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Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass.

The doctrine of the Mass is central to the teaching and practice of the Church of Rome. We should understand that the Mass is not simply the Roman Catholic ‘version’ of the Lord’s Supper. Some Protestants have the idea that attendance at a Mass is not really any different to attending a communion service—it’s just done a little differently. Put simply, ...the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits. [[Article XXXI of the Church of England](#)—Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross] The Mass is an act of blasphemous idolatry and cannot be countenanced as Christian by any who professes to believe the Scriptures.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Mass was first proposed by a Benedictine monk named Radbertus in the ninth century. It became an official part of Roman Catholic theology in 1215 at a Lateran Council presided over by Pope Innocent III. This doctrine was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Central to the Mass is the idea of transubstantiation—the complete change of the elements used in the Mass (the bread and wine) into the body of Christ. Teaching on this change of substance received its first creedal mention in the creed of Pope Pius IV in 1564. Another significant development occurred on June 15th, 1415 at the Council of Constance when it was decided to prohibit the people participating in the communion cup. Following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Mass was permitted to be said in the language of the people. Until then it had to be performed in Latin.

All this indicates that the Mass as its is practiced today by the Church of Rome was something entirely unknown to the church for more than 1000 years.

ROME’S TEACHING ON THE MASS.

1. **It is a sacrifice.** The following extracts from official Roman Catholic teaching make it very clear what the Mass is.
 - [Catechism, #1330](#) The Mass is called The Holy Sacrifice, because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Savior and includes the Church’s offering. The terms holy sacrifice of the Mass, “sacrifice of praise,” spiritual sacrifice, pure and holy sacrifice are also used, since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.
 - [Catechism, #1350](#) The presentation of the offerings (the Offertory). Then, sometimes in procession, the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper - “taking the bread and a cup.” “The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the



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Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving." The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices.

- [Catechism #1367](#) 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." "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner . . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory" .
- [Catechism #1414](#) As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.
- The [Creed of Pope Pius IV](#) (1564), which is a basic statement of Catholic teaching professed by every good Roman Catholic, states: I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead... In effect Rome teaches that the Mass is a re-crucifying of Christ.
- The Canons of the Council of Trent in relation to the Mass pronounce an anathema—the curse of God—upon anyone who denies that the Mass is a sacrifice of Christ! **"If any one saith, that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema."** **"If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is...not a propitiatory sacrifice...let him be anathema."** [Canons 1&3](#) On the Sacrifice of the Mass

The 'sacrifice' of the Mass is one in which even the faithful can place no real confidence. The efficacy of this sacrifice depends upon the intention of the Priest offering it. If his intention is not right then the sacrifice is invalid. Of course there is no way to know whether this is the case or not!

2. **It is founded upon the doctrine of transubstantiation.** Without transubstantiation the concept of a sacrifice is lost to the Mass. Rome teaches that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ which is then offered by the Priest who is acting as Christ. The 'power' to make this change is given to the Priest at his ordination. As the Priest consecrates the bread and wine it is changed into the complete body and deity of Christ. From this point on in the Mass the wafer is called 'the host' and is worshipped as God by the people.

- **Worshipping the wafer.** [[Catechism #1378](#)] "Worship of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. [Pope Paul VI said] "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not



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only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession.”

- **The real presence of Christ.** [[Catechism #1374](#)] The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as “the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.” In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist “the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.” “This presence is called ‘real’ - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.”
- **The Council of Trent** summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: “Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.” [[Catechism #1376](#)]
- **The priest’s power over Christ.** “With regard to the power of the priests over the real body of Christ, it is of faith [i.e., part of what faith embraces] that when they pronounce the words of consecration, the incarnate God has obliged Himself to obey and come into their hands under the sacramental appearance of bread and wine. We are struck with wonder when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests—Hoc est corpus meum (This is my body)—God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes whenever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come He remains entirely at their disposal and they move Him as they please from one place to another. They may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him out-side the church; they may, if they choose, eat his flesh, and give Him for the food of others. Besides, the power of the priest surpasses that of the Blessed Virgin because she can-not absolve a Catholic from even the smallest sin” ([Part III, The Dignity and Duties of the Priest, Ligouri](#)).

The Church of Rome arrives at this position by taking the language of Scripture literally when it was clearly intended to be metaphorical. **Matthew 26:26-28**—*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is*



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shed for many for the remission of sins. John 6:53-56—Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

BIBLICAL OBJECTIONS TO THE MASS.

1. **Christ offered a single, once-for-all sacrifice on the cross.** It is not repeated nor continued. Cp Romans 6:9, Hebrews 7:27, Hebrews 9:12, 22-29, Hebrews 10:12-14.
2. **The body and blood of Christ are simply SYMBOLIZED in communion.** The Lord's supper is a sacrament not a sacrifice. A sacrament is a natural symbol of spiritual truth. The bread and wine do not change in substance. What the disciples drank was *the fruit of the vine* Matthew 26:29—n.b. this was after the Saviour had referred to it as *my blood*. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the fact that the communion service is a memorial not a sacrifice—engaged in by the Church *in remembrance of me* 1 Corinthians 11:24. The observation of this memorial is said to *shew forth* (or, proclaim) Christ's death, 1 Corinthians 11:26 not re-enact it. The language of Scripture which speaks of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood is metaphorical.
3. **A bloodless sacrifice is no sacrifice at all!** Hebrews 9:22—*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*
4. **Consumption of blood by Christ and His disciples would have been in direct breach of the commands of God.** Leviticus 17:10 states: *And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.* Add to this the monstrous idea of Christ and His disciples eating His own flesh in a sort of cannibalistic fashion and the doctrines of the Mass and transubstantiation are abhorrent indeed!
5. **The worship of the consecrated host is blatant idolatry.** The second commandment forbids this in forthright terms. Roman Catholicism teaches and practices that the consecrated wafer is to be worshipped as God.

Conclusion

No-one who knows the gospel of Christ as revealed in Scripture and also knows what the Roman Catholic Mass is, can countenance the blasphemous claims of the Church of Rome.

Only ignorance of one or the other could permit a professing Christian to attend such an abomination. The professing Christian, who faced with the truth about the Mass, persists in attending it, calls into serious question the reality of their profession of faith.

That professing Christians are again in this day showing alarming tendencies to attend the Mass and justify such attendance, only demonstrates the ignorance that is descending upon the Church of Christ and the unconscionable failure of preachers whose calling it is to



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expound the true nature of the gospel and warn faithfully against all error.

CANONS OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

The dogma of the Council of Trent is still the bedrock of Roman Catholic Teaching. The following canons concisely state the fundamental beliefs of the Church of Rome about the Mass.

CANON I

If any one saith, that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema.

CANON II

If any one saith, that by those words, Do this for the commemoration of me (Luke xxii. 19), 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.

CANON III

If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema.

CANON IV

If any one saith, that, by the sacrifice of the mass, a blasphemy is cast upon the most holy sacrifice of Christ consummated on the cross; or, that it is thereby derogated from; let him be anathema.

CANON V

If any one saith, that it is an imposture to celebrate masses in honour of the saints, and



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for obtaining their intercession with God, as the Church intends; let him be anathema.

CANON VI

If any one saith, that the canon of the mass contains errors, and is therefore to be abrogated; let him be anathema.

CANON VII

If any one saith, that the ceremonies, vestments, and outward signs, which the Catholic Church makes use of in the celebration of masses, are incentives to impiety, rather than offices of piety; let him be anathema.

CANON VIII

If any one saith, that masses, wherein the priest alone communicates sacramentally, are unlawful, and are, therefore, to be abrogated; let him be anathema.

CANON IX

If any one saith, that the rite of the Roman Church, according to which a part of the canon and the words of consecration are pronounced in a low tone, is to be condemned; or, that the mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue only; or, that water ought not to be mixed with the wine that is to be offered in the chalice, for that it is contrary to the institution of Christ; let him be anathema.