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’ [John 3:5]. This is the Spirit which from the beginning was borne over the waters; for neither can the Spirit operate without the water, nor the water without the Spirit. Certain people therefore interpret [this passage] for themselves wrongly, when they say that by imposition of the hand they receive the Holy Ghost, and are thus received, when it is manifest that they ought to be born again [initiated] in the Catholic Church by both sacraments” (*Seventh Carthage* [A.D. 256]).

Treatise on Re-Baptism

“It has been asked among the brethren what course ought specially to be adopted towards the persons of those who . . . baptized in heresy . . . and subsequently departing from their heresy, and fleeing as supplicants to the Church of God, should repent with their whole hearts, and only now perceiving the condemnation of their error, implore from the Church the help of salvation. . . . [A]ccording to the most ancient custom and ecclesiastical tradition, it would suffice, after that baptism which they have received outside the Church . . . that only hands should be laid upon them by the bishop for their reception of the Holy Spirit, and this imposition of hands would afford them the renewed and perfected seal of faith” (*Treatise on Re-Baptism* 1 [A.D. 256]).

“By imposition of the bishop’s hands the Holy Spirit is given to every one that believes, as in the case of the Samaritans, after Philip’s baptism, the apostles did to them by laying on of hands [Acts 8:14–17]; in this manner also they conferred on them the Holy Spirit” (*ibid.*, 3).

Cyril of Jerusalem

“After you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given chrism, the antitype of that with which Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit. But beware of supposing that this is ordinary ointment. For just as the bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is simple bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this ointment is no longer plain ointment, nor, so to speak, common, after the invocation. Further, it is the gracious gift of Christ, and it is made fit for the imparting of his Godhead by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and to your other senses; while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit. Just as Christ, after his baptism, and the coming upon him of the Holy Spirit, went forth and defeated the adversary, so also with you after holy baptism and the mystical chrism, having put on the panoply of the Holy Spirit, you are to withstand the power of the adversary and defeat him, saying, ‘I am able to do all things in Christ, who strengthens me’” (*Catechetical Lectures*, 21:1, 3–4 [A.D. 350]).

“[David says,] ‘You have anointed my head with oil.’ With oil he anointed your head, your forehead, in the God-given sign of the cross, so that you may become that which is engraved on the seal, ‘a holy thing of the Lord’” (*ibid.*, 22:7).

Serapion

“[Prayer for blessing the holy chrism:] ‘God of powers, aid of every soul that turns to you and comes under your powerful hand in your only-begotten. We beseech you, that through your divine and invisible power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you may effect in this chrism a divine and heavenly operation, so that those baptized and anointed in the tracing with it of the sign of the saving cross of the only-begotten . . . as if reborn and renewed through the bath of regeneration, may be made participants in the gift of the Holy Spirit and, confirmed by this seal, may remain firm and immovable, unharmed and inviolate. . . .’” (*The Sacramentary of Serapion* 25:1 [A.D. 350]).

Council of Laodicea

“Those who have been illuminated are, after baptism, to be anointed with celestial chrism and thus become partakers in the kingdom of Christ” (Canon 48 [A.D. 360]).

Pacian of Barcelona

“If, then, the power of both baptism and confirmation, greater by far than charisms, is passed on to the bishops, so too is the right of binding and loosing” (*Three Letters to the Novatianist Sympronian* 1:6 [A.D. 383]).

The Apostolic Constitutions

“How dare any man speak against his bishop, by whom the Lord gave the Holy Spirit among you upon the laying on of his hands, by whom you have learned the sacred doctrines, and have known God, and have believed in Christ, by whom you were known of God, by whom you were sealed with the oil of gladness and the ointment of understanding, by whom you were declared to be the children of light, by whom the Lord in your illumination testified by the imposition of the bishop’s hands” (*Apostolic Constitutions* 2:4:32 [A.D. 400]).

The African Code

“The former council . . . decreed, as your unanimity remembers as well as I do, that those who as children were baptized by the Donatists, and not yet being able to know the pernicious character of their error, and afterward when they had come to the use of reason, had received the knowledge of the truth, abhorred their former error, and were received in accordance with the ancient order by the imposition of the hand, into the Catholic Church of God spread throughout the world” (Canon 57[61] [A.D. 419]).

MATRIMONY

Hermas

“What then shall the husband do, if the wife continue in this disposition [adultery]? Let him divorce her, and let the husband remain single. But if he divorce his wife and marry another, he too commits adultery” (*The Shepherd* 4:1:6 [A.D. 80]).

Justin Martyr

“In regard to chastity, [Jesus] has this to say: ‘If anyone look with lust at a woman, he has already before God committed adultery in his heart.’ And, ‘Whoever marries a woman who has been divorced from another husband, commits adultery.’ According to our Teacher, just as they are sinners who contract a second marriage, even though it be in accord with human law, so also are they sinners who look with lustful desire at a woman. He repudiates not only one who actually commits adultery, but even one who wishes to do so; for not only our actions are manifest to God, but even our thoughts” (*First Apology* 15 [A.D. 151]).

Clement of Alexandria

“That Scripture counsels marriage, however, and never allows any release from the union, is expressly contained in the law: ‘You shall not divorce a wife, except for reason of immorality.’ And it regards as adultery the marriage of a spouse, while the one from whom a separation was made is still alive. ‘Whoever takes a divorced woman as wife commits adultery,’ it says; for ‘if anyone divorce his wife, he debauches her’; that is, he compels her to commit adultery. And not only does he that divorces her become the cause of this, but also he that takes the woman and gives her the opportunity of sinning; for if he did not take her, she would return to her husband” (*Miscellanies* 2:23:145:3 [A.D. 208]).

Origen

“Just as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seem to be married to a man, while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry her who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her” (*Commentaries on Matthew* 14:24 [A.D. 248]).

Council of Elvira

“Likewise, women who have left their husbands for no prior cause and have joined themselves with others, may not even at death receive Communion” (Canon 8 [A.D. 300]).

“Likewise, a woman of the faith [i.e., a baptized person] who has left an adulterous husband of the faith and marries another, her marrying in this manner is prohibited. If she has so married, she may not receive Communion—unless he that she has left has since departed from this world” (Canon 9).

“If she whom a catechumen [an unbaptized person studying the faith] has left shall have married a husband, she is able to be admitted to the fountain of baptism. This shall also be observed in the instance where it is the woman who is the catechumen. But if a woman of the faithful is taken in marriage by a man who left an innocent wife, and if she knew that he had a wife whom he had left without cause, it is determined that Communion is not to be given to her even at death” (Canon 10).

Basil the Great

“A man who marries after another man’s wife has been taken away from him will be charged with adultery in the case of the first woman; but in the case of the second he will be guiltless” (*Second Canonical Letter to Amphilochius* 199:37 [A.D. 375]).

Ambrose of Milan

“No one is permitted to know a woman other than his wife. The marital right is given you for this reason: lest you fall into the snare and sin with a strange woman. ‘If you are bound to a wife do not seek a divorce’; for you are not permitted, while your wife lives, to marry another” (*Abraham* 1:7:59 [A.D. 387]).

“You dismiss your wife, therefore, as if by right and without being charged with wrongdoing; and you suppose it is proper for you to do so because no human law forbids it; but divine law forbids it. Anyone who obeys men ought to stand in awe of God. Hear the law of the Lord, which even they who propose our laws must obey: ‘What God has joined together let no man put asunder’” (*Commentary on Luke* 8:5 [A.D. 389]).

Jerome

“Do not tell me about the violence of the ravisher, about the persuasiveness of a mother, about the authority of a father, about the influence of relatives, about the intrigues and insolence of servants, or about household [financial] losses. So long as a husband lives, be he adulterer, be he sodomite, be he addicted to every kind of vice, if she left him on account of his crimes, he is her husband still and she may not take another” (*Letters* 55:3 [A.D. 396]).

“Wherever there is fornication and a suspicion of fornication, a wife is freely dismissed. Because it is always possible that someone may calumniate the innocent and, for the sake of a second joining in marriage, act in criminal fashion against the first, it is commanded that when the first wife is dismissed, a second may not be taken while the first lives” (*Commentaries on Matthew* 3:19:9 [A.D. 398]).

Pope Innocent I

“The practice is observed by all of regarding as an adulteress a woman who marries a second time while her husband yet lives, and permission to do penance is not granted her until one of them is dead” (*Letters* 2:13:15 [A.D. 408]).

Augustine

“Neither can it rightly be held that a husband who dismisses his wife because of fornication and marries another does not commit adultery. For there is also adultery on the part of those who, after the repudiation of their former wives because of fornication, marry others. This adultery, nevertheless, is certainly less serious than that of men who dismiss their wives for reasons other than fornication and take other wives. Therefore, when we say: ‘Whoever marries a woman dismissed by her husband for reason other than fornication commits adultery,’ undoubtedly we speak the truth. But we do not thereby acquit of this crime the man who marries a woman who was dismissed because of fornication. We do not doubt in the least that both are adulterers. We do indeed pronounce him an adulterer who dismissed his wife for cause other than fornication and marries another, nor do we thereby defend from the taint of this sin the man who dismissed his wife because of fornication and marries another. We recognize that both are adulterers, though the sin of one is more grave than that of the other. No one is so unreasonable to say that a man who marries a woman whose husband has dismissed her because of fornication is not an adulterer, while maintaining that a man who marries a woman dismissed without the ground of fornication is an adulterer. Both of these men are guilty of adultery” (*Adulterous Marriages* 1:9:9 [A.D. 419]).

Augustine (cont'd)

“Neither can it rightly be held that a husband who dismisses his wife because of fornication and marries another does not commit adultery. For there is also adultery on the part of those who, after the repudiation of their former wives because of fornication, marry others. This adultery, nevertheless, is certainly less serious than that of men who dismiss their wives for reasons other than fornication and take other wives. Therefore, when we say: ‘Whoever marries a woman dismissed by her husband for reason other than fornication commits adultery,’ undoubtedly we speak the truth. But we do not thereby acquit of this crime the man who marries a woman who was dismissed because of fornication. We do not doubt in the least that both are adulterers. We do indeed pronounce him an adulterer who dismissed his wife for cause other than fornication and marries another, nor do we thereby defend from the taint of this sin the man who dismissed his wife because of fornication and marries another. We recognize that both are adulterers, though the sin of one is more grave than that of the other. No one is so unreasonable to say that a man who marries a woman whose husband has dismissed her because of fornication is not an adulterer, while maintaining that a man who marries a woman dismissed without the ground of fornication is an adulterer. Both of these men are guilty of adultery” (*Adulterous Marriages* 1:9:9 [A.D. 419]).

Augustine (cont'd)

“A woman begins to be the wife of no later husband unless she has ceased to be the wife of a former one. She will cease to be the wife of a former one, however, if that husband should die, not if he commit fornication. A spouse, therefore, is lawfully dismissed for cause of fornication; but the bond of chastity remains. That is why a man is guilty of adultery if he marries a woman who has been dismissed even for this very reason of fornication” (ibid., 2:4:4).

“Undoubtedly the substance of the sacrament is of this bond, so that when man and woman have been joined in marriage they must continue inseparably as long as they live, nor is it allowed for one spouse to be separated from the other except for cause of fornication. For this is preserved in the case of Christ and the Church, so that, as a living one with a living one, there is no divorce, no separation forever” (*Marriage and Concupiscence* 1:10:11 [A.D. 419]).

“In marriage, however, let the blessings of marriage be loved: offspring, fidelity, and the sacramental bond. Offspring, not so much because it may be born, but because it can be reborn; for it is born to punishment unless it be reborn to life. Fidelity, but not such as even the unbelievers have among themselves, ardent as they are for the flesh. . . . The sacramental bond, which they lose neither through separation nor through adultery, this the spouses should guard chastely and harmoniously” (ibid., 1:17:19).

HOLY ORDERS

Ignatius of Antioch

“Now, therefore, it has been my privilege to see you in the person of your God-inspired bishop, Damas; and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and my fellow-servant, the deacon, Zotion. What a delight is his company! For he is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ” (*Letter to the Magnesians* 2 [A.D. 110]).

“Take care to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and with the deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the business of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and is at last made manifest” (ibid., 6:1).

Be subject to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ was subject to the Father, and the apostles were subject to Christ and to the Father; so that there may be unity in both body and spirit” (ibid., 13:1–2).

Ignatius of Antioch (cont'd)

“Indeed, when you submit to the bishop as you would to Jesus Christ, it is clear to me that you are living not in the manner of men but as Jesus Christ, who died for us, that through faith in his death you might escape dying. It is necessary, therefore—and such is your practice that you do nothing without the bishop, and that you be subject also to the presbytery, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ our hope, in whom we shall be found, if we live in him. It is necessary also that the deacons, the dispensers of the mysteries [sacraments] of Jesus Christ, be in every way pleasing to all men. For they are not the deacons of food and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They must therefore guard against blame as against fire” (*Letter to the Trallians* 2:1–3 [A.D. 110]).

“In like manner let everyone respect the deacons as they would respect Jesus Christ, and just as they respect the bishop as a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and college of the apostles. Without these, it cannot be called a church. I am confident that you accept this, for I have received the exemplar of your love and have it with me in the person of your bishop. His very demeanor is a great lesson and his meekness is his strength. I believe that even the godless do respect him” (*ibid.*, 3:1–2).

“I cried out while I was in your midst, I spoke with a loud voice, the voice of God: ‘Give heed to the bishop and the presbytery and the deacons.’ Some suspect me of saying this because I had previous knowledge of the division certain persons had caused; but he for whom I am in chains is my witness that I had no knowledge of this from any man. It was the Spirit who kept preaching these words, ‘Do nothing without the bishop, keep your body as the temple of God, love unity, flee from divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as he was imitator of the Father’” (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 7:1–2 [A.D. 110]).

Irenaeus

“Pretending to consecrate cups mixed with wine, and protracting to great length the word of invocation, [Marcus the Gnostic heretic] contrives to give them a purple and reddish color. . . . Handing mixed cups to the women, he bids them consecrate these in his presence.

“When this has been done, he himself produces another cup of much larger size than that which the deluded woman has consecrated, and pouring from the smaller one consecrated by the woman into that which has been brought forward by himself, he at the same time pronounces these words: ‘May that Charis who is before all things and who transcends all knowledge and speech fill your inner man and multiply in you her own knowledge, by sowing the grain of mustard seed in you as in good soil.’

(Against Heresies 1:13:2 [A.D. 189]).

Tertullian

“It is of no concern how diverse be their [the heretics’] views, so long as they conspire to erase the one truth. They are puffed up; all offer knowledge. Before they have finished as catechumens, how thoroughly learned they are! And the heretical women themselves, how shameless are they! They make bold to teach, to debate, to work exorcisms, to undertake cures . . .” *(Demurrer Against the Heretics 41:4–5 [A.D. 200]).*

“[A female heretic], lately conversant in this quarter, has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy baptism. . . . But we, little fishes, after the example of our *Icthus* [Greek, “Fish”], Jesus Christ, are born in water . . . so that most monstrous creature, who had no right to teach even sound doctrine, knew full well how to kill the little fishes, by taking them away from the water” *(Baptism 1 [A.D. 203]).*

“It is not permitted for a woman to speak in the church [1 Cor 14:34–35], but neither [is it permitted her] . . . to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say sacerdotal office” *(The Veiling of Virgins 9 [A.D. 206]).*

Hippolytus

“When a widow is to be appointed, she is not to be ordained, but is designated by being named [a widow]. . . . A widow is appointed by words alone, and is then associated with the other widows. Hands are not imposed on her, because she does not offer the oblation and she does not conduct the liturgy. Ordination is for the clergy because of the liturgy; but a widow is appointed for prayer, and prayer is the duty of all” (*The Apostolic Tradition* 11 [A.D. 215]).

The Didascalia

“For it is not to teach that you women . . . are appointed. . . . For he, God the Lord, Jesus Christ our Teacher, sent us, the twelve [apostles], out to teach the [chosen] people and the pagans. But there were female disciples among us: Mary of Magdala, Mary the daughter of Jacob, and the other Mary; he did not, however, send them out with us to teach the people. For, if it had been necessary that women should teach, then our Teacher would have directed them to instruct along with us” (*Didascalia* 3:6:1–2 [A.D. 225]).

Council of Nicaea I

“Similarly, in regard to the deaconesses, as with all who are enrolled in the register, the same procedure is to be observed. We have made mention of the deaconesses, who have been enrolled in this position, although, not having been in any way ordained, they are certainly to be numbered among the laity” (Canon 19 [A.D. 325]).

Council of Laodicea

“The so-called ‘presbyteresses’ or ‘presidentesses’ are not to be ordained in the Church” (Canon 11 [A.D. 360]).

Epiphanius of Salamis

“Certain women there in Arabia [the Collyridians] ... In an unlawful and blasphemous ceremony ... ordain women, through whom they offer up the sacrifice in the name of Mary. This means that the entire proceeding is godless and sacrilegious, a perversion of the message of the Holy Spirit; in fact, the whole thing is diabolical and a teaching of the impure spirit” (*Against Heresies* 78:13 [A.D. 377]).

“It is true that in the Church there is an order of deaconesses, but not for being a priestess, nor for any kind of work of administration, but for the sake of the dignity of the female sex, either at the time of baptism or of examining the sick or suffering, so that the naked body of a female may not be seen by men administering sacred rites, but by the deaconess” (ibid.).

“From this bishop [James the Just] and the just-named apostles, the succession of bishops and presbyters [priests] in the house of God have been established. Never was a woman called to these. . . . According to the evidence of Scripture, there were, to be sure, the four daughters of the evangelist Philip, who engaged in prophecy, but they were not priestesses” (ibid.).

Epiphanius of Salamis (cont'd)

“If women were to be charged by God with entering the priesthood or with assuming ecclesiastical office, then in the New Covenant it would have devolved upon no one more than Mary to fulfill a priestly function. She was invested with so great an honor as to be allowed to provide a dwelling in her womb for the heavenly God and King of all things, the Son of God. . . . But he did not find this [the conferring of priesthood on her] good” (ibid., 79:3).

John Chrysostom

“When one is required to preside over the Church and to be entrusted with the care of so many souls, the whole female sex must retire before the magnitude of the task, and the majority of men also, and we must bring forward those who to a large extent surpass all others and soar as much above them in excellence of spirit as Saul overtopped the whole Hebrew nation in bodily stature” (*The Priesthood* 2:2 [A.D. 387]).

The Apostolic Constitutions

“A virgin is not ordained, for we have no such command from the Lord, for this is a state of voluntary trial, not for the reproach of marriage, but on account of leisure for piety” (*Apostolic Constitutions* 8:24 [A.D. 400]).

The Apostolic Constitutions (Cont'd)

“Appoint, [O Bishop], a deaconess, faithful and holy, for the ministering of women. For sometimes it is not possible to send a deacon into certain houses of women, because of unbelievers. Send a deaconess, because of the thoughts of the petty. A deaconess is of use to us also in many other situations. First of all, in the baptizing of women, a deacon will touch only their forehead with the holy oil, and afterwards the female deacon herself anoints them” (ibid., 3:16).

“The ‘man is the head of the woman’ [1 Cor. 11:3], and he is originally ordained for the priesthood; it is not just to abrogate the order of the creation and leave the first to come to the last part of the body. For the woman is the body of the man, taken from his side and subject to him, from whom she was separated for the procreation of children. For he says, ‘He shall rule over you’ [Gen. 3:16]. For the first part of the woman is the man, as being her head. But if in the foregoing constitutions we have not permitted them [women] to teach, how will any one allow them, contrary to nature, to perform the office of the priest? For this is one of the ignorant practices of Gentile atheism, to ordain women priests to the female deities, not one of the constitutions of Christ” (ibid., 3:9).

Augustine

[The Quintillians are heretics who] give women predominance so that these, too, can be honored with the priesthood among them. They say, namely, that Christ revealed himself . . . to Quintilla and Priscilla [two Montanist prophetesses] in the form of a woman” (*Heresies* 1:17 [A.D. 428]).

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

John Chrysostom

“The priests of Judaism had power to cleanse the body from leprosy—or rather, not to cleanse it at all, but to declare a person as having been cleansed. . . . Our priests have received the power not of treating with the leprosy of the body, but with spiritual uncleanness; not of declaring cleansed, but of actually cleansing. . . . Priests accomplish this not only by teaching and admonishing, but also by the help of prayer. Not only at the time of our regeneration [in baptism], but even afterward, they have the authority to forgive sins: ‘Is there anyone among you sick? Let him call in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven’” (*On the Priesthood* 3:6:190ff [A.D. 387]).

Caesar of Arles

“As often as some infirmity overtakes a man, let him who is ill receive the body and blood of Christ; let him humbly and in faith ask the presbyters for blessed oil, to anoint his body, so that what was written may be fulfilled in him: ‘Is anyone among you sick? Let him bring in the presbyters, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he be in sins, they will be forgiven him. . . . See to it, brethren, that whoever is ill hasten to the church, both that he may receive health of body and will merit to obtain the forgiveness of his sins’” (*Sermons* 13[325]:3 [A.D. 542]).

Council of Nicaea

“Concerning the departing, the ancient canonical law is still to be maintained, to wit, that, if any man be at the point of death, he must not be deprived of the last and most indispensable Viaticum.” (canon 13 [A.D. 325])

Bishop Serapion

“We beseech you, Savior of all men, you that have all virtue and power, Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we pray that you send down from heaven the healing power of the only-begotten [Son] upon this oil, so that for those who are anointed . . . it may be effected for the casting out of every disease and every bodily infirmity . . . for good grace and remission of sins . . .” (*The Sacramentary of Serapion* 29:1 [A.D. 350]).

Origen

“[The penitent Christian] does not shrink from declaring his sin to a priest of the Lord and from seeking medicine . . . [of] which the apostle James says: ‘If then there is anyone sick, let him call the presbyters of the Church, and let them impose hands upon him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.’” (*Homilies on Leviticus* 2:4 [A.D. 250]).