



# The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar—A Gift from the Lord

## A RIDDLE

What do we call something that is:

- a. instituted by God,
- b. uses visible elements that are joined to God's Word,
- c. and offers, gives, and assures believers of the forgiveness of sins through Christ?

A S

There are two of these:

- 1) Baptism—which we may receive

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- 2) the Lord's Supper—which we may receive

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*Note:* Sometimes Holy Absolution is counted as a third sacrament even though it has no divinely instituted visible element (Large Catechism IV 74; Apology XIII 4).

## A MIRACLE!

Shortly before Jesus began His suffering, He established the Lord's Supper. Since He knew He was soon to die, and since we know that He intended the meal to be a blessing and to be repeated regularly, we can see His great love in this gift. Even in the moments just before His death, He thought of us. He gave us a special meal that would be a reminder of His suffering and death for us every time we receive His supper. But the meal is more than a memorial—it is empowered by God's Word. In this meal, God Himself comes to us, offering His blessings. What a miracle!

*(Read catechism questions 350-363 Then complete the following by writing your answers in the corresponding sections on the next page.)*

Box 1: The Lord's Supper is not just bread and wine. Mere bread and wine have no spiritual power. What must be connected with the visible elements? *Q 352, 356*

Boxes 2 and 3: The Lord's Supper is bread and wine and much, much more. As stated by Christ Himself, what do we receive in, with, and under the bread and wine? *350*

Boxes A, B, C: What are some of the blessings we receive in this holy sacrament? *362*

Part D: 1 Corinthians 11:26 says that when you receive the Lord's Supper "you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." In addition to receiving blessings, you are declaring your faith and giving glory to God because Jesus died on the cross for you. Outline the diagram in the shape of a cross and praise God for His great gifts to you!

## The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar

*What is the Sacrament of the Altar?*

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

*Where is this written?*

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:

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."

1

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2

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**bread**

**wine**

3

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A

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B

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C

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## MORE RIDDLES

There are many names for Christ's special meal. Use the clues in these sentences and your catechism to identify these names.

a. The meal to remember our Lord and to celebrate His death and life (1 Corinthians 11:20).

b. The *last* meal Jesus ate with His disciples before He was crucified (Luke 22:16).

c. An *action* Jesus did before feeding people's bodies or souls (Luke 22:19, Acts 2:42).

d. The means of grace where people receive Christ's body and blood with bread and wine at His altar.

e. The meal that celebrates *community* with God and His family (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

f. The place where food is eaten—a *table* for physical and spiritual food (1 Corinthians 10:21).

g. From a Greek word that means to give *thanks* (1 Corinthians 11:24, Matthew 26:26).

## MIRACLES, MIRACLES!

For a moment, think about another meal Jesus provided. Think about Jesus out on a hillside with His disciples and over 5,000 other people. Read Matthew 14:15-21 and 26:26-28.

1. What are some similarities between the two meals?

2. What are some of the differences?

3. Tell why the Lord's Supper is important to you. Why do you want to receive Holy Communion?

## TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Acts 2:42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar.



# The Sacrament of the Altar— “In Remembrance”

## LET'S CELEBRATE

The night Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He and the disciples were gathered to celebrate the Passover. As they ate, Jesus gave a "new testament" (a new covenant promise) in His very own body and blood, with the bread and wine.

Read and compare **Exodus 12:1-30** and **Matthew 26:17-30**. Consider each of the following questions as you read these two portions of Scripture: What were the physical elements in each? What did God offer through the shedding of the blood of the lamb on Passover and the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God? Why were the people commanded to continue to celebrate the Passover meal? the Lord's Supper?

Now, look at the chart below. Match the Old Testament Passover

practice with the New Testament Scripture references to our Lord and Savior, to see how the Passover was a foreshadowing of the Lord's Supper.

## WHAT IT ISN'T

Each of the following statements about the Lord's Supper is false. Tell why you disagree with each statement as you consider what is the truth about the Lord's Supper. (Refer to the Bible verses and catechism sections indicated.)

**false** 1. The power of the Lord's Supper is in the bread and wine. (Question **332**)

**false** 2. Only those who have avoided great sin or who are strong in faith should receive the Sacrament. (**Mark 9:24; John 6:37**)

Passover Meal	Lord's Supper
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. A "perfect" unblemished lamb was used as the Passover lamb.	a. "Do this in remembrance of Me. ... For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." ( <b>1 Corinthians 11:24b, 26</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. When the lamb was killed and prepared, no bones were broken.	b. "When they came to Jesus and found that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear." ( <b>John 19:33-34a</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. The lamb's blood was painted on the doorposts.	c. "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" ( <b>John 1:29</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Only those who trusted God's promise in the blood of the lamb were saved from death.	d. "A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself." ( <b>1 Corinthians 11:28-29</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. The Passover reminded the people how God had freed them from slavery and the power of Pharaoh.	e. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" ( <b>Philippians 4:4</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. God commanded His people to continue observing the Passover to remember His saving act.	f. "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." ( <b>Matthew 26:28</b> )
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. It was a time of celebration and joy.	g. "... that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." ( <b>Hebrews 2:14-15</b> )

**false** 3. In the Sacrament of the Altar the bread and wine are no more than reminders to us of the body and blood of Christ. (Question 352)

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**false** 6. The bread and wine change into body and blood (transubstantiation) and are no longer bread and wine. (1 Corinthians 10:16)

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**false** 5. The same benefits of the Sacrament are offered to all who take Communion—regardless of their attitude or belief. (1 Corinthians 10:27–29)

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**false** 4. It is best to prepare for Communion by having a seri-



**false** 7. The Sacrament of the Altar is a resacrifice of Christ's body and blood. (Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18)

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**false** 8. Celebrating the Lord's Supper once a year, like any anniversary, is often enough. (Acts 2:42)

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## WHAT IT IS

Check any statements that describe the Lord's Supper.

1. *A Witness*—In the Sacrament you confess your faith in Christ.

2. *A Eucharist*—A time of thanksgiving, joy, and praise to God.

3. *A Remembering*—You are reminded of Christ's sacrifice for your sins.

4. *A Communion*—A time to unite; to be joined together with God and other believers.

5. *A Banquet of Love*—A celebration where God's love is showered on you. You, in turn, living in Christ, share love with others.

Actually, the Lord's Supper is not just one of the above, it is all of these. And most significantly, it is:

6. *A Gift of God*—a blessing offering forgiveness, life, and salvation through Christ, our Savior, who died and arose for us. It is a blessing of eternal consequence!

## TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

1 Corinthians 11:26: Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar.

One of the names for the Lord's Supper is *communion*. You can see the word *union* in the word *communion*. Communion means "sharing togetherness and unity." The Lord's Supper provides communion with Christ in a special way.

You are united with Christ by faith; you also share a unity of faith with other believers. "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you

a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."  
(Romans 15:5-6)

