

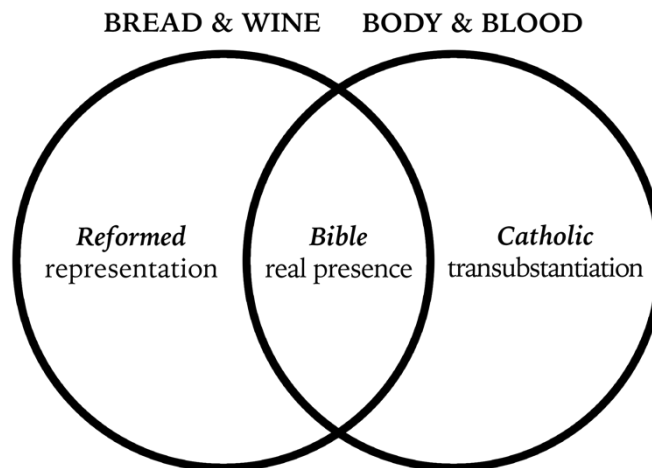
WHAT DO OTHER CHURCHES TEACH ABOUT COMMUNION?

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

- **The priest sacrifices Christ** all over again: “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.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] par 1367)
- **This sacrifice can be offered on behalf of others**, even the dead: “From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice...The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead...” (CCC par 1032)
- At the precise moment the Words of Institution are spoken, the bread and wine are changed (or “**transubstantiated**”) into Christ’s body and blood.
- That the forgiveness of sins offered in the Mass is received **even if the person does not believe** (*ex opere operato*).

MANY PROTESTANT CHURCHES TEACH:

- That Jesus’ words, “This is my body... This is my blood” actually mean, “This **represents** my body... This **represents** my blood.”
- That the Lord’s Supper is only a memorial meal, and not a Sacrament through which we receive forgiveness.



HOW CAN I PREPARE MY HEART FOR COMMUNION?

As printed in our CW (Christian Worship) hymnal, p. 156. Consider looking over this page each time you prepare to receive Communion. It is an excellent reminder of what this sacrament means for us.

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: *He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.*

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: *I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?*

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: *I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.*

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: *His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.*

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: *In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.*

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: *I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."*

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: *I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.*

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.