

# Give Me A Sign

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## The Meal

Every covenant involves essential elements. Almost all of them have some kind of sign, a sacrifice, and an oath. But each covenant is sealed, or consummated, with a ritual meal. To consume the meal was to “consummate” the covenant. With the eating of the meal, the covenant is fully sealed and the family bonds of the covenant are complete. In a similar way, when a couple is married, at the altar (with the speaking of the words) their covenant is “ratified”. But their covenant is “sealed” when it is consummated through the sexual embrace. This exchange of “flesh and blood” is a hint at the Mystery of Christ and His Church. He handed over His Body on the Cross, but He continues to hand over His Body to us through the Eucharist. Whenever we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the ritual meal of the Mass, we are renewing and sealing the new and eternal covenant. Through this, Jesus continues to draw all to Himself.

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## Discussion Questions

1. We will sometimes wait for a thing because the waiting actually does make the experience better. Sometimes we wait because we are prohibited by another. But we wait to perform the actions of the covenant until after the covenant is established. Does the idea of waiting to participate in the covenant make sense to you? How might this raise more questions for you?
2. There is an incredible connection between the new and eternal covenant and the Jewish feast of Passover. When the people of Israel were set free from slavery, they had to eat the sacrificed lamb and mark their homes with its blood. Isaiah 42:6 says that God Himself would be the covenant and Abraham promises that “God will provide *Himself* a lamb”. Jesus is the Lamb of God, He is the covenant, His Blood is the sign. What difference does that make in your life? (Knowing that this might seem to abstract a question, please feel no pressure to have a “profound” response; does it make any difference, or is it simply an interesting tid-bit?)
3. The Sacraments are the way that Jesus continues to work in the world (making us new, healing us, forgiving us, commissioning us, etc). But the Eucharist *is* Jesus. This is why the Eucharist is the “Sacrament of sacraments”. To what degree is Jesus in the Eucharist a regular part of your life? If it is limited, what are some of the obstacles you face to encountering Christ in the Mass or Adoration? If it is deeper, what was the path by which God drew you to Himself in the Eucharist?
4. “Eucharist” is a Greek word that means “thanksgiving”. Is thanksgiving a conscious thought that you have when you participate in the Mass? How could the Mass truly become a sacrifice and meal of thanksgiving for you?

5. When you love a person, you want to give your entire self to them. How does the Eucharist demonstrate how God feels about you? Is His love something you find difficult to experience? How so?

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## God in Real Life

1. There are times when we are tempted to simply “watch” the Mass. But actively engaged members of the covenant are never merely passive observers. We are called to be actively engaged in worship. Based off of this week’s teaching (that we enter into and seal the covenant through consuming the sacred meal of Christ’s Body and Blood), you are invited to participate in at least one daily Mass this week. When you pray with the priest, and when you approach the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, hold in your mind and your heart that this is the wedding nuptials of Christ and His Bride, the Church. He gives everything to you and your relationship is consummated.

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## Be Transformed

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

- A. Read about how the Israelites were commanded to participate in the meal of the Passover (Exodus 12:1-28)
- B. Saint Paul, when writing to the church at Corinth, provides an incredible theology of the Mass. He makes the direct connection between Jesus’ sacrifice as the “new Passover”...and an even deeper connection between Christ’s sacrifice and the Mass. He writes: “Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).
- C. After God established the covenant with the Israelites in Exodus, He not only called them to celebrate the Passover annually, but He also fed them daily with “bread from heaven”. In Jesus, the Passover Lamb is the Bread come down from Heaven. (See Exodus 16 and John 6).
- D. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states points out the participation in Holy Communion consummates one’s initiation into the covenant. It states: “The holy Eucharist **completes** Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.” (CCC 1322)
- E. 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 1323)

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## **To the Heart**

"The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." (CCC 1324)

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" (Mt. 26:26-28)

"“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”” (John 12:27-28)