

282. The Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. *Ps. 103, 2.*

The Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper is no human ordinance or invention. It was not instituted by men, but by our Lord Jesus Himself.

Christ Jesus, the Author of the Holy Supper, is true man and true God: true man, that He might be capable of giving us His body and blood in the Holy Supper; true God, that He might be able to fulfil His great promise and word: "This is My body; this is My blood." Jesus Christ, the Author of the Holy Supper, is also infinitely true and powerful, which consideration ought to move us to value this Sacrament very highly. To show the great importance of this institution, the Holy Ghost has seen fit to record this Sacrament of our blessed Lord four times. And did not the Lord vouchsafe to Paul a special revelation of this doctrine? Does not that also show how important this doctrine is?

Now, then, what does Scripture say regarding the Lord's Supper? It says: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." In that solemn night, a few hours before His suffering and death for the sins of the world, the Savior instituted this Sacrament as a rich legacy to His disciples and all Christians. It was His last will. "This do in remembrance of Me." For whom is this Sacrament? "For us Christians to eat and to drink." He gave His holy Supper for His Christians, for every believer until the end of time.

Prayer.

Dearest Jesus, it was the night in which Thou wast betrayed. Yet, although the traitor's plans were all worked out and were all discovered to Thy all-knowing eye, Thy love for sinners was so great that Thou didst institute the Holy Supper. In these hours, the evening before Thy death, Thou hast made Thy testament. In it Thou hast willed to Thy disciples unto the end of time the choicest treasures of heaven and earth. Thus Thou hast declared and sealed and forever established the fact that Thou art faithful, even though all the world turn traitor unto Thee. We heartily thank Thee that Thou hast given this heavenly food. Amen.

Hail, sacred feast, which Jesus makes,
Rich banquet of His flesh and blood!
Thrice happy he who here partakes
That sacred stream, that heavenly food!

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