

**Congregation at Prayer**  
✠ **The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost** ✠

*A Guide for Daily Family Prayer  
For the Week of June 17<sup>th</sup> to June 23<sup>rd</sup>*

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

The focus of our self-examination in preparation for receiving the Lord's Supper is rightly on what we receive. If we don't believe that Jesus actually comes to us in this sacred meal, then we have no place in receiving it. That is the focus of the questions this week.

This belief in the real presence separates countless denominations. For many, when they hear the words of institution, they think—"Ah, He must mean this *represents* His body, or this *symbolizes* His blood, which would be shed on the cross." He must not actually mean this *is* His body.

But if this is just a symbol, as Flannery O'Connor once said, "to hell with it!" And she'd be right. Symbols don't do anything. They don't heal or forgive or nourish or sustain us. Symbols don't unite us with Christ—at best, they remind us of Christ. But that's not the Lord's Supper.

Even when Jesus says, "*do this in remembrance of Me*" He is inviting us into a participation with Him. Just like Israel was to celebrate the Passover feast every year *in remembrance* of the Exodus, and thereby was incorporated into that ancient act of Divine mercy, so also do we week after week celebrate the True Passover in Christ's holy Supper. And it's at the altar of our Lord that we are incorporated into the final act of Divine mercy in Jesus Christ.

We Lutherans firmly believe and publicly confess that what we offer and receive at this Altar is not mere bread and wine, but it is the bread and wine together with the body and the blood of Jesus. Receiving communion at this altar is receiving Jesus—not a symbol or representation or anything else less than the real Jesus Himself. But how do we know this to be true?

We're never on good solid ground when we believe something to be true but don't have our Lord's word on our side. This isn't one of those shaky times. How do we know it's truly His body and blood? From the words of Christ! "*This is My body...this is My blood.*" These words of institution are the bedrock of our faith in this Sacrament. These words were spoken first on the night when Jesus was betrayed by Judas. But they were spoken again to St. Paul after our Lord called him away from persecuting the Church. That means Jesus confirmed these words exactly after He died and rose. Not only that, but these words are recorded four times in the Scriptures! If He wanted us to believe it was a symbol, He easily could have done so.

So, certain of our Lord's words, we are certain of what we receive—Jesus Christ and Him crucified for us! With such certainty there can only be joy!

**The Real Deal at the Altar**

Responsive Prayer 2, *Lutheran Service Book* p.285

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

**1 Corinthians 10:16**

*The cup of blessing that we bless,  
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?  
The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?.*

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

**Christian Questions & Their Answers**

12. *What are the Words of Institution?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: '*Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.*'

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: '*Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.*'

13. *Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?*

Yes, I believe it.

14. *What convinces you to believe this?*

The word of Christ: *Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.*

Daily Readings...

*Monday (6/17): Proverbs 17:1-28; John 16:17-33*

*Tuesday (6/18): Proverbs 20:5-25; John 17:1-26*

*Wednesday (6/19): Proverbs 22:1-21; John 18:1-14*

*Thursday (6/20): Proverbs 22:22-23:12; John 18:15-40*

*Friday (6/21): Proverbs 24:1-22; John 19:1-22*

*Saturday (6/22): Proverbs 25:1-22; John 19:23-42*

*Sunday (6/23): Proverbs 27:1-24; John 20:1-18*

Prayer of the Week...

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us Your gifts of faith, hope, and love that we may receive the forgiveness You have promised and love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalms of the Week...

*Psalms 25*

Hymn of the Week...

*"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" 790*

Looking Forward to Next Week...

Isaiah 65:1-9

Galatians 3:23-4:7

Luke 8:26-39