

# **ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE**

## ***Topical Bulletin, November 2023***

This month's topic for consideration is: **The Lord's Supper**. We will follow the general order of the subject material as put forth in Luther's Small Catechism (Concordia Publishing House, 1943 edition). Additional Scripture verses will be quoted and commented upon to thoroughly cover the topic.

The Lord's Supper is also known as the Sacrament of the Altar, because it is a sacred act instituted by God Himself, in which there are certain visible means connected with His Word; by which God offers, gives, and seals unto us the forgiveness of sins which Jesus Christ has earned for us.

Other names for the Lord's Supper and the Sacrament of the Altar are: Holy Communion, the Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, and the Eucharist (from the Greek 'eucharisteo' meaning: to give thanks).

**"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."**  
**(1 Corinthians 11:20)**

**"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."** (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

**"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."** (1 Corinthians 10:21)

**"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."** (Acts 2:42)

**"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks [eucharist], he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."** (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

*Comment: The Scripture passages quoted above clearly demonstrate why the various descriptive terms are used and applied to the Sacrament of the Altar.*

Luther's Small Catechism says: **"I. WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER IS** *What is the Sacrament of the Altar?* It 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. *Where is this written?* The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul [the Apostle] write thus: 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, saying, 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, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 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, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Luther's statements – as put forth in his Small Catechism, regarding the Lord's Supper – are indeed true, as the following Scripture verses authoritatively prove.

**“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 shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:26-28)**

**“And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.” (Mark 14:22-24)**

**“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:19-20)**

**“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)**

*Comment: Note well that the Sacrament was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, who is true God and true man, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:9) Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that the bread IS His body and what is in the cup (what one drinks from the cup, i.e. the wine) IS His blood. Accordingly, IT'S A FACT THAT IN, WITH, AND UNDER THE BREAD AND THE WINE CHRIST GIVES US HIS TRUE BODY AND HIS TRUE BLOOD— this is known as the REAL PRESENCE. Indeed, bread and wine do not merely represent the body and blood of Christ; the body and blood of Christ are truly present and received by the communicants, because the Lord Jesus says so! “For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.” (Psalm 33:4) “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” (Proverbs 30:5-6) Additionally, the Holy Bible clearly states: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16) That's COMMUNION {co-union} of wine and blood; and, COMMUNION {co-union} of bread and body— FOUR things being present in the Lord's Supper! The English word “communion” is a translation of the Greek “koinonia” meaning “joint participation” [as Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon relates].*

*It is also important to note that the Holy Bible states that unworthy communicants are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and not of mere bread and wine. “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” (1 Corinthians 11:27-29) Furthermore, no sinful human being has the right to change the meaning of a divine institution and testament! “Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.” (Galatians 3:15) [Also see verses printed above in bold, repeatedly using the word “testament”.]*

*The Scripture verses printed in bold type (at the top of page two of this topical bulletin) also make it quite clear that in the Lord's Supper bread and wine are NOT CHANGED into the body and blood of Christ; for the Bible expressly declares that bread and wine are still present in the Sacrament. Roman Catholicism falsely teaches that their priests change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (their false doctrine being known as 'transubstantiation'). Let us never forget that Christ gives us Christians His true body and blood – in, with, and under – the bread and the wine, to eat and to drink, both really and spiritually.*

**"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Corinthians 11:26-28)**

**"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:22-24)**

*Comment: Note well that ALL communicants are to partake of both the bread and the wine, as was done by the early Christians and was commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we are told, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:26) Yes, until Jesus visibly returns in glory to judge the quick and the dead on the Last Day, the Lord's Supper is to be rightly celebrated with ALL COMMUNICANTS PARTAKING OF BOTH THE BREAD AND THE WINE! Roman Catholicism permits only their priests to drink of the cup, in direct opposition to Christ's command!*

*Another sad teaching and practice of Roman Catholicism is that they ADORE the bread and the wine, while God's Word pointedly says: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10) And, "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (Psalm 29:2) Hence, the Lord God is to be worshiped in full accord with HIS WORD, NOT by worshiping in vain by self-devised practices! The words that Christ once spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees can well be applied to Roman Catholics with their false doctrines and practices, for Jesus said: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7)*

**"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Hebrews 9:24-28)**

**"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the**

volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." (Hebrews 10:1-18)

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)**

*Comment: The above quoted Bible passages plainly put forth the fact that Jesus Christ paid for ALL the sins of ALL people, once and forever, so that no further sacrifice is needed or necessary! Again, Roman Catholicism errs in teaching that the Sacrament of the Altar is a real, though unbloody, sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Holy Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus Christ fully atoned for ALL the sins of ALL people, by His bitter sufferings and death on the cross of Calvary! Indeed, recall that while nailed to the cross, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30) How dare anyone teach that a further sacrifice for sins is necessary! Such false doctrine is blasphemy against Christ!*

**"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 shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28)**

*Comment: As we again read the words of Scripture concerning the Lord's Supper, we note that bread and wine are received by the communicant like any other food, in a natural manner. Such was the case with Jesus' disciples when He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar. Additionally, like the bread and the wine, the Lord Jesus Christ's body and blood are received by the communicant with the mouth, but in a supernatural manner, by the power of the Lord! Accordingly, we call this eating and drinking a 'sacramental eating and drinking', because it takes place ONLY in the Sacrament of the Altar; for, "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:22-24)*

**"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)**

*Comment: Note the underlined words in the above Scripture passage, for when the Lord Jesus Christ says, "This do in remembrance of me," He requires that the Sacrament should forever be administered and received in His Church until His return in glory, and that we should especially remember and proclaim His death when we partake of the Lord's Supper. Realize that we have the true Lord's Supper ONLY when we administer and receive it according to Christ's institution, because He said, "THIS DO YE"; thus, no one is to do his or her own thing and then call such a practice the Lord's Supper!*

*Take it to heart that we adult Christians – who are confirmed in the true faith – are to partake of the Lord's Supper frequently; for St. Paul, by inspiration of God, writes, "AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP." Thus, Christ commands and urgently invites us to His Holy Supper. Let us highly value the Lord's Supper! "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Peter 1:18-21) Thanks and praise be to the Lord Jesus Christ, now and forever!*

*Fellow Christians, let us never forget that the Lord Jesus Christ promises to bestow upon us His blessings, for He says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) Hence, we can certainly come to Christ as He offers His true body and blood to us in the Lord's Supper. We definitely need the forgiveness of sins and strength to resist the temptations to sin which come upon us from the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Indeed, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12) And, God's Word warns and instructs us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17) Additionally, if we would be honest we must confess as did the apostle Paul, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:18-25)*

Accordingly, we should all highly value the Lord's Supper, for it is a true means of grace by which God gives us the forgiveness of sins, which we regularly need while we dwell in this world.

We will continue with more on the topic of **the Lord's Supper** next month.

m.e.l.