

Give Me A Sign

The Heart of the Covenant

We can know without fail that we have a relationship with God because of His bringing us into the new and eternal covenant. We have learned that every covenant has a sign, a sacrifice, and oath, and a shared meal. But the heart of the covenant is something even deeper and more intimate. For the early Church, the “New Testament” was the covenant that God made in the Body and Blood of Jesus. “The New Testament was a sacrament before it was a document.” If we are called to be “New Testament Christians”, this means that we will enter into the Mass.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you ever wonder if you have a real relationship with Jesus? How “real” does the reality of covenant/sacrament make this relationship for you?
2. Have you ever wondered if all of the rituals in the Catholic Church are opposed to Jesus’ original plan? Have you ever felt like the Sacraments are an “obstacle” to Jesus?
3. “New Testament Christians” are those who are devoted to the Eucharist. What are some ways that you can get closer to Jesus in the covenant of the Eucharist?
4. What would your life look like if you had full access to God’s heart? Why might you not be living like that now? If you are living like that, how did you get to that place?
5. Is there someone in your life who doesn’t seem to know that they have complete access to God’s heart? How would you share with them the way they could begin to approach God with humility and confidence? What would you say to them? Will you?

God in Real Life

1. All of us can enter into the new and eternal covenant. We do this through participation in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the new covenant. The covenant is Jesus Himself and the Eucharist is Jesus Himself. This week (Holy Week), take time to renew the covenant through participation in the Mass.

Be Transformed

The key to understanding the Bible is the concept of covenant. In addition, each covenant has an ritual meal:

- A. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and how God promised to establish a “new covenant/testament” with His people.

- B. Saint John Paul the Great wrote: The Second Vatican Council rightly proclaimed that the Eucharistic sacrifice is “the source and summit of the Christian life”. “For the most holy Eucharist contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ himself, our passover and living bread. Through his own flesh, now made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men”. Consequently the gaze of the Church is constantly turned to her Lord, present in the Sacrament of the Altar, in which she discovers the full manifestation of his boundless love.” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 1, 21).
- C. The Letter to the Hebrews states: “And it [the covenant] was not without an oath. Those who formerly became priests took their office without an oath, but this one was addressed with an oath, “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest for ever.’ This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant.” (Hebrews 7:20-22).
- D. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God’s mercy to sinners. The angel announced to Joseph: “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” The same is true of the Eucharist, the sacrament of redemption: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Further, the Catechism points out that Jesus hands Himself over for His Bride (the Church in the Mass): “At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'” (CCC 1346)

To the Heart

The Bible and the Body of Christ (the Eucharist) go hand in hand and both are essential. The Second Vatican Council Stated:

“The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God’s word and of Christ’s body. She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. Consequently these words are perfectly applicable to Sacred Scripture: “For the word of God is living and active” (Heb. 4:12) and “it

has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32; see 1 Thess. 2:13). (Dei Verbum 21)

"When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.'" (Luke 22).