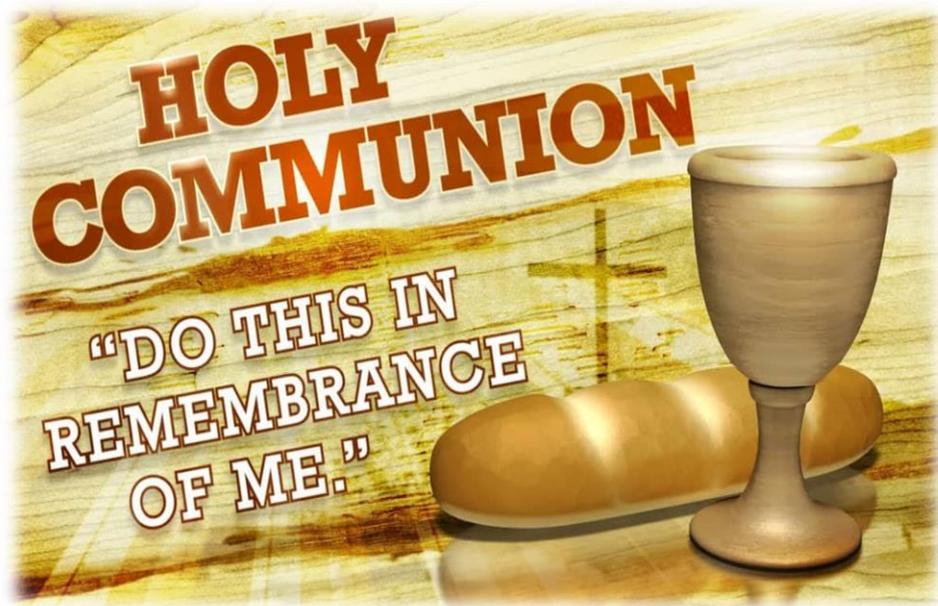


The Eucharist / Holy Communion / Mass



The History and Development of
the Theology and Liturgy of the
Eucharist
Holy Communion
Mass

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Do this in Remembrance of Me

- ▶ Various Names: The **Eucharist** - from Greek εὐχαριστία, *eucharistía*, lit. thanksgiving
- ▶ Holy Communion
- ▶ Holy Mass

Other Terms

- ▶ Other Christian denominations may employ terms such as
- ▶ Lord's Supper
- ▶ Divine Service or worship service
- ▶ Divine Liturgy
- ▶ Breaking of Bread
- ▶ Blessed Sacrament

Mass - Etymology

- ▶ The English noun *mass* is derived from the Latin *missa*.
- ▶ The Latin word was adopted in Old English as *mæsse* i.e. 'a sending, dismissal'
- ▶ The Latin term *missa* itself was in use by the 6th century.
- ▶ Derived from the concluding formula *Ite, missa est* ("Go; the dismissal is made)
- ▶ Historically, however, there have been other etymological explanations of the noun *missa* that claim not to derive from the formula *ite, missa est*.
- ▶ Comes from latinization of Hebrew *matzâh* - unleavened bread; oblation",
- ▶ Greek μύησις "initiation", or even Germanic *mese* "assembly".

Mass

- ▶ The term *Mass* is commonly used in the:
- ▶ Catholic Church
- ▶ Western Orthodox Church
- ▶ Old Catholicism and Independent Catholicism
- ▶ Lutheran churches,
- ▶ some Anglican churches.
- ▶ by some Protestant churches.

Early Christianity

▶ *1 Corinthians 11: 23-26*

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you:

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes

▶ *Matt 26:26-29*

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

▶ *Mark 14:22-26*

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

▶ *Luke 22:17-23*

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Early Christianity

- ▶ There are three references in Acts to "the breaking of bread" by early Christians at Jerusalem and by St Paul on his visit to Troas.
- ▶ The letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles make it clear that early Christianity believed that this institution included a mandate to continue the celebration as an anticipation in this life of the joys of the banquet that was to come in the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ The term "Agape" or "Love-feast" appears in Jude 1:12 and 2 Peter 2:13

Early Christianity – Didache - Teaching

- ▶ Didache is known as Lord's teaching through Apostles. It begins as:
- ▶ “The teaching of the Lord through the 12 Apostles to the Gentiles (meaning ‘nations’).”
- ▶ The Oldest written Catechism (120).
- ▶ **3 Main sections:**
- ▶ Christian Ethics: Two ways – one of life and one of love, Vices and Virtues
- ▶ Baptism
- ▶ Eucharist

Early Christianity – Didache - Teaching

- ▶ **According to the Teaching, this is how the Eucharist should be celebrated:**
- ▶ “And with respect to the thanksgiving meal, you shall give thanks as follows: First with respect to the cup: ‘We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David, your child, which you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be the glory forever.’
- ▶ And with respect to the fragment of bread: ‘We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be the glory forever.
- ▶ As this fragment of bread was scattered upon the mountains and was gathered to become one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. For the glory and the power are yours through Jesus Christ forever.’

Early Christianity – Didache - Teaching

- ▶ But let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving meal unless they have been baptized in the name of the Lord. For also the Lord has said about this, 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs.'
- ▶ And when you have had enough to eat, you shall give thanks as follows: 'We give you thanks, holy Father, for your holy name which you have made reside in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality that you made known to us through Jesus your child. To you be the glory forever.'
- ▶ You, O Master Almighty, created all things for the sake of your name, and gave both food and drink to humans for their refreshment, that they might give you thanks. And you graciously provided us with spiritual food and drink and eternal life through your child.

Didache / Didakhe - Teaching

- ▶ Above all we thank you because you are powerful. To you be the glory forever. Remember your church, O Lord; save it from all evil, and perfect it in your love. And gather it from the four winds into your kingdom, which you prepared for it. For yours is the power and the glory forever.
- ▶ May grace come and this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come; if any one is not, let him repent. Maranatha! (Come, Lord!) Amen. (So be it.)
- ▶ But permit the prophets to give thanks (or: 'hold the eucharist') as often as they wish.'" *Didache 9. 10*

Early Christianity

- ▶ In the 4th century Cyril of Jerusalem left a more detailed and ritualistic instruction for Communion (Latin *communio* meaning “fellowship/sharing”). While *Didache* concentrates on prayer and thanksgiving, Cyril’s instructions emphasize technique:
- ▶ “Approaching (Communion)...come not with your palms extended and stretched flat nor with your fingers open. But make your left hand as if a throne for the right, and hollowing your palm receive the body of Christ saying after it, Amen.
- ▶ Then after you have with care sanctified your eyes by the touch of the holy Body, partake... giving heed lest you lose any particle of it (the bread). For should you lose any of it, it is as though you have lost a member of your own body, for tell me, if any one gave you gold dust, would you not with all precaution keep it fast, being on the guard lest you lose any of it and thus suffer loss? How much more cautiously then will you observe that not a crumb falls from you, of what is more precious than gold and precious stones. Then having partaken of the Body of Christ, approach also the cup of His blood; not extending your hands, but bending low and saying in the way of worship and reverence, Amen, be you sanctified by partaking, also of the blood of Christ.” *Catechetical Lecture 5*

Early Christianity

- ▶ **By 150 AD - the following liturgical structure was in use:**
- ▶ Scripture Readings and Homily.
- ▶ Intercessions and Kiss-of-Peace.
- ▶ Bread and Cup are brought to the Celebrant.
- ▶ Eucharistic Prayer (flexible) but following a fixed pattern with congregational “Amen”.
- ▶ Distribution of the elements by the deacons to those present and absent.
- ▶ Collection.

Early Christianity

- ▶ No full liturgies are known before the 3rd century.
- ▶ The earliest extant texts of an anaphora (the central part of the Eucharistic liturgy known also as the Eucharistic Prayer) include
 - ▶ the Anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition
 - ▶ the Egyptian form of the Liturgy of Saint Basil.
 - ▶ Liturgy of St Ambrose
- ▶ Early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper as a full meal, but by the third century, it had ceased to be a banquet and had become a ritualized small meal instead.

Early Christianity

▶ THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

- ▶ The earliest non-canonical references to Communion come in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, namely Ignatius of Antioch (c. 108 CE) and the *Didache* (c. 110 CE). Ignatius, much like Paul in 1 Corinthians, indicates that he is very concerned with proper Christian order at Communion, writing, “Give heed to keep one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup unto union with His blood. There is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow servants; that whatsoever you do, you may do according unto God.”²

Early Christianity

▶ JUSTIN'S *APOLOGY*

- ▶ Justin Martyr, writing around 150 CE in Rome, provides a unique perspective into the weekly practice of Communion among second century Christians. Toward the end of his *First Apology* he outlines the liturgy of the Roman Church:
- ▶ Scripture readings followed by a sermon,
- ▶ prayers of intercession and
- ▶ kiss of peace,
- ▶ a flexible Eucharistic prayer with congregational "Amen,"
- ▶ the distribution of the elements via deacons to those present and absent, and finally a collection for the poor.

HOLY COMMUNION

“DO THIS IN
REMEMBRANCE
OF ME.”



SECOND TO 5TH CENTURIES

- ▶ After Justin, following Christian writers speak about Communion, some with great regularity.
- ▶ Irenaeus - Gaul – 130-202AD
- ▶ Clement of Alexandria and Origen - Egypt 150- 215AD
- ▶ Tertullian and Cyprian – Carthage – 155-220AD
- ▶ Hippolytus – Rome – 170-235AD
- ▶ Cyril – Jerusalem 376 – 444AD
- ▶ Ephrem the Syrian- Syria 306 – 373AD
- ▶ Ambrose - Italy 339 - 397
- ▶ Augustine - North Africa 354 – 430AD

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

▶ First Development

- ▶ Universal affirmation of a real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements.
- ▶ Transubstantiation / Transelementation – 1215 by Council of Latern
- ▶ In the 6th Article of 1539 – the death penalty was prescribed for those who denied transubstantiation.
- ▶ Consubstantiation – Martin Luther
- ▶ Receptionism –
- ▶ Spiritual Feeding - Calvin

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

▶ Second Development

- ▶ Restrictions upon who could receive Communion
- ▶ Introduction of confirmation & confession.
- ▶ By the 3rd & 4th centuries one had to undergo a rigorous process of confirmation into the faith in order to become a fully-communing member of the Church.
- ▶ Additionally, after becoming a member of the Church, one had to remain in good standing in order to continually participate in the Lord's Supper.
- ▶ The biggest concern involved those who had "lapsed" or denied the faith during persecution.
- ▶ Those who had denied Christ needed to undergo intense training in order to be brought back into communion

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

▶ Third development

- ▶ the doctrine of *ex opere operato*, which means roughly, “from the work performed.”
- ▶ This doctrine indicates that the sacraments were efficacious in themselves, not because of the worthiness of the one giving the sacraments.
- ▶ This issue arose primarily in North Africa, where a number of bishops and presbyters had “lapsed” due to persecutions and then returned to the Church and administered communion.
- ▶ The Church through various councils in Africa and Europe affirmed that the faithful who had received communion from these (formerly) lapsed clergy had in fact received the Eucharist, because it is the Eucharist itself that bestows God’s gifts and not the one administering it.

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

- ▶ ***Ex opere operato*** - Latin - meaning "from the work performed" and, in reference to sacraments, signifies that they derive their efficacy, not from the minister or recipient, but from the sacrament - independently of the merits of the minister or the recipient.
- ▶ The *ex opere operato* efficacy means being sure of God's sovereign and gratuitous intervention in the sacraments. "For example, in confirmation the Holy Spirit is bestowed not through the attitude of the bishop and of the person being confirmed but freely by God through the instrumentality of the sacrament. In order to receive sacraments fruitfully, it is believed necessary for the recipient to have faith.

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

▶ Fourth Development

- ▶ Statements about communion began to find their way into the canons (official statements) of synods and councils, including the first ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 CE.
- ▶ Statements regarding the proper administration of the Eucharist became quite common, leading to the solidification of how communion was to be administered and understood.
- ▶ For example, Canon 18 of Nicaea reads: “*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].*” Here we see some of the practical matters at the heart of early Christian thinking about communion.

Development of Eucharistic doctrine

- ▶ **Finally**
- ▶ With the official status granted to Christianity post-Constantine, daily & weekly services were held in churches & cathedrals created specifically as sacred spaces for Christian worship.
- ▶ Worship was increasingly undertaken in formal spaces and no longer in the homes and public meeting places where it had been previously.
- ▶ This furthered the formalization of communion practice and understanding. For it is one thing to share a meal in someone's home under the threat of persecution and quite another to participate in the pageantry of a sacred ceremony being held in a magnificent church.

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