

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Form 1

The Institution of the Supper

Dear congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us give full attention to the words of the institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord, as they are delivered by the apostle Paul:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when 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 also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats

and drinks judgment on himself.
(*1 Cor. 11:23–29*)

That we may now celebrate the Supper of the Lord to our comfort, it is necessary to examine ourselves fully, and further to consider carefully that purpose for which Christ ordained and instituted this sacrament—namely, His remembrance.

The Call to Self-Examination

The true examination of ourselves consists of three parts:

First, let everyone carefully consider their sins and ungodliness, that they may hate their sins and humble themselves before God, considering that the wrath of God against sin is so great that He, rather than leaving it unpunished, has punished it in his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, with the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

Second, let everyone examine their heart to see whether they also believe the sure promise of God that all their sins are forgiven only because of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and that the complete righteousness of Christ is imputed and freely given to them as their own—indeed, so

completely as if they had personally satisfied for all their sins and fulfilled all righteousness.

Third, let everyone carefully examine their own conscience to see if they are fully determined to show true thankfulness to God in every area of life and to walk sincerely before His face, and whether they, with full sincerity, strive to lay aside all enmity, hatred, and envy, and earnestly resolve from this day forward to live with their neighbor in true love and unity.

All those, then, who are of this mind, God will certainly receive in grace and count as worthy partakers of the Table of His Son, Jesus Christ. On the contrary, those who do not sincerely believe this testimony in their hearts eat and drink judgment upon themselves. According to the command of Christ and the apostle Paul, those who know themselves to be engaging in the following sins, without repentance, have no part in the kingdom of Christ and should therefore abstain from coming to the Table of the Lord: idolaters; those who call upon deceased saints, angels, or any other creature; those who revere images; those who engage in witchcraft, fortune-telling, occult practices, or other forms of superstition; all those who despise God, His word, and His holy sacraments; all blasphemers; those who seek to cause discord, factions, and dissension in the church or in the state; all perjurers; all who are disobedient to their parents

and those in lawful authority; all murderers, contentious people, and those who live in hatred and envy against their neighbors; all adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, thieves, the greedy, robbers, gamblers, covetous people, and all who lead offensive lives. All those who continue in such sins shall abstain from the Lord's Supper, so that they feel the weight of God's judgment and condemnation.

But this warning is not intended to discourage those believers with contrite hearts, as if no one might come to the Lord's Supper unless they are without sin. We do not come to this Supper to testify about our own perfection and righteousness, but, on the contrary, we come seeking life in Jesus Christ apart from ourselves. We come confessing our misery, admitting that we have many shortcomings and do not have perfect faith. We also confess that we do not serve God with sufficient zeal, but that we must struggle daily with the weakness of our faith and struggle against the evil lusts of our flesh. However, the grace of the Holy Spirit makes us sorry for our shortcomings, gives us the desire to live according to God's commandments, and helps us to fight against unbelief. Therefore, we can rest assured that no sin or weakness that still remains in us against our will can prevent us from being received by God's grace and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink.

Celebrating Our Salvation in Christ

Let us also consider the purpose for which our Lord has instituted his Supper: that we should do this in remembrance of Him. And this is how we remember Him by it:

First, let us be fully persuaded in our hearts that our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the promises made to our forefathers in the Old Testament, was sent by the Father into this world; that He assumed our flesh and blood; that He took upon Himself for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished eternally; that from the beginning of His incarnation until the end of His life on earth, He fulfilled for us all obedience and righteousness of the divine law. This was especially evident when the weight of our sins and of the wrath of God caused Him to sweat drops of blood in the garden. He was bound, so that we might be loosed from our sins, and afterward He suffered countless insults, so that we might never be put to shame. Let us confidently believe that He was innocent, yet put to death that we might be acquitted on the day of judgment; that He even allowed His own blessed body to be nailed to the cross, so as to cancel "the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (*Col. 2:14*). In doing so, He took from us the curse and bore it Himself, so that He might fill us with His blessing. He humbled Himself to the very

deepest reproach and anguish of hell, in body and soul, on the cross, when He cried out with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*Matt. 27:46*). He did all of this so that we might be accepted by God, never to be rejected by Him. Indeed, with His death and the shedding of His blood, He confirmed the new and eternal covenant, the covenant of grace and reconciliation, when He said, "It is finished" (*John 19:30*).

In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, during the Last Supper, "Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (*Matt. 26:26–28*). That is, "As often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, as a sure reminder and pledge, you shall be admonished and assured of My great love and faithfulness toward you. Because you otherwise would have suffered eternal death, I give My body and blood for you in My death on the cross." And, "As certainly as this bread is broken before you, and this cup is given to you, and with your mouth you eat and drink in remembrance of Me, so surely do I nourish and refresh for everlasting life your hungry and thirsty souls with My crucified body and shed blood."

From the institution of this Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that He directs our faith to His perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross, as the only foundation of our salvation. By this sacrifice, He has become to our hungry and thirsty souls the true food and drink of life eternal. For by His death, He has taken away the cause of our eternal death and misery, our sin. He has also obtained for us the life-giving Spirit, who dwells in Christ our head and enables us, who are His members, to have communion with Him and be made partakers of His riches, including eternal life, righteousness, and glory.

Besides, by this same Spirit, we are also united as members of one body in true Christian love, as the apostle Paul says: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (*1 Cor. 10:17*). As many grains are ground to prepare one loaf of bread, and as many grapes are pressed together to produce wine, so we who by true faith are incorporated into Christ shall be one body, through Christian love, for the sake of our dear Savior, Jesus Christ. He loved us so greatly in order that we might show His love toward one another, not only in words, but also in deeds.

May the almighty, merciful God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help us in this, through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Dependence

That we may obtain all these blessings, let us humble ourselves before God and with true faith implore Him for His grace:

Merciful God and Father, we cherish the blessed memory of the death and sufferings of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. We ask that in this Supper You will so work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, that with true confidence we might give ourselves up, more and more, unto Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray that this might allow our burdened and contrite hearts to be nourished and refreshed with the true body and blood of Him who is true God and true man, the only heavenly bread. Empower us to no longer live in our sins, knowing that He lives in us, and we in Him. May we truly be partakers of the new and everlasting covenant of grace. May we not doubt that You will forever be our gracious Father, who does not impute the guilt of our sins to us, and who provides us with all that we need for body and soul, as your dear children and heirs. Grant us also Your grace, that we may take up our cross cheerfully, deny ourselves, confess our Savior, and in all tribulation—with uplifted head—expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. There He will make our mortal bodies

like unto His glorified body, and take us to be with Him in eternity. Answer us, O God and merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray:

Congregation:

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

By this Holy Supper, may we also be strengthened in the catholic, undoubted, Christian faith, of which we make profession with heart and mouth, saying:

Congregation:

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at

the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

That we may be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, let us not cling with our hearts to external things, like bread and wine, but lift our hearts to heaven, where our advocate, Jesus Christ, is, at the right hand of His heavenly Father, where the articles of our Christian faith direct us. Let us not doubt that we shall be nourished and refreshed in our souls, with His body and blood, through the working of the Holy Spirit, as truly as we receive the holy bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

In breaking and distributing the bread, the minister shall say:

The bread which we break is a communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember, and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

And when he gives the cup, the minister shall say:

The cup of blessing which we bless is a communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink, remember, and believe that the precious blood of our Lord

Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

During the communion, a psalm may be sung, or some portion of Scripture may be read, in remembrance of the passion of Christ, such as Isaiah 53 or John 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, or 18.

The Response of Thanksgiving and Praise

After the communion, the minister shall say:

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now nourished our souls at His Table, let us together praise His holy name with thanksgiving, and let everyone say in his heart:

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and
all that is within me, bless his
holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and
forget not all his benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the
pit, who crowns you with
steadfast love and mercy....

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding
in steadfast love.

He will not always chide, nor will
he keep his anger forever.

He does not deal with us accord-
ing to our sins, nor repay us
according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are
above the earth, so great is his
steadfast love toward those

who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our
transgressions from us.

As a father shows compassion
to his children, so the LORD
shows compassion to those
who fear him. (*Ps. 103:1–4,
8–13*)

He who did not spare his own Son
but gave him up for us all, how
will he not also with him gracious-
ly give us all things? (*Rom. 8:32*)

God shows his love for us in that
while we were still sinners, Christ
died for us. Since, therefore, we
have now been justified by his
blood, much more shall we be
saved by him from the wrath of
God. For if while we were enemies
we were reconciled to God by the
death of his Son, much more, now
that we are reconciled, shall we be
saved by his life. (*Rom. 5:8–10*)

Therefore, my mouth and heart
shall show forth the praise of the
Lord from this time forth, for ev-
ermore. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O merciful God and Father, we
thank You with all our heart that of
Your boundless mercy You have given
us Your only begotten Son for a Me-
diator, the sacrifice for our sins, and
as our food and drink unto life eter-
nal. We also thank You that You give
us a true faith, whereby we become

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partakers of these benefits. You have united us to Christ and to each other in the communion of saints. You have given Your Son for us and to us and have proclaimed His saving death to the whole world. Having signified and sealed the atoning sacrifice of Your

Son for us, we ask that You would, by Your Spirit, also make us witnesses to this good news among our neighbors. Strengthen us in faith to live gratefully in this present age as we await our Savior's return in glory. In His name we pray. Amen.