**5 Myths About the Eucharist that Too Many People Still Believe**

Since the Eucharist is Christ himself, the Eucharist is at the center of our Christian faith, which is why it’s unfortunate there are so many misconceptions about it. Here are 5 common myths:

**Myth 1: The Eucharist is just a symbol**

Truth: Of course, there is symbolic value in our spiritual food coming to us in the form of bread and wine. But the Eucharist is not just a symbol. The Eucharist is Jesus himself!

We know this because Jesus told us so. At the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he did not say that the bread was “like” his Body, or a “symbol” for his Body. He said “this is my Body.” Catholics take him at his word and believe in his real presence in the Eucharist by faith.

**Myth 2: The Real Presence is a late corruption of the faith by the Catholic Church**

Truth: Aside from Christ’s own clear teaching on the matter mentioned above (as well as St. Paul’s, see 1 Corinthians 11), we know from their own writings that the earliest Christians believed in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Here are just two (of many) examples: At the beginning of the 2nd century, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote that a defining characteristic of heretics was to “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.” (Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 7)

And St. Justin the Martyr wrote in the mid-2nd century: “For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; […] the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him… is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus.” (First Apology, 66)

**Myth 3: Catholics believe they are re-sacrificing Jesus over and over again because his first sacrifice wasn’t enough**

Truth: This is old Protestant propaganda against the Catholic Church, and it’s simply false.

The Bible (compiled and preserved by the Catholic Church) is explicit that Christ died “once for all” for the sins of the world (cf. Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, et al.) And the Catechism makes this clear as well (cf. CCC 1330).

When we call the Eucharist the “Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,” we mean that “it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Savior.” (CCC 1330) Christ’s one sacrifice on the cross is the infinite source for all the grace God dispenses in the world and in the Church.

The Eucharist is a mysterious way that Christ left us for making his one sacrifice present for all generations so that we may join with his sacrifice and have it applied to our lives.

**Myth 4: Everyone, regardless of their beliefs or the state of their soul, should be allowed to receive the Eucharist**

Truth: This might sound unwelcoming or non-inclusive, but to open the Eucharist to everyone regardless of their beliefs or the state of their soul would actually be bad for people who are unprepared, in addition to directly contravening Scripture.

This isn’t something the Church made up. St. Paul specifically addresses the problem of people receiving the Eucharist unprepared:

“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are ill and infirm, and a considerable number are dying.” (1 Corinthians 11.27-30)

Of course, Catholics want everyone to receive the Eucharist – just as believing and practicing Catholics.

**Myth 5: It’s acceptable to use grape juice instead of wine**

Truth: It’s common among evangelical Protestants to use grape juice instead of wine for

their celebrations of the Lord’s Supper. This practice appears to have come from the 19th

century anti-alcohol Temperance movement in the United States and was based on a

concern about the abuse of alcohol.

That might sound reasonable at first, except that it’s contradicting what Christ, in his

perfect wisdom, specifically told the Church to do.

Christ could have used any drink for the Eucharist, but chose wine. It’s not our place to

determine that Jesus’ decision was unwise or socially unacceptable and then change it.

The Catholic Church rightly remains faithful to Christ’s own institution and only uses real

wine (and bread).