

Explaining the Heresy of the Catholic Mass, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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I want you tonight, if you will, to understand my heart. I have to confess to you that the biggest grief, of course, in my life, and you will understand this because it is yours as well, and it is the Lord's, is that we find no pleasure in the death of the wicked. We find no delight in people who are condemned to hell. We long that people be saved. That is the great heart cry of every true Christian: salvation for all they know. As we learned from the story this morning of the rich man in hell, even in hell, he had an evangelistic passion wanting somebody to go and warn his brothers. If that is the impulse of those who are the damned, what kind of impulse do the redeemed have for the salvation of sinners that they may escape eternal hell? There are many religions in the world who promise heaven and do not deliver it. Many religions in the world that are satanic deceptions. All of them, in fact, but the true faith and the true gospel fall into that category.

Roman Catholicism belongs in the category of false religions, clearly, not because of what I say about them, but because what they say about the Bible, and what they say about the gospel, and what they say about religion. All one needs to do to understand a false religion is to see what they believe and understand what they advocate, and they can be then measured against the Word of God so that we can clearly understand that. Today there is a very, very aggressive and concerted effort among evangelical people, so many of whom don't know the true gospel, not just Roman Catholics but also Protestants, to embrace Roman Catholicism as if it is a true religion. This run to embrace Catholics and declassify them as non-believers, declassify them as a mission field, is being led by very prominent leaders in evangelical positions, both in churches and para-churches. This has gone on for a number of years.

It was not too many years ago that a document appeared, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," known as ECT which struck an alliance between evangelicalism and the Roman Catholic system. It was signed by many, many well-known evangelical leaders. It launched no small controversy. As a result of it, I would up in a seven-hour meeting, locked up in a room with these evangelical leaders while we endeavored to confront the signers of that document with the horrible realities of Catholicism, and their complete misrepresentation of the gospel, and to call these people to take their names off, to deny this document with all their passion and all their heart, none of which they were willing to do. And so, that embrace of Catholicism has gone on.

And the great reality is that many, many people who would call themselves Christians, and some who are Christians, are confused about the character of Roman Catholicism. We need to end that

confusion because we need to make sure that we understand that they do not believe in the true gospel.

At the heart of Roman Catholicism is this event called the Mass. Before we look at it, I want you to open your Bible, however, to the book of Hebrews, to the seventh chapter of Hebrews, and I just want to settle one thing in your mind, to begin with. And I tell you this, that this may seem a little bit rambling as I go through this material. Usually, I'm pretty organized in my thinking, but as I was trying to finally put this together Saturday while I was flying, there was just an interminably bumpy flight, and I think it was jogging my brain along with everything else. So, I'm going to hope that there's some cohesion, even if I have difficulty reading my own handwriting, because of the movement. I hope that you can follow me as I go through this.

But I want to establish one thing to begin with, and that is the nature of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So in Hebrews chapter 7, I would like you to look at verse 26, and I just want to read verse 26 through 28. "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily like those high priests to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. Because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath which came after the Law appoints a Son made perfect forever." The operative word is "once." One sacrifice. There is no need for daily offering of sacrifices.

If you will look at the ninth chapter of Hebrews you will see this same truth repeated in verse 11. "When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this creation, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood. He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained," past tense, "eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Again, the operative word is "once." "He entered the holy place," verse 12, "once," past tense, "having obtained eternal redemption."

Go over to verse 24 of Hebrews 9, "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, that is some earthly temple, some earthly sanctuary, some earthly altar, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, nor was it that He would offer Himself often as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now," here's that word again, "once at the consummation of the ages." That is, the culminating point of the ages, the very event of His own death and resurrection. "Once at the consummation of the ages, He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch it is appointed for men to die

once and after this comes judgment, so Christ, also having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin to those who eagerly await Him." Again the operative word appears in verse 28: "once." He does not need to offer Himself often, verse 25 says. He does not need to suffer repeatedly, as verse 26 would indicate from the foundation of the world. Because again, "once," at the culmination of the ages, He put away, past tense, sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Chapter 10 of Hebrews, verse 10, "By this will," that is the will of God, which Jesus came to do as it says in the prior verse 9. "By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Sanctified meaning separated from sin in a saving sense, as well as an ongoing sense. "And it was accomplished through the offering of Jesus Christ, the offering of His body, once. Every priest in contrast," verse 11, "stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away sins, but He having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time sat down at the right hand of God." The finality of this is so clear. He came, He made one sacrifice which perfected forever them that are sanctified. He came, He made one offering for all, never to be repeated, in contrast to priests repeating over and over and over, sacrifices which can never take away sin. There's only one sacrifice, made one time, by one person that can take away sin. It is that sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All the Old Testament sacrifices did was portray and develop almost a passionate longing for the final sacrifice, which would truly take away sin. The Old Testament had a priesthood, an altar, and sacrifices which were only shadows, anticipatory, of the final sacrifice that would come with Christ. He came, He offered that sacrifice, and God punctuated that one sacrifice by destroying the temple using the Romans to do it in 70 AD, by destroying the altars, thus smashing the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament, and all the records of all the genealogies, of all those in the priestly line, thus ending, permanently, the priesthood. There are no more sacrifices. There are no more altars. And there are no more priests as a special order to offer sacrifices. It all came to an end at the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Any sacrifices being made today are unbiblical and unable to accomplish anything. Any priests today are false claimants to a special priesthood, a special order of priests, since now we are all priests. We are a royal priesthood, all believers. We need no mediator; we all have immediate access to God. We need to make no sacrifices because there is no temple, there are no altars, there are no sacrifices, and we are not in need of any priests.

In spite of that, the Roman Catholic system has devised a priesthood, has built in every church on the face of the earth an altar, and around that altar continues to offer sacrifice. Tens of thousands of times every day, as if they had reinvented the Levitical priesthood. And they will be doing this until the end of time, until the end of the world, it says there in their literature. They have reestablished what God Himself destroyed, and it is a variation of the Levitical priesthood. It is an illegitimate variation of

that priesthood. I say variation because it is mingled with cultic pagan mystery and idolatry. The Mass is a sacrifice which can be made only on an altar of some kind and only by a priest.

How important is the Mass to Catholicism? Well, to show you its importance, I quote the Catholic Catechism. Quote: "The Mass is the source of and summit of the Christian life." That it is say, it is the origin of the Christian life and it is the high point. It was Cardinal Ratzinger, now calling himself Pope Benedict, who said, and I quote him, "The Mass is the sum and substance of our faith." This is not peripheral. This is not on the edge. This is not one among many. This is the heart and soul of the system, even though there are seven sacraments by their definition. This is the main sacrament. But at the very outset, the Mass is a deception because, as I said, there are no more sacrifices, there are no more altars. There is no more temple in which God dwells, no more tabernacle, and there is no more priesthood. It is therefore a false sacrifice on a false altar in a false temple by a false priest. At heart, it is a denial of the singular sacrifice of Christ on the cross, because the Mass is an offering of Christ repeatedly by an illegitimate priesthood on an illegitimate altar for a useless and ungodly purpose.

As in so many points, as I've been saying, Roman Catholicism is a mix. It is mostly paganism with a little Christianity sprinkled into it and with a lot of Christian terminology in order to deceive and delude souls. It is a demonic religion that does not bring salvation. Cannot.

John O'Brien, a Catholic priest, has helped Roman Catholics to understand the importance of the Mass. He has written a book called "The Faith of Millions: The Credentials of the Catholic Religion." It is a classic work. This is what he writes, John O'Brien, a very popular work. "When the priest announces the tremendous words of consecration," this is the Mass, "he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the victim for the sins of man. It is a power exercised by the priest greater than that of saints and angels, greater than that of seraphim and cherubim. Indeed, it is a power greater even than the power of the Virgin Mary. While the Blessed Virgin was the human agency by which Christ became incarnate a single time, the priest brings Christ down from heaven, and renders Him present on our altar as the eternal victim." You wonder why you always see a crucifix and not an empty cross? "The priest brings Christ down from heaven and renders Him present on our altar as the eternal victim for the sins of man, not once but a thousand times."

Stop there for a moment. You see the comparison? Mary only brought Him into the world once; the priest brings Him down thousands of times. He has greater power than the Virgin Mary. It's an amazing thing for a Roman Catholic to say, since any study of Mary would indicate to us that they think that she has the very power of God. We wouldn't expect a system like this to be consistent, would we? "The priest," he goes on, "speaks, and lo, Christ the eternal and omnipotent God bows His head in humble obedience to the priest's command." And the last paragraph from O'Brien, "Of what sublime dignity is the office of the Christian priest who is thus privileged to act as the ambassador and

the vice-regent of Christ on earth? He continues the essential ministry of Christ. He teaches the faithful with the authority of Christ. He pardons the penitent sinner with the power of Christ. He offers up again the same sacrifice of adoration and atonement which Christ offered on Calvary. No wonder that the name which spiritual writers are especially fond of applying to the priest is that of *Alter Christus*, for the priest is, and should be, another Christ.”

Last week I was on the Larry King program, some of you saw it. That came out of the mouth of one of the priests on that program. “How wonderful it is,” he said, “to be another Christ.” The Bible warns about another Christ, false Christs, and they will proliferate in the end days. That’s what’s going on in a Mass. This priest, given for that greater power than the Blessed Virgin, brings Christ down out of heaven. All he has to do is speak, and Christ the eternal and omnipotent God bows his head in humble obedience to the priest’s command.

Now, all of this goes back for its real ratification and clarification to the Council of Trent in the 16th century. The Council of Trent affirms so many things, because they were reacting to the Reformation. But you go back to the Council of Trent, and you’ll get a really good idea of how they felt about the Mass. This is dogma, folks. When the Council of Trent said something, the Church says it. When the Church says it, it’s infallible; therefore, it can’t change. The Council of Trent met in its 13th session. The sessions went on for a long, long time. Met in this 13th session in October of 1551. They promulgated at that particular session a decree concerning, quote: “The Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist: the Mass.”

At the end of the decree was a list of canons, or laws, and these laws provide anathemas or damnation, strongest thing that they can do, strongest word that they can use is to damn or anathematize. And, the canons anathematized those who reject the Council’s teaching. Now, what happens if you look at these canons, is they provide short succinct definitions of their doctrine. And I want to read to you some of them that relate to the Mass, the issue of what they call the Eucharist.

Canon number one, inside the decree concerning the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. Canon number one: if anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are contained truly, really, and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but says that He is in it only as a sign or figure or force, let him be anathema. Damnation is pronounced on anybody who says that Christ is not actually there, body, blood, soul, divinity, in the wine, and the wafer.

Canon number two: if anyone says that in the sacred and holy sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, they’re both there. And denies that wonder and singular change of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the appearances only of bread and wine remaining, which changed the Catholic Church most apply calls transubstantiation, let

him be anathema. In other words, if you say the body and blood, as well as the soul and divinity of Christ are not there in the wine and the bread, you're anathematized. If you say He's only there along with the bread and the wine, you're also damned. What you have to say is: He's there, and the bread and the wine are not there, although they appear to be there. Mystical hocus-pocus, mumbo-jumbo for sure.

Canon number eight: if anyone says that Christ received in the Eucharist is received spiritually only, and not also sacramentally and really, let him be anathema. That is, if you say that in taking the bread in, taking the host, as they call it, which the bread is the only thing given to the communicant; if you say that Christ is only there spiritually and not sacramentally and really, you're damned.

11 years later in 1562, 22nd session was held of the Council of Trent, and this time the decree promulgated was entitled, "Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass." And, it's important for you to know this, so let me just read what the second session of this decree says. "And inasmuch as in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass is contained and immolated in an un-bloody manner, the same Christ who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, the holy Council teaches, that this is truly propitiatory and has this effect: that if we, contrite and penitent with sincere heart, and upright faith, with fear and reverence draw nigh to God, we obtain mercy and fine grace in seasonable aid." In other words, the Mass is really Christ. It is really a sacrifice on a real altar, by a real priest, just like priests in the Old Testament offered an animal on the altar as a sacrifice. The only difference is: it is an un-bloody one, that Christ is nonetheless immolated, or offered or sacrificed. And as a result of this, propitiation is achieved, actual satisfaction for sin is achieved.

Trent went on to say, "The victim is one and the same," that is, Christ is the victim as He was on the cross, "in this Mass, the same," that is Christ, "now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered Himself on the cross." So, you've got tens of thousands, millions upon millions of sacrifices of Christ being made by priests, and it is the same Christ, the real Christ, the actual Christ and not just a spiritual Christ but the real Christ. Body, blood, spirit and divinity. And it is propitious, propitiatory. He went on to say, Trent did, "It is well understood that it is an un-bloody sacrifice, but it is no less a sacrifice. It is rightly offered for the sins, the punishments, the satisfactions, and the other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those departed in Christ, but not yet fully purified." Where are they? Purgatory. So this is propitiation for the living and for the dead. Now, at the end of that decree which came 11 years later, there are more canons, more curses pronounced on those who would deny this.

Here's canon number one: "If anyone says that, in the Mass, a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God or that to be offered is nothing else than that Christ is given to us to eat, let him be anathema." If you say we're eating Christ, literally eating His body and blood and spirit and divinity but it's not a sacrifice, you're damned.

Canon number two: "If anyone says that by those words, 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' Christ did not institute the Apostles' priests, or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer His own body and blood, let him be anathema." If you just say, "Do this in remembrance of Me," is anything less than the institution of the Roman Catholic priesthood, you are damned.

Canon number three: "If anyone says that the sacrifice of the Mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory one." That is, it is not efficacious, that it is not a real sacrifice which God accepts so that He can forgive sin. "If you say it's anything less than that, or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead," that is, only the person who is there receiving it and not other living people and other dead people who aren't there, "for sins, punishment, satisfactions and other necessities, let him be anathema." If you say that it doesn't count for the living and the dead who aren't there, you're cursed.

Canon number four: "If anyone says that by the sacrifice of the Mass, a blasphemy is cast upon the most holy sacrifice of Christ consummated on the cross, let him be anathema." So, we're all damned. If you say that this sacrifice blasphemes the most holy sacrifice of Christ, then you're blaspheming and you're damned.

Canon number five: "If anyone says that it is a deception to celebrate masses in honor of the saints, and in order to obtain their intercession with God, let him be anathema." Masses are offered as some kind of offering to dead saints to get dead saints to intercede for us, the living, and dead. And then just to make sure you can't escape, "If anyone says that the canon of the Mass contains errors, let him be anathema."

I mean, they've damned you in every possible way. There is no way out. Now do you understand why Roman Catholic people are bound to this system? It is so full of damnation, there is no way out.

How can we summarize this? Just a few things. One, Jesus Christ, this is Roman Catholic theology of the Mass, it's from the Council of Trent, summary. One, Jesus Christ is truly, really, and substantially present in the sacrament following the words of consecration. It doesn't show up till after the words of consecration. Two, transubstantiation. That simply means to transform the substance. It started out as wine and bread, the substance, but the transforming of that substance into the actual body and blood of Christ is what transubstantiation means. Transubstantiation, secondly, involves the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance into the body of Christ, the change of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of the blood of Christ. It is a real and actual change, although it appears still to be bread and wine. Three, since Christ is really present in the Eucharist, the elements themselves are worthy of worship. They're worthy of worship.

Do you know that when a Catholic goes to Mass and passes the little box that the wafer and the wine is in, he worships? I was listening the other night to the Catholic channel when I was in Louisville and there was a priest on. I listened for at least an hour 'cause he was lecturing on the Mass, and I was checking my facts. Amazing how God brings things into my life when I'm working on this stuff. I mean, I was on the Larry King Show last week with six priests, and I was checking all my facts. And then I go there and this guy is saying this: "We can always tell," this priest. "We can always tell the devotion of a true Christian by whether or not he or she bows and genuflects in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament." That's exactly what they taught.

Fourth, the sacrifice of the Mass is properly called propitiatory in that it brings about a real pardon for sin. Five, in the institution of the Mass at the Lord's Supper, they think Christ instituted the Mass, He offered His own body and blood to the Father in the signs of the bread and the wine. And in so doing, He ordained the Apostles as the first priests. Number six, the sacrifice of the Mass is properly offered for sins, punishments, satisfaction and other necessities, not just for living people but dead ones. And finally, anybody who denies any of this is damned.

Now you might say, "Well, that's a long time ago. You're talking about 16 centuries. That's still the teaching of the Church?" Absolutely still the teaching of the Church. Pick up any Catholic Catechism, any Catholic writer, any modern writer on Catholicism, Karl Keating or anybody else, you're going to find the same thing. Trent's teaching remains the official dogmatic position of the Roman Catholic Church. Interesting, in the catechism of the Catholic Church, there are 9 paragraphs dedicated to the subject of justification. There are 84 dedicated to the Mass, and 14 summary paragraphs. In the current catechism of the Catholic Church, Trent is mentioned by name, the Council of Trent quoted as authoritative, its doctrines plainly presented as the Church's teaching.

Here's one paragraph from the Catechism: "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. The victim is one and the same. The same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, only the manner of offering is different. In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once on the altar of the cross is offered in an un-bloody manner," repeatedly. I added the word "repeatedly" for clarification.

Roman Catholic theology says the Mass is not a divine, is not a, what did I say? A dramatic reenactment. It's not theater. Roman Catholic theology says it's not a commemoration. It's not a memorial. It's not a remembrance. It is a real sacrifice that continues the eternal sacrifice of Christ, the eternal victim. It is not a separated sacrifice, but it is the same sacrifice as the cross continually being offered again, and again, and again, and again, and again. It's really an amalgamation of pagan sacrifices which has found their way into Christianity very, very early. True Roman Catholic devotion is measured by whether or not you genuflect and make the sign of the cross when you see the

Blessed Sacrament. Roman Catholic Catechism quotes Vatican II. Vatican II says, "As often as the sacrifice of the cross by which Christ has been sacrificed is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out. It is a redeeming sacrifice, as is the cross." What utter chaos and confusion is that?

So, where do you look for your salvation? To what sacrifice? The one you had today? Yesterday? The one you'll have down the road? No wonder in Roman Catholicism there's no such thing as assurance of salvation. How would you ever know? And let me just compound that a little bit. I was talking to RC Sproul this week back in Louisville, and we were talking about Catholicism. It's the background he came out of. And he said, "What's really astounding about Catholicism is this: if the priest doesn't have a pure intention when he offers the Mass, it's invalid." Whoa. The only way that the thing becomes valid is if the intention of the priest is pure. Trying to find a pure priest is no easy deal. And what if he's immoral? What if he's a pedophile? What if he's a homosexual? Does that invalidate everything the guy does? And just exactly what does pure intention mean?

Listen to Ludwig Ott, my favorite Roman Catholic theologian because I can find everything I need in that one book. Here's Ott: "The sacrifice of the Mass effects the remission of the temporal punishments for sin which still remain after the forgiveness of the guilt of sins and of the eternal punishment, not merely remitted by the conferring of the grace of Penance, but also immediately because the atonement of Jesus Christ is offered as a substitute for our works of atonement and for the suffering of the poor souls. The measurement of the punishments of sins remitted is proportional." Okay, you're going to get your sins remitted, but it's proportional in the case of the living, to the degree of perfection in their disposition. In the case of the suffering souls, the satisfactory operation of the sacrifice of the Mass is applied by way of intercession, as they are in the state of grace, and thus oppose no obstacle. Theologians generally teach that at least part of their punishment for sins is infallibly remitted.

So now, you've got not only the intention of the priest, but you've got the nature of the person's attitude. On the same page he says, "As a propitiatory and impetratory sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Mass possesses a finite external value, since the operations of propitiation and impetration refer to human beings, who as creatures, can receive a finite act only. This explains the practice of the Church in offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass frequently for the same intention."

What's all that about? It's all saying this. We can't be too sure about the intention of the priest. We can't be too sure about the intention of the person for whom the Mass is being offered. And since we can't really be sure about that, we have human limitations upon the Mass. Since the priest might not have a pure intention, and the person might not have a pure intention, and it might not be really doing very much good. And so they throw in this little possibility at the bottom that there has to be somewhere a finite benefit. In fact, part of their punishment must infallibly be remitted. You've got to throw that in. Why? Because you have to pay for the Mass.

That's right, you pay. That's how the coffers of the Catholic Church are filled, you pay for a Mass. There are inexpensive Masses and there are really expensive ones offered by a Bishop or a Cardinal. There is the votive Mass, which is like the routine stuff of life. There is a requiem, which is a Mass for the dead. That costs you more. There's a nuptial Mass for a wedding. that will cost you more. And then there's a super Mass offered by a hierarchical figure in the Church, which will cost you a lot more. The Catholic Church admits that you could have Mass, upon Mass, upon Mass, upon Mass, and you can pay plenty of money. And if the intention of the priest isn't right, and the intention of the person receiving the Mass isn't right, it's not going to have much effect. But they hurry to quickly add, quote, "Part of their punishment is infallibly remitted." Why? Because that's really a bummer to try to get people to pay money for something that might have no value. So you stick in a little finite value at the bottom and that makes them come back again, and again, and again, and again, to pile up those little finite values.

Roman Catholic theology teaches that a person can attend a thousand Masses, and still leave this life not fully purified, and go into Purgatory and have another thousand Masses read in their behalf, and still not be fully purified, because their attitude isn't pure, and the attitude of the priest isn't pure either. What a horrible trap. Absolutely horrible trap. Mystical mumbo-jumbo right out of the pit to take captive the souls of people.

Now, to have a Mass you have to have a priest. You can't have a Mass without a priest. That's why the shortage of priests is a big problem. Oh, I want to take you to a Mass for a moment here. This is kind of how it would float. This is Boettner, who wrote a classic book called "Roman Catholicism." You'll be interested in this. Stay with me. "The bread, in the form of thin round wafers, hundreds of which may be consecrated simultaneously, is contained in a golden dish. The wine is in a golden cup. The supposed body and blood of Christ are then raised before the altar by the hands of the priests, and offered up to God for the sins both of the living and the dead." By the way, the people are never more than spectators. They don't sing. They don't talk. They don't pray. They don't do anything. And the liturgy is so rigid, that it's carried out mechanically and the priests have to be trained to do it. And you've got to have a good memory to be a priest.

There's a lot of details. And the observants, after he's lifted it up, the priest partakes of a large wafer, then he drinks the wine in behalf of the whole congregation. They never drink the wine. Traditionally, they do not. Maybe some exceptions to that. The lay members go to the front of the church. Some of you have seen this; some of you have done this. And they kneel before a railing, and they close their eyes, and they drop their jaw into an open-mouth position, into which the priest places a small wafer. And the reason it never leaves the hands of the priest and goes to the hands of the parishioner is simply because this is the complete body and blood of Christ, and they don't want to drop it, they don't want the people to touch it. Only the priest drinks the wine, because the people might spill it, and it would land on the floor and it would have a horrible situation.

It used to be, in Roman Catholic tradition, you had to abstain from solid food since midnight if you were having a morning Mass. That's why they always had early Mass. You know where early Mass came from? It came from that traditional law that you couldn't eat anything between midnight and Mass and people didn't want to wait till 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, so they always had a 6:00, 5:00 Mass, because people were hungry. They weren't hungry to eat the wafer; they were just hungry to have the wafer eaten and then to go eat. And the reason you weren't allowed to eat before midnight was they didn't want to mingle Christ with anything else. Now that's been changed. I know. I understand the silliness of it. Now it's down to an hour, I think. Strange, however, isn't it that the Lord instituted the Last Supper immediately after they had eaten a huge meal that lasted for hours? Christ had no objection with the bread and the wine being mixed with whatever else they ate.

Then, the pageant really gets going. It takes a lot of training, and you'll understand why, okay? This is what happens. The priest then makes the sign of the cross 16 times in his pageant. I'm not going through it step-by-step. I'm going to sum it up. He has to make the sign of the cross 16 times. He has to turn toward the congregation 6 times, lift his eyes to heaven 11 times, kiss the altar 8 times, fold his hands 4 times, strike his breasts 10 times, bow his head 21 times, genuflect 8 times, bow his shoulder 7 times, bless the altar with the sign of the cross 30 times, lay his hands flat on the altar 29 times, pray secretly 11 times, pray aloud 13 times, take the bread and wine and turn it into the body and blood of Christ, cover and uncover the chalice 10 times, go to and fro 20 times, and in addition perform numerous other acts. What in the world is he doing? "All this extended pageant is designed," writes Boettner, "to reenact the experience of Christ from the Last Supper in the Upper Room, through the agony in the Garden, through the betrayal, through the trial, through the crucifixion, through His death, burial, resurrection and ascension."

That's why all that motions going on, some kind of dramatization. His bowings and genuflections are imitations of Christ in His agony and suffering. And if the priest forgets one element of the drama, he commits a sin; technically, invalidates the Mass. So, you've got to be trained to do this, and you've got to have a good memory. Who could count all those? What you do is you go through it; it's like a routine until you get it down.

Historically, the Mass has been said or sung in Latin, which nobody understood. They didn't need to understand. Priesthood, by the way, replaced preaching, and an altar replaced a pulpit. That's how it is with sacramental religion. And Boettner says, "Surely there was much truth in Voltaire's remark concerning the Mass as practiced in the cathedrals of France in his day when he called it the Grand Opera of the Poor." After the adoration of the consecrated host, the uplifted hands of the priest pretend to offer to God the very body and blood of Christ, who has come down for the sacrifice for the living and the dead. And then, the priest pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of the people, also to give Him to the people under the appearance of bread, though it's not really bread to be eaten by them. When the Roman priest consecrates the wafer, it is then called the Host, and they worship it as

God. And that's why they genuflect, and that's why they bow. And you know as well as I do that that piece of bread is nothing but a piece of bread. And if the soul and divinity of Christ are not present, then to worship it is sheer idolatry, no different than a pagan who worships a rock, or a stick, or a statue, or a fetish.

And remember, the efficiency of all of this, when it's all said and done, depends upon the priest's intention. If he doesn't have the right intension, it doesn't work. Council of Trent, "If anyone shall say that intention at least of doing what the Church does is not required in ministers while performing and administering the Sacraments, let him be anathema."

Pope Pius IV said, "If there is a defect in any of these, namely the due matter, the form with intention, or the sacerdotal order of the celebrant, it nullifies the sacrament." If you do it wrong, or with a wrong attitude, it's null and void. Cardinal Bellarmine, who was considered one of the foremost authorities, says, quote: "No one can be certain with the certainty of faith that he has received a true sacrament, since no sacrament is conformed without the intention of the ministers and no one can see the intention of another." Just tragic stuff. But according to the media today, the priests do this with the salvation of the world in view. Quote: "It is the sacrifice of the altar where the merits won by the Redeemer on the cross are distributed to the faithful." When you try to nail down the Roman Catholics on what exactly is going on, they're all over the map. And most of the poor folks who just go to the Catholic Church have no clue, except they think this is Christ and they worship Him.

In fact, this is so serious, skipping over to something, listen to Mother Teresa, and I'll stop here. This is a quote from Mother Teresa. "It is beautiful to see that humility of Christ in His permanent state of humility in the tabernacle," the little box where they put the wafer and the wine. "Where Christ has reduced Himself to such a small particle of bread that a priest can hold Christ in two fingers." Vatican II said, "The Blessed Sacrament should be given the worship which is due to God, the true God. It is not to be adored any less." What are they worshipping? Bread?

Churches promote the worship of the Blessed Sacrament. There are annual feasts in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. Special orders of men and women dedicated to continuous adoration of the Host. There is a group of nuns called, "The Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament." There is the congregation of the Blessed Sacrament who are, quote, "Devoted to carry out before the Blessed Sacrament, a perpetual mission of prayer and supplication." Their whole lives devoted to worshipping a piece of bread in a box.

Now, let me close with this. I think I can find it. Oh yes. We'll close by taking you to an 18th century eyewitness account of a festival, Corpus Christi, the body of Christ, the Blessed Sacrament. And I won't drag you through all of it. It's too painful. But it would go a little bit like this. "Huge wooden figures, 15 feet, dressed colorfully in their respective habits of office and dignity are assembled. All the clergy of the parish, Churches, and Friars of convents form a procession. All the silver bodies of

saints on pedestals and bases in the Churches and convents are collected together.” So, they’ve got all these statues and all these things. “The inhabitants are to clean the streets which the Sacrament is to go through, and cover the ground with greens and flowers, and put the best hangings in the front of balconies and windows.” There’s going to be a parade of the bread. “The Archbishop makes a prayer before the great altar. The music begins. The Archbishop takes out of the tabernacle the bread, the Host upon the rich solid gold chalice, and places it on the great Custodia, on the altar’s table. The Archbishop in his Pontifical habit officiates his grace, gives the blessing to the people with the Sacrament in his hands. Then, the Archbishop, with the help of the Dean, the arch-deacon and the chanter, place the Custodia on a gilt pedestal, which is adorned with flowers and the jewels of several ladies of quality, and which is carried on the shoulders of 12 priests dressed in the same ornaments they say Mass in. This being done, the procession begins to go out of the Church in the following order.”

Now, they’ve got 12 guys carrying this Custodia, this golden box, and on top of it sits this little box with the Host in it. First of all comes the bagpipe, some kind of instrument played like a bagpipe, and the great and small giants, the colorful figures, dancing all along the streets followed by a big silver cross out of the cathedral. Next come 30 corporations of tradesmen; the smallest is 30 people. Then, the boys and the girls of the Blue Hospital with their master, mistress and chaplain. Then, all the religious orders led by the Franciscans, ‘cause they’re the youngest, and all about 70 orders dressed in the ornaments they use at the altar. 20 convents of Friars, about 2,000 present on this solemn occasion. 16 convents of nuns, about 1500. 1,200 parish priests, 4,700 ecclesiastical personages. And the rest add up to about 15,000 families. Massive parade. They come out, this is in Spain, in a town called Zaragoza, but it’s typical of all of these. They come marching out, 12 priests carrying the canopy under which the Sacrament goes, the Archbishop in his pontifical habit goes at the sub-deacon’s right hand, the viceroy at the Archbishop’s right hand, the deacon and the subdeacon, one at the right and the other at the left, all under the canopy. Six priests with incense and incensories on both sides of the Custodia go incensing the Sacrament without intermission, without stopping. One kneels down before the great host and incenses it three times. The other puts incense in his incensory, and thus they do from the coming out of the Church until the return back. They’ve got three going at all times. This guy’s doing his three while the other is loading his three, and then they switch.

The great chancellor, the presidents, the counsels follow after with all nobility, men and women with lighted candles. This procession lasts four hours from the time it goes out till it comes into the Church again. All the bells of the convents, all the parishes ring all this time. The riches of the procession are incredible. With this magnificence, they carry the Sacrament through the principle streets of the city, and all the people that are in the balconies and lattice windows throw roses and other flowers upon the canopy of the Sacrament as it goes by. This is the festival of Corpus Christi. This is the worship of bread.

By the way, there's a revival in America today of the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In Catholic Churches around America, parish families sign up for an hour or more each week to keep company with the Host, and they go down to the Catholic Church and they sit there for an hour worshipping the Host around the clock every day. Pope John Paul II approved enthusiastically of perpetual adoration. That's what it means, perpetual around the clock worship of the Host. Some nuns do it all the time. Some congregations do it all the time. And in all Catholic Churches, there are people assigned to keep it going around the clock, or in many Catholic Churches. You could never confuse this with Christianity. Never. Never.

I have a lot more to say. Fascinating about where it came from and why it came, and I'm going to tell you next week some stories that will shock you about massacres of those who refused to worship the bread. Let's pray.

We struggle with this, Lord, because it's so dishonoring to You. We want to make a whip and clean it out. It is a den of thieves. It is a den of thieves, stripping people of their money and their souls in Your name. How it must horrify heaven, but our horror also has mingled with grief for the millions upon millions of people who are captive to this system and don't even know what they teach, but worship a dead woman, Mary, and worship a box with bread in it, and never the true and living God; who trust in a priest who may have a wretched heart, and not in the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy harmless undefiled one and only true great High Priest by whom access to You is given. Help us, Lord, to understand these things, and to rejoice that we know the truth and have been delivered, many of us, from this satanic system. Help us to be eager to share the true gospel with those we know. We pray in the Lord's name. Amen.

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