

The Roman Catholic Mass

Do Roman Catholic priests really have the power to change the elements of bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus Christ during the Mass ritual?

Is this belief founded on God's Word, the Holy Spirit inspired Christian Bible?

Quotation: *'The Catholic Encyclopaedia'* volume 4; page 277; article 'Consecration' –
"In the celebration of the Holy Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. It is called transubstantiation, for in the sacraments of the Eucharist the substance of bread and wine do not remain, but the entire substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the entire substance of wine is changed into His blood, the species or outward semblance of bread and wine alone remaining."

Matthew 26:26-28 [King James] "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."

These are the words of Jesus Christ used to support for this belief.

By forcing a literal meaning on these words creates numerous problems of interpretation and tends to overlook the fact that the Christian Bible commonly uses figurative expressions.

The Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as a "door." [John 10:9]

The Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as the "true vine" [John 15:5], and His disciples as "branches."

The Bible speaks of Jesus as "a rock." [1 Corinthians 10:4]

We believe that such is true also of Christ's statement about His body and blood.

The bread and wine are symbols of His body and blood.

This does not detract at all from the reality of the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ within an assembly of true believers.

Matthew 18:20 [King James] "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

To reject the idea that Jesus Christ becomes literally present in pieces of bread or inside a cup of wine is not to reject that He is present spiritually among true believers.

After Jesus Christ "blessed" the elements, they did not change into His literal flesh and blood, for He was literally still there in physical form. Jesus Christ did not vanish away to appear in the form of bread and wine.

Also after Jesus Christ blessed the cup of wine, He still called it "the fruit of the vine," not literal blood. [Matthew 26:29]

Since Jesus Christ drank from the cup of wine as well as His disciples, and if it had become actual blood, they would have sinned by the very laws that Jesus Christ had established under the Old Covenant. [Deuteronomy 12:16; Acts 15:20]

There is no physical evidence that any change comes to the elements through the Romish ritual. They have the same taste, colour, smell, weight and dimensions.

The change is supposed to take place when the priest says the Latin words, “*hoc est corpus meus.*”

In the view of the fact no change takes place, we can understand how the expression “*hocus-pocus*” originated with these words. [Reference: ‘*The Story of Civilisation – The Reformation*’ by Durant; page 749]

“The learned Council of Trent proclaimed that the belief in transubstantiation was essential to salvation and pronounced curses on any who would deny it. The Council ordered priests to explain that not only did the elements of the Mass contain flesh, blood, bones and nerves as part of Christ, but as the whole Christ.” [Reference: ‘*The Encyclopaedia of Religions*’, volume 2; page 77]

Quotation: ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 14; page 586; article ‘*Theology*’ –
“The dogma of the totality of the real presence means that each individual species of the whole Christ, flesh and blood, body and soul, divinity and humanity, is really present.”

This piece of bread having become “*Christ*” it is believed that in offering it up, the priest sacrifices Christ.

A curse was pronounced by the Council of Trent on any who believed otherwise. *“If anyone saith that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God ... let him be anathema.”* [Reference: ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 10; page 6; article ‘*Mass, Sacrifice of*’]

In Roman Catholic belief, this “*sacrifice*” is a renewal of the sacrifice on the cross. *“Christ ... commanded that His bloody sacrifice on the cross should be daily renewed by an un-bloody sacrifice of His body and blood in the Mass under the simple elements of bread and wine.”* [Reference: ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 10; page 13]

“Because the elements are changed into Christ He is present in our churches not only in a spiritual manner but really, truly and substantially as the victim of a sacrifice.” [Reference: ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 7; page 340; article ‘*High Altar*’]

“Though the ritual has been carried out millions of times, attempts are made to explain that it is the same sacrifice as Calvary because the victim in each case is Jesus Christ.” [Reference: ‘*The New Baltimore Catechism*’ no.3; question 931]

The very idea of Christ – “*flesh and blood, body and soul, divinity and humanity*” being offered repeatedly as a “*renewal*” of the sacrifice of the cross, stands in sharp contrast to the words of Jesus Christ on the cross.

“*It is finished*” [John 19:30], also what the writer of Hebrews said under inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:10-14 [King James] *“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”*

The Old Testament sacrifices had to be offered continually because none of them was a perfect sacrifice. But Jesus Christ only needed to make one sacrifice because of His perfectly sin-free, priceless nature as the very Son of God.

Roman Catholic doctrine is in total contrast to what is recorded in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, daily sacrifices in contrast to one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:25-28 [King James] *“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”*

In view of this, those who believe the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross should be continually renewed in the Mass have in a sense done what is condemned, falling away from the truth.

Hebrews 6:6 [King James] *“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*

Putting to open shame the name of Jesus Christ.

After the bread has been changed into “Christ” by the priest, it is placed on the monstrance in the centre of a sunburst design. Before the monstrance Catholics will bow and worship the little wafer as God! This practice, in our opinion, is similar to the practices of heathen tribes which worship fetishes.

Quotation: *‘The Catholic Encyclopaedia’* volume 5; page 581; article ‘Eucharist’ – *“In the absence of scriptural proof, the Church finds a warrant for, and a propriety in, rendering divine worship of the blessed sacrament in the most ancient and constant tradition...”*

This reasoning brings to mind the words of Jesus Christ, “... making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition.” [Mark 7:13]

Did the idea of transubstantiation begin with the Roman Catholic Mass?

The historian Durant in his *‘Story of Civilisation, The Reformation’* page 741 – *“tells us that the belief in transubstantiation as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church is one of the oldest ceremonies of primitive religion.”*

In the scholarly work Hastings’ *‘Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics’*, many pages are devoted to an article *‘Eating the God.’* In these pages, abundant evidence is given of transubstantiation rites among many nations, tribes and religions. Such rites were known in pagan Rome as evidenced by Cicero’s rhetorical question about the corn of Ceres and the wine of Bacchus.

In Mithraism, a sacred meal of bread and wine was celebrated.

“Mithraism had a Eucharist, but the idea of a sacred banquet is as old as the human race and existed at all ages and amongst all peoples.” [Quotation: *‘The Catholic Encyclopaedia’* volume 10; page 404; article ‘Mithraism’]

“In Egypt a cake was consecrated by the priest and was supposed to become the flesh of the god Osiris. This was eaten and wine was taken as part of the rite.” [Quotation: *‘The Encyclopaedia of Religions’* volume 2; page 76]

“Even in Mexico and Central America, among those who had never heard of Jesus Christ, the belief in eating the flesh of a god was found. When Catholic missionaries first landed there, they were surprised when they witnessed a religious rite which reminded them of communion, an image made of flour ... after consecration by priests, was distributed among the people who ate it ... declaring it was the flesh of the deity.” [Quotation: *‘Conquest of Mexico’* by Prescott; volume 3]

Quotation: *‘The Two Babylons’* by Hislop; page 232 –

“The idea of eating flesh of a god was of cannibalistic inception. Since heathen priests ate a portion of all sacrifices, in cases of human sacrifice, priests of Baal were required to eat human flesh. Thus ‘cahna-bal’, that is, ‘priest of Baal’, has provided the basis for our modern word ‘cannibal’.”

During Mass, members of the Romish church in good standing may come forward and kneel before the priest who places a piece of bread in their mouths which has become a “Christ.” This piece of bread is called “host”, from the Latin word meaning “victim” or “sacrifice.” The Catholic Encyclopaedia says that “*the host has been the object of a great many miracles, including the bread being turned to stone and hosts which have bled and continued to bleed.*” ... “*Hosts are made in a round shape, this form first being mentioned by St. Epiphanius in the fourth century.*” [Quotation: ‘*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 7; pages 489 and 491-2; article ‘Host’]

But when Jesus Christ instituted the New Testament Passover, He simply took bread and broke it. Bread does not break into round pieces! Breaking the bread actually represents the body of Jesus Christ which was broken by the cruel beating and stripes before He died on the cross.

This symbolism is **not** carried out by serving a round, disk shaped wafer completely whole.

If the use of a round wafer is without scriptural basis, is it possible that we are faced with yet another example of pagan influence?

Quotation: ‘*The Two Babylons*’ by Hislop; pages 160 and 163 –
“*The round wafer, whose roundness is so important an element in the Roman mystery, is only another symbol of Baal, or the sun. We know that round cakes were used in the ancient mysteries of Egypt, the thin round cake occurs on all altars.*”

Quotation: ‘*Isis Unveiled*’ by Blavatsky; page 351 –
“*In the mystery religion of Mithraism, the higher initiates of the system received a small round cake or wafer of unleavened bread which symbolised the solar disk, as did their round tonsure.*”

Quotation: ‘*Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism*’ by Inman; page 34 –
“*In 1854 an ancient temple was discovered in Egypt with inscriptions that show little round cakes on an altar. Above the altar is a large image of the sun.*”

Even among the Israelites when they fell into Baal worship, sun-images were set up above their altars! But during the reign of Josiah, these images were torn down.

2 Chronicles 34:4 [King James] “*And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.*”

The margin mentions that the “images” were “sun-images.”

Sometimes the circular sun-image is a stained glass window above the altar or above the entrance to the church building.

Quotation: ‘*Romanism and the Gospel*’ by Scott; page 93 –
“*It is a spectacle of gorgeous magnificence, lights, colours, vestments, music, incense and what has a strange psychological effect, a number of drilled officiants performing a stately ritual in independence of the worshippers. These are indeed spectators, not participants, spectators like those who were present at a performance of the ancient mystery cults.*”

Quotation: ‘*Roman Catholicism*’ by Boettner; page 170 –
Summary of mechanical performance of the priest during Mass:
“*He makes the sign of the cross sixteen times, turns to the congregation six times, lifts his eyes to heaven eleven times, kisses the altar eight times, folds his hands four times, strikes his breast ten times, bows his head twenty-one times, genuflects eight times, bows his shoulders seven times, blesses the altar with the sign of the cross thirty times, prays secretly eleven times, prays aloud thirteen times, takes the bread and wine and turns it into the body and blood of Christ, covers and uncovers the chalice ten times, goes to and fro twenty times.*”

Adding to this complicated ritualism is the use of highly coloured robes, candles, bells, incense, music and the showy pageantry for which Romanism is known.

What a contrast to the simple memorial instituted by Jesus Christ!