

Sacrifice of the Mass and Ministerial Priesthood Catholic invention or Reformers' delusion?

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As response to Reformation the Catholic Church held the nineteenth ecumenical council. The council opened on 13 December 1545 and ended on 4 December 1563. Most of its sessions were held in *Trent* (Trento), hence it is mostly known as Trent Council, with two sessions held in another Italian city, *Bologna*. This council reaffirmed and clarified all Catholic doctrines contested by the Reformers.

One of the Catholic doctrines contested by the Reformers is *Sacrifice of the Mass* or *Eucharistic Sacrifice*. Sacrifice of the Mass is the *central act of worship* in the Catholic Church. Protestant churches, on the other hand, place *sermon* or *preaching* as the centre of their *fellowship* with other believers, which could originate from Luther himself¹. Catholic Mass has Liturgy of the Word where passages from the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) are read, followed by a short sermon; but what follows, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the core of the Catholic worship - and *it is a sacrifice*. It is a sacrifice because it *makes present the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross*² and it includes the faithful's *offering*³ as well. Protestants, on the other hand, have what they called as Lord Supper or Communion service, where chunks of bread or crackers and small cups of grape juice are distributed among the faithful to be consumed – the frequency of the service depends on denomination. To them it is only a memory of Christ passion, following His statement: “*do this in remembrance of me*” (Luk. 22:19). Some still consider it to be a Sacrament, together with Baptism, but all Protestant churches do not consider it to be sacrifice.

In the Bible, sacrifice or giving offering to God are inseparable from worship (1 Samuel 1:3; 2 Kings 17:36; 2 Chronicles 32:12; Ezra 4:2, Romans 12:1). It is not unique to Christianity and Judaism, but it can be found in most beliefs. The intention of sacrifice is either (1) for *doing homage to* or *winning favour from God*, known as *propitiatory* sacrifice, or (2) for *securing pardon from* or *restoring broken relationship with Him*, known as *expiatory* sacrifice. Any sacrifice requires *priest* as mediator in offering it to God and *altar* on which it is offered. Sacrifice, priest, and altar always come together. The Reformers' rejection of sacrificial nature of the Mass consequently leads to their rejection of the priesthood through whose ministry the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered and the altar. Protestants (and post Reformation) churches (except some Anglican churches) replace *altars* with *pulpits*, replace *priests* with *pastors/ministers* and replace *crucifixes* with *empty crosses*. Catholic churches do have pulpits, but they are *not* placed at the centre. Protestants believe in the *High priesthood of Christ* (Heb. 3:1; 9:11) and in universal priesthood of all believers as *kingdom of priests* (1 Pe. 2:5, Rev. 1:6). The Catholic Church also

believes in Christ as the only High Priest of the New Covenant⁴ and that baptized Catholics, both males and females, are priests⁵; but has another priesthood, known as *ministerial* or *hierarchical priesthood*, comprising *bishops, priests, and deacons*. Through the ministry of *either of the first two* the *same* sacrifice Christ made on the cross is *made present* in every Mass. The standard arguments of Protestants against this belief are (1) sacrifice of Christ made on the cross is *once for all* (Heb. 10:10) and (2) New Testament does *not* mention the office of ministerial priesthood.

Luther expressed his rejection of ministerial priesthood and Sacrifice of the Mass in:

Every true Christian really ought to know that in the New Testament there is no outward, visible priest, except those whom the devil has exalted and set up through human lies. We have only one single priest, Christ, who has sacrificed himself for us and all of us with him. Peter speaks of this in I Pet. 3[:18]: "Christ died once for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us—dead in the flesh but alive in the spirit—to God." And Heb. 10[:14] says: "For by a single offering he has finished and perfected for all time those who are sanctified." This is a spiritual priesthood, held in common by all Christians, through which we are all priests with Christ. That is, we are children of Christ, the high priest; we need no priest or mediator other than Christ.

Luther: *The Misuse of the Mass*, 1521, Luther's Works, Vol. 36, page 138

Where is it written, that the mass is a sacrifice, or where has Christ taught that one should offer consecrated bread and wine to God? Do you not hear? Christ has sacrificed himself once [Heb. 7:27; 9:25–26]; henceforth he will not be sacrificed by anyone else. He wishes us to remember his sacrifice. Why are you then so bold as to make a sacrifice out of this remembrance? Is it possible that you are so foolish as to act upon your own devices, without any scriptural authority?

ibid, page 146-147

The other Reformer, John Calvin, made similar charge:

Christ, when dying, declares, that by his one sacrifice is perfected and fulfilled whatever was necessary to our salvation. To such a sacrifice, whose perfection he so clearly declared, shall we, as if it were imperfect, presume daily to append innumerable sacrifices? Since the sacred word of God not only affirms, but proclaims and protests, that this sacrifice was once accomplished, and remains eternally in force, do not those who demand another, charge it with imperfection and weakness? But to what tends the mass which has been established, that a hundred thousand sacrifices may be performed every day, but just to bury and suppress the passion of our Lord, in which he offered himself to his Father as the only victim? Who but a blind man does not see that it was Satanic audacity to oppose a truth so clear and transparent?

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 4.18.3, page 1174

They [the Catholic Church] cannot produce one iota of Scripture in support of their priesthood. And must not the sacrifices be vain, since they cannot be offered without a priest?

ibid, 4.18.9, page 1178

According to Heb. 10:1 the law (of Moses) or the Old Covenant was *a shadow of the good things to come* instead of *the true form of these realities* - we need to know first the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant. The English word sacrifice comes from Latin *sacrificium*, combining *sacra* (sacred) with *ficere* (to make). In Hebrew the word for offering is קָרְבָּן (Strong⁶ H7133, pronunciation: kor-bawn') with the corresponding verb קָרַב (Strong H7126, pronunciation: kaw-rab'), that means "to bring near". The verb זָבַח (Strong H2076, pronunciation: zaw-bakh') means "to slaughter (for offering)". Its corresponding noun, generally translated as sacrifice, is זֶבַח (Strong H2077, pronunciation: zeh'-bakh), literally means "something slaughtered for offering". For example, Lev. 3:6 says: "*If his offering [קָרְבָּן, Strong H7133] for a sacrifice [זֶבַח, Strong H2077] of peace offering [שְׁלָמִים, Strong H8002] to the LORD is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer [קָרַב, Strong H7126] it without blemish.*" Hebrew has another verb שָׁחַט (Strong H7819, pronunciation: shaw-khat'), translated as "to kill" or "to slay" or "to slaughter" either for offering or for other purpose. Another verb קָטַר (Strong H6999, pronunciation: kaw-tar') is translated as "to burn for offering".

The Old Testament has different types of offerings, listed below in ascending order of corresponding Strong number:

1. אֵשֶׁה (Strong H801, pronunciation: ish-shay'): from אָשׂ (Strong H784, pronunciation: aysh) that means "fire", and therefore is translated as "burnt offering" (Exo. 29:18, 25, Lev. 1:9; 2:3, 11, 16; 3:16, Num. 29:13, Deu. 18:1, Jos. 13:14, 1 Sa. 2:28 etc.). It is a propitiatory sacrifice.
2. אָשָׁם (Strong H817, pronunciation: aw-shawm'): the word means guilt or offense or trespass (Gen. 26:10, Num. 5:7, 8, Jer. 51:5 etc.) but also means guilt-offering or trespass-offering (Lev. 5:6, 16, 19; 7:1, Num. 6:12, 1 Sa. 6:3, Isa. 53:10 etc.). It is an expiatory sacrifice.
3. חַטָּאת (Strong H2403, pronunciation: khat-taw-aw'): the word means sin (Gen. 4:7; 18:20; Exo. 10:17, Psa. 25:7; 32:5, Pro. 20:9 etc.) but also means sin-offering (Exo. 29:14, 36; 30:10, Lev. 4:8, 20, 21, Num. 15:27; 28:22 etc.). It is an expiatory sacrifice.
4. מִנְחָה (Strong H4503, pronunciation: min-khaw'): the word means gift or present (Gen. 32:13, 18, 20, 21; 43:15, 2 Sa. 8:6 etc.) but also means gift-offering (Exo. 29:41, Lev. 2:1, 3, 5-7, Psa. 96:8 etc.). It is the first offering mentioned in the Bible, that is, the offerings of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3-4). It is both propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice (Eze. 45:15, 17).

5. נָדָבָה (Strong H5071, pronunciation: ned-aw-baw'): the word means "freely" (Hos. 14:4) but is also translated as free-will offering (Exo. 35:29, Lev. 7:16; 22:23, Psa. 54:6 etc.). It is a propitiatory sacrifice.
6. נִסְךָ (Strong H5262, pronunciation: neh'-sek): the word means "something poured" (molten image in Isa. 41:29; 48:5 and Jer. 10:14) and it also means drink-offering (Gen. 35:14, Exo. 29:40, Lev. 23:13, Num. 15:7, Isa. 57:6 etc.). It is both propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice (Eze. 45:15, 17).
7. עֹלָה (Strong H5930, pronunciation: o-law'): from verb עָלָה (Strong H5927, pronunciation: aw-law') that means "to go up" or "to ascend". It means "step" or "stairway" (Eze. 40:26) but it also means "offering that goes up" but is usually translated as burnt offering (Gen. 8:20; 22:2, 3, 6-8, 13, Exo. 18:12; 29:14, Lev. 1:3-6, Num. 7:15, Psa. 66:13, Jer. 33:18 etc.). It is not to be confused with שָׂמֶן (Strong H801), also translated as burnt offering. It is both propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice (Lev. 1:4; 5:10; 9:7 etc.).
8. שְׁלָמִים (Strong H8002, pronunciation: sheh'-lem): It is translated as peace-offering (Lev. 3:1, 3, 6; 7:11, 13-15, Num. 7:77, 1 Ki. 8:63, Pro. 7:14 etc.). It is both propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice (Lev. 4:26, 31, Eze. 45:15, 17).
9. תּוֹדָה (Strong H8426, pronunciation: to-daw'): it is translated as "thanksgiving offering" (Lev. 7:13; 22:29, 2 Chr. 33:16, Psa. 116:17 etc.) and as "thanksgiving" or "confession" or "praise" (Jos. 7:19, Ezr. 10:11, Neh. 12:27, Psa. 56:12 etc.). It is a propitiatory sacrifice.
10. תְּנוּפָה (Strong H8573, pronunciation: ten-oo-faw'): it means "swinging" or "waving" or "shaking" (Isa. 19:16; 30:32) and it is also translated as "wave-offering" (Exo. 29:14, Lev. 7:30, Num. 6:20 etc.). It is both propitiatory and expiatory (Num. 8:21) sacrifice.
11. תְּרוּמָה (Strong H8641, pronunciation: ter-oo-maw'): it is translated as offering or heave (lifting) offering or contribution (Exo. 25:3; 29:27; 30:14, Lev. 7:14, 32, Num. 5:9 etc.). It is propitiatory sacrifice.

The Old Testament in Exo. 12:27 also mentions (proprietary) sacrifice (חֹבֵט, Strong H2076) of Passover (Pesach) where the Israelites kill (טָהַר, Strong H7819) the Passover lamb.

In Greek we have ὁλοκαύτωμα (Strong G3646, pronunciation: hol-ok-ow'-to-mah), translated as burnt offering (Mar. 12:33, Heb. 10:6, 8) equivalent to עֹלָה (Strong H5930). προσφορά (Strong G4376, pronunciation: pros-for-ah') is translated as offering of any kind (Act. 21:26; 24:17, Rom. 15:16, Eph. 5:2, Heb. 10:5, 8, 10, 14, 18). It is applied to offering Christ made in Eph. 5:2, Heb. 10:10, 14. Its corresponding verb, προσφέρω (Strong G4374, pronunciation: pros-for-o) means "to offer" or "to bring" (Mat. 5:23; 8:4, 16, Luk. 23:36, Heb. 5:1, 3, 7; 8:3, 4; 9:7, 9, 14, 28; 10:1, 2, 8, 11, 12; 11:4, 17 etc.). Greek word εἰδωλόθυτος (Strong G1494, pronunciation: i-do-loth'-oo-tos) refers to offering to idols (Act. 15:29; 21:25, 1 Cor. 8:1, 4, 7, 10, 19, 28, Rev. 2:14, 20).

The Hebrew word for priest (singular) is כֹּהֵן (Strong H3548, pronunciation: ko-hane'), that of high priest is כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (pronunciation, from right to left: gaw'dole' ko-hane'). גָּדוֹל (Strong H1419) means "great" or "older" or "important". In Greek the word priest is ἱερεύς (Strong G2409, pronunciation: hee-er-yooce') and that of high priest is ἀρχιερεύς (Strong G749, pronunciation: ar-khee-er-yuce'). ἀρχή (Strong G746, pronunciation: ar-khay') means "beginning". A priest is a person appointed on behalf of others (or of oneself) to give offering or to sacrifice.

According to Exo. 19:6 all Israelites are *kingdom of priests*, prefiguring that of New Testament (1 Pe. 2:5, Rev. 1:6) of all believers. Within this kingdom of priests of the Old Testament God established another priesthood, *Levitical* or *Aaronic* priesthood (Exo. 28:1) comprising Aaron, brother of Moses⁷, of the tribe Levi, and his *male descendants*. Those Levitical/Aaronic priests were in charge in sacrificial duties *within* the Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle⁸ (Lev. 17:1-9), and later in the Jerusalem Temple. The rest of the tribe Levi, known as *Levites*, also served in the Tabernacle but not as priests. One of the (Levitical) priests was chosen to become the High Priest. Outside the Tent of Meeting non-descendant of Aaron like Gideon who belonged to the weakest clan of the tribe Manasseh (Jdg. 6:15) acted as priest in Jdg. 6:26 when he offered burnt offering (עֹלָה, Strong H5930). Other than priests and Levites there were seventy chosen *elders* (Exo. 24:1, 9, Num. 11:16, 24). The Hebrew word of elders is זִקְנִים (Strong H2205, pronunciation: zaw-kane'), in Greek it is πρεσβύτερος (Strong G4245, pronunciation: pres-boo'-ter-os).

While the Old Testament does mention the existence of Levitical priests, Protestants argue that it was *abolished* with the coming of Christ.

In accordance with this New Testament change in the priesthood [Hebrews 9], through which the old order of ritual and sacrifice which prefigured the atoning work of Christ has been fulfilled and Christ alone has become our true High Priest, the human priesthood as a distinct and separate order of men has fulfilled its function and has been abolished.

Boettner⁹: *Roman Catholicism*, page 44

Contrary to what Boettner wrote, when God established Levitical priesthood, He declared it to be *everlasting* or *perpetual* priesthood (Exodus 40:15). Numbers 18:19 applies "*covenant of salt*" to this priesthood, which means it will last forever as salt is used to preserve food. "Covenant of salt" appears twice in the Old Testament and the second one (2 Chr. 13:15) is applied to kingship of David and his descendants through Solomon, which is based on God's promise to David (2 Sam. 7:12-13) – God will establish his throne through Solomon forever. The perpetuity of both Davidic kingship and Levitical priesthood were later reaffirmed by prophet Jeremiah in:

"For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer (עָלָה, Strong H5927) burnt offerings (עֹלָה, Strong H5930), to burn (קָטַר, Strong H6999) grain offerings (מִנְחָה, Strong H4503), and to make sacrifices (זָבַח, Strong H2077) forever."

Jer. 33:17-18

When Jeremiah was given those dual prophecies, Nebuchadnezzar already defeated kingdom of Judah and took *Jeconiah* (or *Coniah* or *Jehoiachin*), then the last ruling Davidic king, into exile (Jer. 24:1, 27:20). Nebuchadnezzar made Jeconiah uncle, *Zedekiah* to be vassal king. Zedekiah later rebelled but defeated by Nebuchadnezzar who also destroyed the first Jerusalem Temple built by Solomon (2 Ki. 25:9). The Temple was later rebuilt, which enabled Levitical priests to perform their priestly duties but there were no Davidic kings, fulfilling the curse in Jer. 22:30: *Thus says the LORD: "Write this man [Jeconiah] down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."* This second Jerusalem Temple was destroyed by the Romans in c. 70 AD, which ended sacrificial system of Judaism¹⁰ and is never rebuilt to this day. Thus, Levitical priests of Judaism of today cannot fulfill Jer. 33:18

All Christians believe that Christ is the promised Davidic king that will reign forever (Luk. 1:32-33), fulfilling the prophecy of Jer. 33:17. After His ascension to heaven, He was exalted at the right hand of God (Act. 2:33) and has been reigning from heaven (1 Cor. 15:25). To be Davidic king, the second Person of the Holy Trinity took human form to become descendant of David through Solomon (Mat. 1:6). While Christ is not biological son of Joseph, He is Joseph's legal son and hence a legal descendant of David through Solomon. By *not* being biological son of Joseph who was descended from Jeconiah (Mat. 1:12-16), Christ did *not* violate the curse of Jer. 22:30.

Some might say that the dual prophecies of Jer. 33:17-18 will be fulfilled in the *future one-thousand-year reign* of Christ on earth (Rev. 20:4-6). Jerusalem Temple will be rebuilt, which will enable Levitical priests to perform again their sacrificial duties. But according to Heb. 10:9-10 Christ abolished sacrifices of the Old Covenant. Why would God allow those sacrifices to be revived in the future? The Catholic Church understands that one-thousand-year reign of Christ already started after His ascension to heaven. Christ has been reigning from heaven ever since¹¹; one-thousand-year refers to long period of time, *not* literally one thousand years.

New Testament mentions (1) *bishop* or *overseer* (ἐπίσκοπος, Strong G1985), (2) *presbyter/elder* (πρεσβύτερος, Strong G4245) and (3) *deacon* (διάκονος, Strong G1249). The title priest is applied to all believers who offer spiritual sacrifices through Christ (1 Pe. 2:5), like sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15). In Rom. 12:1 Paul asked believers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice. It is also

applied to Levitical priests (Mat. 8:4, Luk. 1:5 etc.) and those of Roman god Jupiter (Act. 14:13). The title High Priest is applied to Christ (Heb. 4:14; 5:5, 10; 6:20) and to that of Judaism (Mat. 26:57, Luk. 3:2, Heb. 5:1 etc.). New Testament does *not* apply the title priest to bishops, and presbyters. But according to prophecy of Jer. 33:18 Levitical priests cannot be abolished with the coming of Christ who brought the New Covenant. It should be fulfilled in the Levitical priesthood of the New Covenant. Therefore, the Catholic Church teaches that the ordination of (1) Levitical priests, (2) presbyters/elders and (3) Levites of the Old Covenant prefigures that of (1) bishops, (2) priests, and (3) deacons of the New Covenant¹². While it is not stated in the New Testament it fulfills the prophecy in Jer. 33:18. Priests in the Catholic Church are presbyters/elders of the New Covenant. The elders of Old Testament did not perform sacrifice, while those of the New Covenant do – but bishops and elders are interchangeable (Tit. 1:5-9).

Jesus' High-priesthood belongs to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21) while that of the Old Testament belongs to order of Aaron. The kingdom of priests (1 Pe. 2:5) of the New Covenant comprises all believers, while that of the Old Covenant comprised all Israelites (Exo. 19:6). The same applies to the Levitical priests and Levites of the New Covenant; they shall be no longer restricted to male descendants of Aaron and the tribe of Levi – the prophecy in Isaiah 66:21 even says that God will take as priests and Levites from all the nations.

What kind of sacrifice offered by New Covenant Levitical priests? Priests without sacrifice are not priests! The prophecy in Jer. 33:18 says they offer *burnt offerings* (עֹלָה, Strong H5930), *grain* (or gift) *offerings* (מִנְחָה, Strong H4503), and to make *sacrifices* (זָבַח, Strong H2077) *forever* or *continuously*¹³. But Scripture also says that Christ offered Himself as sacrifice on the cross *once for all* (Heb. 10:10), abolishing all the Old Covenant sacrifices/offerings (Heb. 10:9-10). At first glance it seems we have irreconcilable issues but being the very words of God books of Scripture cannot contradict each other.

New Covenant Levitical priests *make present* the same sacrifice Christ made on the cross in every Mass. To understand how such thing is possible we need to go to Rev. 13:8 that says Christ as the Lamb slain before/from the foundation of the world. The Greek verb "slain" is in *Greek passive perfect tense*. Unlike that of English Greek perfect tense indicates the action described by the verb (to be slain) was completed in the past (at foundation or creation of the world) with continuing result to the present¹⁴. For comparison the phrase "it is written" (Mat. 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10 etc.), referring to Scripture, is also in Greek passive perfect tense. Whenever we buy a new Bible *in any language*, Scripture is *reprinted* but it is *not rewritten*. Thus Christ' single sacrifice on the cross can be *made present* in every Mass *without Him being re-crucified or re-slain* again. The relation between His being slain from the foundation of the world with crucifixion is stated in Heb. 9:26: "*for then he* [Christ] *would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the*

world [not since crucifixion]. *But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" From what Christ told Mary Magdalene after His resurrection we know that He did not ascend to God the Father in heaven after He died on the cross (John 20:17). This meant He did not offer Himself in *heavenly* sanctuary after crucifixion (Hebrews 9: 11), prefigured in what the Old Covenant the High Priest did, using blood of goat, on yearly Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15-17) in *man-made* sanctuary (Heb. 9:1), a copy of heavenly one (Heb. 8:5). He already did it before the foundation of the world after being slain (Rev. 13:8)!

Burnt offering (עֹלָה, Strong H5930) and sacrifice (זָבַח, Strong H2077), mentioned in Jer. 33:18, are applied to *two of three* Old Testament's sacrifice/offering prefiguring that of Christ:

1. The *substitute* ram God provided to Abraham as burnt offering in place of Isaac. *"And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering (עֹלָה, Strong H5930) instead of his son"* (Gen. 22:13).
2. Yearly Passover Lamb sacrifice as described in Exo. 12:17: *"It is the sacrifice (זָבַח, Strong H2076) of the LORD's Passover"*. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 5:7: *"Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."*
3. Yearly atonement made by the High Priest of the Old Testament as described in Lev. 16. Once a year the High Priest offered the blood of *one* of two goats as *sin offering* (תַּשְׁרֵף, Strong H2403) to atone the sins *of all Israelites* (Lev. 16:15-17). Heb. 9:11-12 says: *"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come [Heb. 10:1], then through the greater and more perfect tent¹⁵ (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."*

During the Mass Catholic priests also offer the faithful's offering, which corresponds to grain (or gift) offerings (מִנְחָה, Strong H4503) of Jer. 33:18. Catholics give *offering* on Sundays (and days of obligation) Mass, not *tithe*¹⁶. Some might argue that corresponding verb of מִנְחָה in Jer. 33:18 is "to burn" (קָטַר, Strong H6999), which is certainly not applied in the faithful's offering. But Christ as the Passover Lamb of the New Covenant was not roasted either as described in Exo. 12:8. Paul wrote in Rom. 15:16: *"to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.* The Greek word translated as "in the priestly service" is ἱερουργέω (Strong G2418, pronunciation: hee-er-oorg-eh'-o) is related to Greek word for priest, ἱερεύς (Strong G2409); in other words, Paul acted as priest through whom offering (προσφορά, Strong G4376, corresponding to מִנְחָה, Strong H4503) of the Gentiles is offered. While believers, both Jewish and Gentiles, belong to kingdom of priests, they still need mediation of priests to make that offering.

Why does the Catholic Church impose celibacy for bishops and priests if Scripture says in 1 Ti. 3:2 that a bishop should have one wife? Celibacy is *not* a doctrine, but a discipline imposed to priests and bishops of the Western Catholic Church. In the Eastern Catholic Church married men can be ordained as priests, but bishops are to be celibate. Scripture is not against celibacy, in Mat. 19:12 Jesus said: *“there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”* While not forbidding men to marry (1 Cor. 7:8-9) Paul recommended them to be like him, that is, remaining unmarried, for the reason he wrote in 1 Cor. 7:32-33. In the Old Testament God told prophet Jeremiah not to marry (Jer. 16:1-2). What 1 Ti. 3:2 says is not a doctrine but *a rule* that can be changed; it could even indicate that some believers were then polygamist – if all married men, then had one wife, why did Paul impose that rule? Other example of changeable rule in Scripture is stated in Act. 15:29: believers are forbidden to eat blood and food sacrificed to idols. Most believers of today do not follow this rule – even Paul revised the rule of eating food sacrificed to idols of Act. 15:29 in what he wrote in 1 Cor. 8. The Catholic Church may or may not change celibacy rule in the future. In the past there were married priests, married bishops, and even married popes. Pope *Hormisdas* who reigned from 514 to 523 was married; his son became Pope *Silverius* who reigned from 536 to 537.

Why do Catholics address their priests as “fathers” if Scripture forbids calling any man as father other than God (Mat. 23:9)? But in Act. 7:1 and 22:1 Stephen and Paul addressed as fathers and brothers to those *not* related to them. In the Old Testament Elisha addressed Elijah as “his father” (2 Ki. 2:12) – they were not father and son. In 2 Ki. 6:21 and 13:14 the king of Israel also addressed Elisha as his father. Being the words of God Scripture cannot contradict itself. Mat. 23:8-10 says: *“But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.”* The context of Mat. 23 shows that Jesus addressed those verses to the Pharisees (Mat. 23:1-7). Jesus was not against hierarchy or persons of authority because he also said in Mat. 23:2-3: *“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you--but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”* After sending the seventy elders Jesus said to them: *“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me”* (Luk. 10:16).

The word altar is Hebrews is *זֶבֶחַ* (Strong H4196, pronunciation: miz-bay'-akh), derived from *זָבַח* (Strong H2076) and refers to a place where slaughtering of animals for sacrifice takes place. In Greek it is *θυσιαστήριον* (Strong G2379, pronunciation: thoo-see-as-tay'-ree-on) is related to *θυσία* (Strong G2378, pronunciation: thoo-see'-ah) that means sacrifice.

Heb. 13:10 says: “*We have an altar* (θυσιαστήριον, Strong G2379) *from which those who serve the tent* (σκηνή, Strong G4633) *have no right to eat*”. The word “we” is first person plural that includes even the person who wrote Hebrews – in other words it refers to believers. “Those who serve the tent” refers to Levitical priests of Judaism who served in the Jerusalem Temple or Tent of Meeting during Exodus. In the Old Testament priests have the right to eat some of offering or sacrifice (Lev. 6:26; 7:6; 24:9, Num. 18:10-11). “Having no right to eat” in Heb. 13:10 refers to having no right to eat sacrifice from the altar of believers of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 10:21 Paul used the term “*the table of the Lord*”, not altar, in referring to partaking the Eucharist (1 Cor. 10:16). Based on this verse the Reformer John Calvin turned sacrificial nature of the Eucharist into feast and replaced priest with ministers when he wrote:

But now that the sacrifice [of Christ on the cross] has been performed, the Lord has prescribed a different method to us—viz. to transmit the benefit of the sacrifice offered to him by his Son to his believing people. The Lord, therefore, has given us a table at which we may feast, not an altar on which a victim may be offered; he has not consecrated priests to sacrifice, but ministers to distribute a sacred feast.

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion*, 4.18.12, page 1180

But in Scripture Table of the Lord is synonymous with altar. Mal. 1:6-8 says: “*O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts*”.

In the first three Gospels Christ instituted the Eucharist in the Last Supper. The Last Supper was a Jewish Passover Meal, which is a *sacrificial* meal, not just a memorial meal. It is a sacrificial meal because the Jews consumed sacrificed Passover lamb as described in Exo. 12. The Jews of today still celebrate Passover but without sacrificed lamb; after the destruction of Jerusalem Temple their Passover lambs can no longer be sacrificed. As the Jews of Old Covenant literally consumed Old Covenant's Passover lambs, we also literally consume Christ, the Passover Lamb of the New Covenant (1 Cor. 5:7), to become partakers of His Divine Nature (2 Pe. 1:4). Only believers have the right to eat from the altar in Heb. 13:10; it also refers to consuming the Body and Blood of Christ, the sacrificed Passover Lamb. Believers' sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) and of their living bodies (Rom. 12:1) neither require altar and other priests to offer them, nor do they eat that sacrifice.

In Jhn. 6:54 Jesus said: *“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”* In the next verse Jesus said: *“For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink”* (Jhn. 6:55). The Greek word translated as “true” is ἀληθῶς (Strong G230, pronunciation: al-ay-thoce') that means “truly” or “surely” or “indeed”. This word is used over twenty times in the New Testament and always refers to something real. Food and drink are something to be consumed; therefore, in Jhn 6:55 Jesus did ask His believers to literally consume His Body and Blood as food and drink to have eternal life. In Catholic teaching His Body and Blood refer to *the change of substance of the consecrated Eucharistic Bread and Wine into His Body and Blood* in the Mass, while they retain their appearance, known as *Transubstantiation*¹⁷. In Catholic terminology the Bread and Wine are referred as *Eucharistic species*¹⁸. Common objection against Catholic belief is taken from what Jesus said in Jhn. 6:63: *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”* But Jesus did not say “my flesh” but “the flesh”. The Greek word for flesh is σάρξ (Strong G4561, pronunciation: sarx) is used in Jhn 6:52-56 and 63; it may refer to either flesh or carnal body (of a person). In Mat. 26:41 Jesus said: *“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh (σάρξ, Strong G4561) is weak.”* Without the Holy Spirit we cannot believe what Jesus said in Jhn 6:51-58; the flesh in Jhn. 6:63 and Mat. 26:41 refers to our carnal body.

All Reformers denied any change of substance of the Eucharistic bread and wine, but they disagree on the extent of Christ' presence in the Eucharist. Luther taught that the Body and Blood are *present with the bread and wine*¹⁹, strongly²⁰ against *symbolic* presence²¹ of Zwingli, while that of Calvin is known as *spiritual* presence, though he also considered the bread and wine as symbols²². Those who believe in symbolic presence argue that the phrase “This is my Body” is to be understood figuratively, not literally. Zwingli, for example, interpreted the word “is” of that phrase to mean “signifies”²³. For support they love citing other Jesus' statement like “I am the door” (Jhn. 10:7), “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jhn. 14:6) and “I am the true vine” (Jhn. 15:1). Certainly, Jesus did not “transubstantiate” Himself into a door etc. as in Catholic belief, and neither did He is present with the door etc., as taught by Luther. But we should compare “This is my Body” with the phrase with the same word structure like *“This²⁴ is my beloved Son”* (Mat. 3:17, 17:5, Mar. 9:7, Luk. 9:35). The word “this” refers to Jesus, while “my” refers to God the Father. Jesus is not figuratively Son of God, like the Israelites (Exo. 4:22) and neither He was one of angels (the beloved one) referred as sons of God in Job 1:6 and 2:1. Jesus is indeed the beloved Son of God, consubstantial with God the Father. In the phrase “This is my Body”, “this” refers to the bread Jesus held in His hands, while “my” refers to Himself. He did *not* say: “this is my Body with the bread”, which would support Luther's belief. Thus, the bread is indeed His Body. A person may tell a lie when he said: “this is my car” if that car did not belong to him – but, certainly, we do not believe Jesus would lie to us, do we? Being the Second Hypostasis of the Most Holy Trinity, Jesus, who is now reigning in heaven (1 Cor. 15:25), certainly can make

Himself *sacramentally* present in the form of bread and wine in every Mass. The intention is to enable us, which is *grace* from Him, through consuming His Body (His Flesh and His Blood), to become partakers of His divine nature (2 Pe. 1:4).

Those who are against Catholic belief would also say the phrase "*Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life*" (Jhn 6:54) is to be understood to mean "to believe in Him to have eternal life"²⁵. This will certainly go well with their belief of salvation by faith alone. But if this is the case why did His disciples say: "*This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?*" (Jhn. 6:60) and then many of them left Him (Jhn. 6:66). If they misunderstood His statement, why didn't Jesus clarify it? His disciples (and others) did misunderstand His words in other occasions, and Jesus always clarify what He meant directly (Mat. 16:5 - 12, Jhn. 11:11 - 14) or after His resurrection (Jhn. 2:19 -22), but certainly not many centuries later through the Reformers.

If Jesus asked us both to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood to have eternal life, why in most cases the faithful Catholics are not given His Blood? When Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper in the first three synoptic Gospels (Mat. 26:26, Mar. 14:22, Luk. 22:19) He said: "*This is my Body*". The Greek word for Body is σῶμα (Strong G4983, pronunciation: so'-mah), *not* σάρξ (Strong G4561) and σῶμα means body of a creature, that includes both flesh and blood. In 1 Cor. 11:27 Paul wrote: "*Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body* (σῶμα, Strong G4983) *and blood of the Lord*". Thus, receiving *either* species in an unworthy manner will be guilty of *both* species. This is the reason why Catholics believe consuming one species of the Eucharist is sufficient.

To Catholics, bread and wine brought by *Melchizedek* who was priest of God (Gen. 14:18), prefigures the offering of bread and wine of the Last Supper and of all Catholic Masses that becomes His Body and Blood²⁶. It was rejected by both Luther and Calvin who insisted that they were meant for Abraham's refreshment²⁷. But did Abraham deserve a banquet, not just simple refreshment of bread and wine, after what he did as described in Gen. 14:13-16?

Why do Catholic churches have *crucifixes*, not *empty crosses* as in Protestant churches? Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 1:23: "*but we preach Christ crucified*" - the Greek verb "crucified" in 1 Cor. 1:23, like the Greek verb "slain" in Rev. 13:8, is also in passive perfect tense. Crucifixes will remind Catholics who attend the Mass that His single Sacrifice can be made present again, without re-crucifying Him again.

End Notes

- ¹ *It would be well if we were able to accustom people to understand that when they say they are “going to sermon” this means “going to divine service,” and that preaching means serving God, and that all who are assembled together are assembled in real and high service of God. Just as in former times the beloved apostles and ancient fathers expressed it—and it is from them the expression came and remained to this day—we say “go to mass” and “hear mass,” as the pope himself strictly commanded in his decree that everyone should “hear” mass every Sunday. Nobody is accustomed to say “I am going to see a mass,” but rather “I am going to hear a mass,” and this really means the same as to go to divine service and hear preaching or God’s Word, which is the best and most necessary part of the mass, not as the pope does with his secret sacrificial masses in which there is no preaching nor hearing of God’s Word, especially in that part which they consider the greatest and is called the canon of the mass [Stillemesse]. For the little word “mass,” which appears to have been taken from the apostles, means in Hebrew the equivalent of a tribute or statute labor, as a peasant or tenant brings his lord his portion [Mess], that is, his due tribute or service, or serves his lord, thus acknowledging him to be his lord and rendering his obedience. So here too they said, “I am going to mass,” or “to hear mass,” as much as to say, “I am going to give or pay God his tribute and present and perform his service in the highest and most acceptable service.” Thus, to hear mass means nothing else but to hear God’s Word and thereby serve God.*
Luther: *Sermon on the Sum of the Christian Life*, 24 Nov 1532, Luther’s works, Vol. 51, pages 261-262
- ² *The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church.*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1545
- ³ *From the very beginning Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need.*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1351
- ⁴ *He [Christ] is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration.*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1348
- ⁵ *The baptized have become “living stones” to be “built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1268
- ⁶ A *concordance* is index of every word (Hebrews, Aramaic, Greek) in the Bible and corresponding verses, where it appears – for Strong Concordance, verses of 66-book KJV (King James Version) English Bible. Strong Concordance was the work of James Strong (1822 - 1894) and was first published in 1890. Each word was given a number with prefix H (Hebrews or Aramaic) or G (Greek). James Strong was professor of exegetical theology (from 1868) at Drew Theological School, New Jersey, USA.
- ⁷ Both Moses and Aaron were referred as priests in Psa. 99:6.
- ⁸ Hebrew מִשְׁכָּן (Strong H4908, pronunciation: mish-kawn'), means dwelling of men (Job 18:21; 21:28, Psa. 49:11; 87:2) as well as where God stayed with the Israelites during exodus (Exo. 25:9; 40:2, 17, Lev. 26:11).
- ⁹ Lorraine Boettner (1901 – 1990) was American Reformed Theologian and graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary.
- ¹⁰ The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, page 767, Encyclopedia Judaica Vol. 14 page 612.
- ¹¹ *Christ the Lord already reigns through the Church, but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him (1Cor. 15:25).*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 680
- ¹² *The liturgy of the Church, however, sees in the priesthood of Aaron and the service of the Levites, as in the institution of the seventy elders, a prefiguring of the ordained ministry of the New Covenant.*
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1541
- ¹³ Hebrew יוֹם (Strong H3117, pronunciation: yome) that means “day” or “time” or “period” or “continually” (Gen. 6:5, Psa. 52:1, Jer. 33:18).
- ¹⁴ *The force of the perfect tense is simply that it describes an event that, completed in the past (we are speaking of the perfect indicative here), has results existing in the present time (i.e., in relation to the time of the speaker). Or, as Zerwick [Zerwick: Biblical Greek, page 96] puts it, the perfect tense is used for “indicating not the past action as such but the present ‘state of affairs’ resulting from the past action.”*

BDF [Blass, F. and Debrunner, A. (translated and revised by Funk, R.W.): A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 1961] suggest that the perfect tense “combines in itself, so to speak, the present and the aorist in that it denotes the continuance of completed action”

Wallace, D.B.: *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 1996, page 239

The Greek perfect is one of the more interesting tenses and is often used to express great theological truths. The Greek perfect describes an action that was brought to completion and whose effects are felt in the present. Because it describes a completed action, by implication the action described by the perfect verb normally occurred in the past.

Mounce, W.D.: *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar - Second Edition*, 2003, page 225

¹⁵ Greek σκηνή (Strong G4633, pronunciation: skay-nay') that means tent or booth or habitation (Mat. 17:14, Luk. 9:33; 16:9), usually translated as “tabernacle” (from Latin word for tent, *tabernaculum*), referring to moveable tent where God dwelled with Israelites during Exodus (Act 7:44; 15:16, Heb. 8:2, 5; 9:2, 3, 6, 8, 21; 11:9; 13:10) as well as the heavenly one (Heb. 9:11, Rev. 15:5).

¹⁶ The Hebrew word for tithe is תְּעֹמָר (Strong H4643, pronunciation: mah-as-ayr') and first appears in Gen. 14:20; Abraham gave ten percent of *war booty* to Melchizedek, king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of God. It is derived from עָשָׂר (Strong H6240, pronunciation: aw-sawr') that means “ten”. According to Num. 18:21, 21, 24 the Levites were entitled to tithe of the other tribes for their service in the Tent of Meeting and later in Jerusalem Temple. In Greek it is ἀποδεκατόω (Strong G586, pronunciation: ap-od-ek-at-o'-o).

¹⁷ *By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1413

¹⁸ *In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1353

¹⁹ *But this I do know, that the word is there: “Take, eat, this is my body, given for you, this do in remembrance of me.” When we say these words over the bread, then he [Christ] is truly present*

Luther: *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ – Against Fanatics*, 1526, Luther's Works, Vol. 36, page 341

For as soon as Christ says: “This is my body,” his body is present through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Word is not there, it is mere bread; but as soon as the words are added they bring with them that of which they speak.

let us adhere to the words as they read: that the body of Christ is present in the bread and that his blood is truly present in the wine.

ibid, page 346

²⁰ *Our adversary says that mere bread and wine are present, not the body and blood of the Lord. If they believe and teach wrongly here, then they blaspheme God and are giving the lie to the Holy Spirit, betray Christ, and seduce the world. One side must be of the devil, and God's enemy. There is no middle ground.*

Luther: *That These Words of Christ, “this is my body,” etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics*, 1527, Luther's works, vol. 37, page 26

²¹ *Wishing to leave us a ceremony of commemoration of his having been savagely slain for us, he took bread and commanded them all to eat, for this was a symbol to his faithful followers of the death of his body who was himself God and their lord and master. Therefore, we, too, should eat together in memory of him, and commend his grace. This is to be understood of the cup also.*

Zwingli: *Letter to Matthew Alber concerning the Lord's Supper*, Nov 1524, Pipkin, H.W.: *Huldrych Zwingli writings*, Vol. 2, 1984, page 143

Ulrich (Huldrych) Zwingli (1484 – 1531) was Swiss Reformer

²² *And we ought carefully to observe, that the chief, and almost the whole energy of the sacrament, consists in these words, It is broken for you: it is shed for you. It would not be of much importance to us that the body and blood*

of the Lord are now distributed, had they not once been set forth for our redemption and salvation. Wherefore they are **represented under bread and wine**, that we may learn that they are not only ours, but **intended to nourish our spiritual life**; that is, as we formerly observed, by the corporeal things which are produced in the sacrament, we are by a kind of analogy conducted to spiritual things. Thus when bread is given as a **symbol of the body of Christ**, we must immediately think of this similitude. **As bread nourishes, sustains, and protects our bodily life, so the body of Christ is the only food to invigorate and keep alive the soul.** When we behold wine set forth as a **symbol of blood**, we must think that such use as wine serves to the body, the same is **spiritually bestowed by the blood of Christ**; and the use is to foster, refresh, strengthen, and exhilarate. For if we duly consider what profit we have gained by the breaking of his sacred body, and the shedding of his blood, we shall clearly perceive that these properties of bread and wine, agreeably to this analogy, most appropriately represent it when they are communicated to us.

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion*, 4.17.3, page 1125

All this Christ has elegantly expressed in these words, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51); doubtless intimating, that **his body will be as bread in regard to the spiritual life of the soul**, because it was to be delivered to death for our salvation, and that he extends it to us for food when he makes us partakers of it by faith.

ibid, 4.17.5, page 1126

- ²³ I think the hinge of the matter is to be found in a very short syllable, namely, in the word "is", the meaning of which is not always given by "is" but sometimes by "**signifies**".

Zwingli: *Letter to Matthew Alber concerning the Lord's Supper*, Nov 1524,
Pipkin, H.W.: *Huldrych Zwingli writings*, Vol. 2, 1984, page 138

From Scripture it can be proved that the thing signified is used for the sign. Ezekiel [Eze. 5:1-5] is ordered to cut off his hair. Then the passage continues: "This is Jerusalem"; i.e., this will happen to Jerusalem. The "is" means "signifies."

Zwingli's statement at 1529 Colloquy at Marburg, Luther's Works, Vol. 38, page 22

- ²⁴ "This" in Greek is τοῦτο (Strong G5124) for neuter noun and οὗτος (Strong G3778) for male noun. Unlike those of English, Greek nouns have gender; that of "Body" or "Blood" is neuter, while that of "Son" is male.
- ²⁵ Christ means, therefore, that unless we eat his flesh, that is, unless we believe that he underwent death and poured out his blood for us, we shall not attain life. Again, that if we eat his flesh, that is, believe he died for us, and drink his blood, that is, firmly believe that his blood was poured out for us, then Christ is in us and we in him. But is Christ in anybody physically? By no means. Why, then, are we asking about eating the body? His body is eaten when it is believed that it was slain for us. **It is faith, therefore, not eating**, about which Christ is speaking here.

Zwingli: *Letter to Matthew Alber concerning the Lord's Supper*, Nov 1524,
Pipkin, H.W.: *Huldrych Zwingli writings*, Vol. 2, 1984, page 134

- ²⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1350

- ²⁷ I believe that Melchizedek brought out bread and wine; that is, he arranged **a festive meal**, as is customary for guests and friends who are just arriving, and that thus he gave thanks to God for the victory given to Abraham.

Luther: *Lectures on Genesis*, chapter 6-14, 1535 – 1536, Luther's works, Vol. 2, page 385

Yet such is their dishonesty, that to defend their impiety they arm themselves with the example of Melchizedek. As he is said to have "brought forth (obtulisse) bread and wine" (Gen. 14:18), they infer that it was a prelude to their mass, as if there was any resemblance between him and Christ in the offering of bread and wine. This is too silly and frivolous to need refutation. **Melchizedek gave bread and wine to Abraham and his companions, that he might refresh them when worn out with the march and the battle.** What has this to do with sacrifice?

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 4.18.2, page 1173