



The First Last Supper

Watch a clip from the movie Jesus of Nazareth. Discussion on the Last Supper as the first ever Eucharistic Celebration and why we are called to attend it every Sunday.



Last Supper – Mystical Supper

- It is the first time when this Jewish Passover meal changes its meaning and becomes a new type of sacrifice.
- Instead of “Last Supper,” the Orthodox use the term “Mystical Supper,” which refers both to the biblical event and the act of Eucharistic celebration within liturgy.
- We also use “*Eucharist*” which means giving thanks, based on the Passover ritual of a meal given as thanksgiving to God Who rescued the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. Christ gives the first Thanks to God the Father for the gift of our redemption and liberation from the bondage of sin.

> PLAY VIDEO



Discuss the scene

- **Eucharist - the New Passover**
 - Old Passover - freedom from Egypt;
New Passover: freedom from sin
- **Christ - Bread of Life**
 - Christ shares His deified human body with us so we can participate in His life of holiness
 - Christ gives eternal Life
- **Receiving Communion**
 - Union with God
- ***“This is my Body”... “this is my Blood”***
 - Communion is truly Body and Blood of Christ, not just a symbol (Protestant view)
- ***“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”*** (Mt. 26:29)
 - victory over death
 - Anticipation of the Heavenly Banquet
- ***“And now I give you a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you...“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another”*** (Jn. 13:34-35)
 - Divine love is Sacrificial
 - Christians are recognized by the type of love they practice – sacrificial
- **Jesus prays to the Father for His disciples and all those who will accept Him in Faith**
 - importance of Faith
- ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”*** (Jn. 14:6)
 - Christ is the only way to salvation



Why Blood?

- *“For the life of all flesh is in its blood, and I give it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for its blood makes atonement for the soul.”* (Lev. 17:11)
- The life was in the blood. If blood was shed, a life was given, and the sacrifice was genuine. Blood does not have power to forgive. Rather, the blood, with its inherent life, is God’s gift to mankind to make atonement for sin. The necessity for atonement was the sacrifice of the innocent life of an animal.
- From the Christian perspective, the authority of the Levitical priesthood ended when Christ willingly offered Himself up to the Father as a perfect sacrifice on the cross, typified by the curtain being torn asunder in the temple after His death on the cross.
- The Old Testament understanding concerning blood prefigured the New Testament understanding of the blood of Christ shed as atonement for our sins. Christ is the new sacrificial Lamb. No more need for other bloody animal sacrifices. He is the supreme, the ultimate sacrifice.



Eucharist as Sacrifice

- St. John Chrysostom said: *“It is not men who sanctify this offering. It is the Same One who sanctified the first one (the Last Supper) who also sanctifies this one . . . Christ even now is present, and even now acts.”*
- In the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant prays, *“You Yourself are the One who offers and is offered, who accepts and is distributed.”* Christ is the supreme Priest. He is the true (invisible) celebrant.



Take Home

Based on our discussion in class, The Eucharist is:

- True Body & Blood of Christ
- Free gift, undeserved
- Be prepared to receive
- Be thankful for
- Consult with your priest confessor on frequency
- We are called at EACH Liturgy to be prepared and receive
- Purpose of Liturgy – to commune with Christ
- WHY we need Communion? – partake of Christ's deified Body and thus participate in His Life of holiness
- Become like God through Holy Communion (*Theosis*)