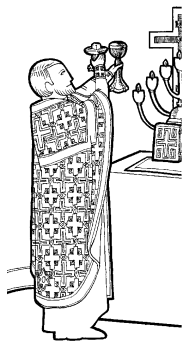




soon as the cup of warm wine and the kneaded bread receive the word of God and become the Eucharist of Christ's body, the substance of our flesh receives from it an increase and assimilates it. How, then, do they say that the flesh cannot receive the gift of God, which is eternal life, if it is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord and is a member of Him? Blessed Paul says in the letter to the Ephesians, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones" (Ephesians 5:3); and this does not say of a spiritual and invisible man, "for a spirit hath neither bones nor flesh" (Luke 2:4-39) but of the constitution of the real man, who is composed of flesh and of nerves and bones. This is he who is nourished by his cup, which **is the blood of Christ**, and grows with the bread **which is his body**." (Adv. Haer. IV, V).

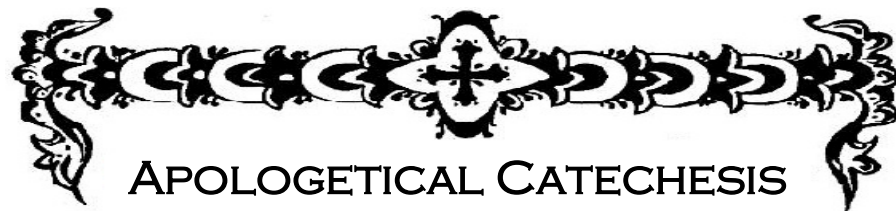


Origen (105-283), one of the greatest theologians of the early Church, tells us about the Body of the Lord in the Eucharist:

*"You who are accustomed to take part in the divine mysteries know with what care and reverence you guard the body of the Lord when it is given to you, lest a little crumb of it should fall to the ground, and some small part of that sanctified gift might be lost. No wonder you would feel guilty if through your negligence any fragment fell to the ground. If, then, you rightly show such care in guarding the body of the Lord, can you think that any carelessness in keeping his word would be less culpable than in guarding his body?"*

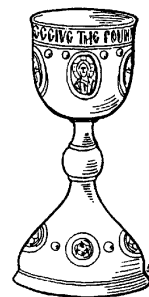
After having read the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures, and of those who lived in the first centuries of the Church. Can anyone honestly say that the Eucharist is not what the Orthodox Church teaches:

***It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.***



## APOLOGETICAL CATECHESIS

### IS CHRIST PRESENT IN THE EUCHARIST?



Some groups that have broken away from the Church believe that Christ's presence in the Eucharist is only a symbol.

The Orthodox Church teaches, and always taught, that Christ's words at the Last Supper, "*Take, eat, this is my body*" and "*This is my blood*" (Matthew 26:26-28), mean what they say: that when the Eucharist is celebrated, the bread and wine become the **Body** and **Blood** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abides in me, and I in him*" (John 6:53-56).

Those who deny that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ tell us that those words are symbolic, not literal.

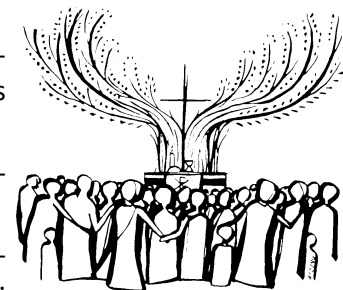
These groups teach that this doctrine "is contrary to the history of the Church."

Jesus never said that the bread and wine represented, or symbolized, His Body and Blood; nor did He say that if we took them with reverence they would be an act of symbolic communion with Him. No, what Christ told us is that the Bread **IS HIS BODY** and the Wine **IS HIS BLOOD**.

This is what the Church has believed from the beginning.

This is the truth.

What does the Bible, history, and Apostolic Tradition say?



### ORTHODOX ANSWERS 11





The Apostle Paul tells us: *"Is not the cup of blessing which we bless communion with the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break communion with the body of Christ?"* (1 Corinthians 10:16).

When Jesus told the Jews that if they did not eat his flesh and drink his blood, they would not have life in them, they were very confused: *"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"* (John 6:52). And the answer

he gave to the deniers of his time is the same as the one we give to those who deny the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist: *"For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink"* (v. 55).

And the disciples themselves were troubled by these words: *"This language is harsh. Who can hear it?"* (v. 60). It was as shocking to them as it still is to those who do not want to acknowledge the truth: *"From that time many of his disciples turned back and walked no longer with him"* (v. 66).

St. Ignatius (A.D. 35-107) writes of those who **"contradict the gift of God"**:

*"They also turn away from the Eucharist and from prayer, for they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ with whom he suffered for our sins, which the Father raised from the dead in his goodness. Therefore, those who contradict the gift of God perish in their disquisitions."*

*"Make every effort to make use of one Eucharist, for the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ is one, and the chalice that unites us with his blood is one, and the altar is one, as the bishop is one, together with the college of elders and the deacons, my fellow servants. In this way, by doing so, you will act according to God"* (Letter to the Philadelphians 4:8).

St. Justin Martyr (100-165), some forty years after what St. Ignatius of Antioch said, relieves us of doubt:

*"This meal is called the Eucharist among us, and no one is lawful to partake of it unless he believes that our teachings are true and has washed himself in the bath of forgiveness of sins and regeneration, living according to what Christ taught us. For we do not take this as common bread or as*



*ordinary drink, but just as our Saviour Jesus Christ, incarnate by the Word of God, had flesh and blood for our salvation, so we have been taught that by virtue of the prayer of the Word which proceeds from God, the food upon which thanksgiving was said — from which our blood and flesh are nourished when we assimilate it — is the food of God. the body and blood of that incarnate Jesus."*



If the Eucharist were just a piece of bread and a little wine, a mere symbol or commemoration, why does the Apostle Paul compare to a murderer the one who eats and drinks it unworthily?

*"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord... For whoever eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks his own punishment"* (1 Corinthians 27-29)."

This verse only makes sense if the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. We need to discern the Body of the Lord from a piece of bread.



Irenaeus of Lyons (140-?), who learned from Polycarp the disciple of the Apostle John, teaches us the following:

*"On the other hand, our beliefs are in harmony with the Eucharist, and in turn the Eucharist is confirmation of our beliefs. Because we offer what is his, consistently proclaiming the communication and unity that exists between the flesh and the Spirit. And just*

*as the bread that comes from the earth when we receive God's invocation is no longer common bread, but Eucharist, composed of two things, the earthly and the heavenly, so also our bodies, when they have received the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but have the hope of the resurrection."*

*"He proclaimed that the chalice that proceeds from creation is his own blood, with which he irrigates ours. And he confirmed that the bread of creation is his own body, with which he increases our bodies. Thus, as*

