

Catholic “Inventions” Debunked

The following list of “Catholic Inventions” is taken right out of **Loraine Boettner’s** deeply flawed and defamatory book, “**Roman Catholicism**”. Boettner, a 20th century author who was an virulent anti-Catholic, played fast and loose with the facts and dates in his slanderous diatribe against the Church.

Boettner’s intent was to cast a negative light on the disciplines and doctrines practiced by the Catholic Church. He wanted to show that they were nothing more than man-made “*inventions*” because some were not explicitly taught in the Bible. As you will see, he was **dead** wrong. The doctrinal and dogmatic decrees made by the Church are Scripturally-based while other matters of discipline were declared to accommodate the needs of the growing worldwide Church. Aside from Boettner’s attacks being false, it is interesting to note that Protestants have also added some of their **own** traditions such as altar calls, individual interpretation of Scripture, the withholding of baptism from infants, Sola Fide and Sola Scriptura, **none** of which have any basis in Scripture.

The sad truth is that many non-Catholic groups **still** use this bogus list to vilify with the Catholic Church – never investigating for themselves the fact that **most** of its claims are patently false or otherwise petty and embarrassingly ignorant. This list - or variations of it - on can be found on many anti-Catholic websites and literature. Sadly, many Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches in our local area also use this list on their websites to defame the Church.

Below, Boettner’s “*inventions*” are **numbered**. The Catholic response is in **blue**.

1. Prayers for the dead

300 A.D.

This is a practice that can be seen as far back in Jewish history as **2 Macc. 12:42-46**. The practice of praying for the dead is still done by Orthodox Jews to this day. The New Testament also refers to a prayer for the dead by St. Paul in **2 Timothy 1:16-18**.

On the Epitaph of Abercius, the Bishop of Hierapolis, he asks all who may read his grave marker to pray for him. This was written in **180 AD**.

2. Making the sign of the cross

300

Where Boettner got this fictitious date, we may never know, but it is **completely** untrue. Tertullian writes about making the sign of the cross circa, **195 A.D.**: “*In all the occupations of our daily lives, we furrow our foreheads with the Sign of the cross*”. This was already a long-established custom when this was written.

3. Wax candles, about

320

Maybe the Early Church was unaware that they were supposed to worship in dark. Is Boettner serious? Is this *really* an issue?

The plain fact is that Light represents joy, goodness and purity, whereas darkness represents sadness, desolation, despair, ignorance and evil. The record of the execution of Cyprian of Carthage in the year 258 mentions the use of **candles** at his funeral.

God created light: “*Then God said ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw how good the light was*” (**Gen. 1:3-4**). God appears before Moses in the burning bush (**Ex. 3:2**). God “*dwells in unapproachable light*” (**1 Tim. 6:16**). God “*... is light and in him there is no darkness*” (**1 John 1:5**). We see that a constant light is kept burning in God’s presence before the Holy of Holies (**Lev. 24:2-4**).

As for the use of candles – there were no electric lights used in churches until the 20th century. Besides, the candle itself is symbolic of Jesus: His flesh – his humanity is symbolized in the pale wax. In the center of the candle, the wick which gives us the light represents his soul. It gives us light until it burns down and is fully consumed, sacrificing itself - representative of the sacrifice Christ himself offered for us. Beeswax, is the purest and the sweetest and is appropriate for representing the sacred humanity of Christ.

4. Veneration of angels and dead saints, and use of images

375

That’s strange – where did he get this date? We have writings from the Fathers citing an already established practice of venerating saints and angels and speak of their intercession from about 150 years **prior** to Boettner’s random date of **375**.

From the earliest of times, we see the Church recognizing those who have gone before us as prayerful intercessors. The term, “**dead saints**”, is particularly offensive to the Catholic because the Church teaches, as do the Scriptures themselves, that those in heaven are more alive than we are. Although they have left this world, they have been made perfect in the Lord, as nothing unclean can enter heaven **Rev. 21:27**. **Hebrews 12:1** tells us that we are surrounded by them and that they are “*so great a cloud of witnesses*”.

As for the “use of images” being somehow wrong - this charge is an amazingly ignorant one. Images have been used for various reasons throughout history such as teaching about Biblical events and to remind people of God and those whom he chose to do his will. Anti-Catholics *choose* to forget that in centuries past most of the population was illiterate and learned of these things from images, statues and stories.

God commanded Moses to create and make use of the image of a bronze serpent to cure those who were dying from snake bites (**Numbers 21:7-9**). He also commanded Moses to place 2 golden cherubim atop the Ark (**Ex. 25:18-20**). Images are not necessarily idols.

5. The Mass, as a daily celebration

394

Hmmm . . . for a guy who fancies himself a historian who believes in Sola Scriptura – Boettner doesn't seem to give much regard to the Scriptures – *or* history.

To see that daily celebration of the mass was always something practiced by the church and not a later Catholic “invention”, one need only to appeal to Scripture to find the truth. **Acts 2:46-47** explicitly tells us: **Every day** they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

These verses suggest a **daily** Liturgy of the Word in the in the temple area which was followed by a Liturgy of the Eucharist in their homes.

If some communities *weren't* celebrating daily mass in the early years of the Church, it was because of persecutions and the masses having to be celebrated in secret. A rudimentary knowledge of history would shed light on that. It's easy for people of today to cast aspersions on the Early Church as if they had all of the freedoms that we enjoy, especially the United States. When the Roman Emperor Constantine finally decriminalized Christianity, they were free to practice their faith and celebrate mass as they wished.

6. Beginning of the exaltation of Mary, the term “Mother of God” first applied to her by the Council of Ephesus

431

Gosh – and we thought the **Bible** gave us the first exaltations of Mary (**Luke 1:28-29, 42, 45, 48**).

Later, the term, Theotokos (God-Bearer), which was applied to Mary at the 1st Council of Ephesus in 431, was used to describe the nature of Jesus in response to the **Nestorian Heresy**, which held that Jesus was not divine. The Early Church always considered Mary to be the Mother of God from the earliest of times.

We see this in the writings of Early Fathers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Gregory the Wonderworker, Peter of Alexandria, Methodius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraim, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory of Nazianz and Jerome.

7. Priests began to dress differently from laymen

500

Maybe it's because people wanted to be able to tell them apart from the congregation. And this is important *because* . . . ?

This is really a non-issue because the very same can be said of the many Protestant denominations whose ministers wear robes, collars or other vestments for their services. This is nothing more than petty anti-Catholicism in its purest form. Priestly vestments symbolize different seasons of the liturgical year.

8. Extreme Unction

526

Are we supposed to disregard the sick and dying? More silliness from those whose sole purpose it seems, is to defame the Catholic Church.

What Boettner *doesn't* mention is that the Church practice of Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick) is derived straight from the Bible itself. It didn't begin in **526**, as he would have you believe: *“Is one of you sick? Let him send for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Lord's name. Prayer offered in faith will restore the sick man, and the Lord will give him relief; if he is guilty of sins, they will be pardoned”* (**James 5:14-15**). **Mark 6:13** tells us that the apostles, having been sent out by Jesus, drove out demons and cured the sick by **anointing** them.

Incidentally, this is a practice that is being resurrected by many Evangelical sects today. Strange how this Catholic “invention” is one that is now being practiced by the very groups that chastised the Church for using it in the first place . . .

9. The doctrine of Purgatory, established by Gregory I

593

Was the Church supposed to keep this a secret?

As you will see in many other issues brought up by Boettner, a declaration or decree of a Catholic belief does NOT mean that it was “*invented*” at that particular time. The belief in Purgatory has been

believed and written about since the dawn of the Church. One need only open up the Bible and read the following Scripture verses that support the idea of final purgation before entry into heaven to see where the Early Church got their ideas: **Matt. 5:25-26, Matt. 12:32, Matt. 18:32-35, Luke 12:58-59, 1 Cor. 3:12-15.**

Along with the Scriptures, Early Church writings from such giants of the early Christianity faith like **Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan and Augustine** support the Catholic position that this was *always* a belief of the Church.

10. Latin Language, used in prayer and worship, imposed by Gregory I

600

Maybe Chinese didn't seem like the appropriate choice at the time.

Why is this an issue? No matter which language the Church may have chosen as its official language, Boettner would have had a problem with it. This is yet another of the many non-issues you will read on his list.

Latin **was** used in prayer and worship in the year 600. As Christianity spread further West, Latin was the lingua franca and it made sense to adopt it as the official language of the Church. There is nothing sinister about the Church's use of Latin as it was the vernacular of the time. Latin is still the Church's official language – and it is no more mysterious or sinister today than it was in the Early Church. To imply otherwise is to display an abject ignorance of history.

11. Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints and angels, about

600

Dead? Since when does **"eternal life"** equate to **"dead"**?

Here we go again with the term, "dead saints". Does Boettner really think that those in heaven are dead? This is a stretch – even for the most virulent anti-Catholic. The writings of the Early Church are replete with examples of the Church Fathers praying to – and recommending intercessory prayer to the Christians who died before them and petitioning their help – just as we are to pray for and ask for prayer from members of the Body of Christ here on earth. The word, **"pray"** simply means **"to implore"** or **"to make a request."** Those who would exclude these brothers and sisters are literally rejecting the Body of Christ. The Early Church **truly** understood that those who have gone before us are no less members of that Body than those of us on earth.

Some examples of this can be seen in the writings of **Origen Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary of Poitiers, Ephraem of Syria, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, Augustine and Jerome – ALL** of whom echoed the Scriptures on the matter of praying and interceding for one another (**1 Tim. 2:1-3, 2 Cor. 1:6, Jas. 5:16, 1 Pet. 2:5-9, Rev. 5:8, 8:3-4**).

Isn't it interesting to note that these authors **ALL** lived and wrote centuries before this bogus time frame of **600 A.D.**?

12. Title of pope, or universal bishop, given to Boniface III, by emperor Phocas

607

607, eh?

First of all, the Bishop of Rome was always considered to be Head of the entire Church, as we find in the writings of the 1st Century Father, Ignatius, as well as Hermas, Dionysius, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, and others. Secondly, Tertullian, writing in the **early 3rd Century** who cited, **"...a pontiff---sovereign, of course---that is, a bishop of bishops."**

Bishop of Rome, or, "Pontifex Maximus", means "bridge-builder", a name which was inherited from governmental functionaries of the pagan Romans. This was **long** before **607**.

As for the word, "Pope" - it simply means **"Papa"**, or **"Father"**. St. Stephen refers to **"our father Abraham,"** in **Acts 7:2**. In **Romans 9:10**, St. Paul speaks of **"our father Isaac"**. In **1 Cor. 4:14-15**, he states, **"For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."** This is a term of affection, not a biological recognition or one of worship.

13. Kissing of the pope's foot, began with pope Constantine

709

Actually – this practice began **much** earlier than the 8th century. When Leo IV was elected in 847, it was spoken of as having been a very "ancient practice". The Emperor Justin paid this respect to Pope John I in 523-26. This is not a requirement by all but an ancient tradition observed in papal enclaves and liturgically in papal masses by Latin and Greek subdeacons.

14. Temporal power of the popes, conferred by Pipin, King of the Franks

750

Umm, time for **another** history lesson.

In 750, Pepin the Short had positioned himself to take charge of the Frankish kingdoms. Since he had been educated by Catholic monks and knew St. Boniface, Pepin asked Pope Zacharias for advice as to

whether or not he should take control of the kingdom or not. Pope Zacharias told Pepin that since he held de facto power over the Franks, it was better for all that he take control.

When we study the facts, it becomes clear that Boettner again had his “facts” jumbled. Pepin never conferred temporal power on the Pope – it was the **Pope** who confirmed the temporal power of Pepin.

15. Worship of the cross, images, and relics, authorized 786

Boy, talk about your anti-Catholic *whoppers!* Catholics do not now, nor have we ever worshipped any object as this would make us guilty of the sin of idolatry. Images and relics are simply reminders of Christ and his devoted followers. We *venerate* them – we do not *worship* them. Veneration simply means to regard something or some one with reverential respect or with admiring deference. A picture of a loved one kept in a wallet is also a *reminder* of that person – but it does not equal worship.

16. Holy water mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest 850

Would Boettner have preferred a pinch of cayenne pepper instead?
It's interesting to note that the 5th Century document, Apostolic constitutions, credits the use of holy water to St. Matthew. Furthermore, two other ancient documents, the Pontifical of Serapion of Thmuis and the *Testamentum Domini* give liturgical formula for blessing oil – *as well as water* at Mass.

17. Worship of St. Joseph 890

St. Joseph? I thought we worshipped *Mary* . . .

Seriously, though - the Catholic worships God alone and nobody else. Having raised Jesus from a baby, St. Joseph is looked upon as a great example of Christian faith. Whereas, he is venerated, worship of him or ANY person other than God has always been strictly prohibited by the Church.

18. College of cardinals established 927

Perhaps the Church thought college was a logical step after graduating high school?

Seriously, this is yet another non-issue. Boettner's idea that the Church should not grow from an acorn to an oak is reason alone to question his list. The Church is a living, breathing organism that will grow over time as any healthy body will.

It was at the Council of Rome in 499 AD that Pope Symmachus divided the City into various parochial components, with each under the jurisdiction of a priest known as a “cardinale”. A constitution by Pope John VIII published between 873 and 882 specifically mentions these cardinal priests, or *presbyteri cardinales* [34].

A *college* is merely a group of individuals engaged in a common goal or interest. This is yet another example of the petty nature of Boettner's list.

19. Baptism of bells, instituted by pope John XIII 965

Maybe this just sounded like a better idea than “*Baptism of the Kazoos*”.
Seriously, though - this is nothing more than Boettner's anti-Catholicism run amok. It was simply *referred to* as a “*Baptism of Bells*” – it wasn't an *actual* Christian Baptism. Inanimate objects *cannot* be truly baptized and don't have a soul.

The ceremony was a blessing by the Bishop of the bells to be plated in the church bell tower. The bells were then given symbolic names – they were not welcomed into the Body of Christ as members. A blessing of this sort is simply a dedication of an object for a sacred purpose - similar to when a Protestant church is dedicated. Don't most Protestant churches have names? For centuries, ships have been doused with liquid, blessed and given names yet nobody objects to *this* practice.

20. Canonization of dead saints, first by pope John XV 995

AGAIN with the “*dead saints*” slur? This is deceptive claim meant to confuse the reader.
Early Christians honored Christians who had died before them and prayerfully asked them for intercession as early as the end of the first century. This is contrary to the belief of many people that the Church set-up this practice later in its existence. The first saints were those who had given up their lives for their faith, the martyrs.

Whereas, it is true that the Catholic Church began applying a standard of holiness of life to some people who lived exemplary Christian lives and through prayer and investigation have declared that the individual is in heaven, we see that the martyrs were always considered saints from the beginning.

21. Fasting on Fridays and during lent 998

Now, this is a stretch – even for Boettner.

As far back as the **1st Century**, we read in *The Didache* (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) about fasting on Fridays. As far as fasting during Lent, Athanasius writes about it in his *Festal Letters* of

331 AD. In *The Apostolic Canons*, a document written around 340, we read the admonishment to the clergy and the laity to fast during Lent. A rudimentary look at history renders Boettner's date of **998** as nothing but a fairytale.

22. The Mass, developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance made obligatory in the 11th century Gradually? Well, it did take a few years after the Ascension of our Lord of Christ before we see the first writings that mention it, but that's a far cry from the 11th century as Boettner claims.

In the 1st Century document, The Didache, we read that Christians should assemble on the Lord's Day for the Eucharist. It also mentions that they should confess their sins before receiving the Eucharist so that their "**sacrifice may be a pure one**". However, this was already an established practice because we see that 1st Century Father, Ignatius also speaks of this sacrifice, as does Irenaeus in the 2nd Century. At any rate – they all seem to speak of the Sacrifice of the Mass almost 1000 years before Boettner's fictitious time frame.

23. Celibacy of the priesthood, decreed by pope Gregory VII **1079**
"Why does this bother Boettner? Nobody asked **him** to be celibate.

What Boettner, and others who are threatened by the idea of priestly celibacy need to remember is that this is a **discipline** – **not** a doctrine - nor, is it unbiblical.

Some of the Apostles themselves were said to be married, including St. Peter. But, this doesn't detract from the discipline of priestly celibacy that St. Paul recommended in **1 Cor. 7:7–9, 28, 32–33**. In those verses he states that celibacy was a more perfect state because the married man is anxious about worldly affairs and how to please his wife, whereas the celibate man (*himself included*) could focus on how to please the Lord.

Nowhere does the Catholic Church downplay the importance of marriage nor does it see marriage as any less of a vocation than the religious life. On the contrary, the Church upholds the sanctity of marriage and holds it to a higher standard than any Protestant denomination. This is evident by the Church's doctrines regarding marriage and its indissolubility.

Many of the Early Fathers, including Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius also favored celibacy. But at the local Council of Elvira (Spain) (295-302 AD) celibacy was first imposed on bishops, priests, and deacons. The bottom line is that **nobody** is forced to become a priest, ergo, no Catholic is forced to be celibate. Those who enter the religious life know very well in advance that this discipline is expected of them.

24. The Rosary, mechanical praying with beads, invented by Peter the Hermit **1090**

What is "**mechanical**" prayer? Does he mean "**robotic**" or is it just another term to infuse the reader with his disdain for the Church?

The Rosary is anything but "mechanical". It is a Biblically-based intercessory prayer that reflects on various events in the life of Christ. Secondly, its origin is traditionally associated with St. Dominic and was not "invented" by Peter the Hermit. Lastly, the anti-Catholic will usually point to **Matthew 6:5-6** where Jesus condemns repetitious prayer. However, the Rosary does not fall into that category because Jesus was deriding the pagan practice of babbling prayer.

One example of this can be found in **1 Kings 18:26-29** where the pagan prophets on Mount Carmel tried to invoke Baal all day long, repeatedly calling on his name and performing ritual dances. Jesus **wasn't** condemning all repetitious prayer as He Himself engaged in repetitive prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed the same prayer **three times** in a row (**Matt. 26:39-44**). Those in heaven would also be guilty of this because, as **Rev. 4:8** tells us, they repeat the same thing without ceasing day and night.

25. The Inquisition, instituted by the Council of Verona **1184**

There was a Council of Verona? Perhaps, Boettner meant, **Synod** of Verona.

Gregory IX established the first Papal Inquisition in 1233 to investigate the Waldensian heresy as well as the and Albigensian heresy. The Synod of Verona called for severe measures against the Waldensians, Cathari and Arnoldists and was a joint effort of both Pope Lucius III and Emperor Frederick I; however, it was **hardly** an Inquisition, as Boettner asserts.

26. Sale of Indulgences (see definition below) **1190**

Indulgences have never been "sold" by the Church. This is one of those urban myths that has grown over time – with the help of people like Boettner and other anti-Catholics.

Whereas certain individuals were guilty of this practice prior to the Reformation, it was never endorsed by the Church.

In fact, the Council of Trent issued some severe reforms regarding the practice of granting indulgences. Because of previous abuses by some individuals, "in 1567 Pope Pius V canceled all grants of indulgences involving any fees or other financial transactions" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*). This illustrated the Church's seriousness about stopping abuses from indulgences. This fictitious date of **1190** only serves to further expose Boettner's bogus list.

27. Transubstantiation, proclaimed by pope Innocent III

1215

1215? And we thought it went all the way back to the Bible. Well, it does.

This is one of the most deceitful claims on Boettner's list. A declaration or decree of a Christian belief does NOT mean that it was "invented" at that particular time. If that were so, ALL of the creeds would be considered, "inventions". The belief in Transubstantiation is derived from *John 6*, where Jesus instructed his disciples to eat his flesh and drink his blood. At the Last Supper, he showed them the **means** by which this was to be done (with bread and wine).

In **1 Corinthians 11:27-29**, St. Paul warns us:

"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord." A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself."

That's a pretty harsh warning – **if** it were only a symbol as most non-Catholics believe, which it is **not**.

As for Transubstantiation - the only thing "new" about at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 was the term assigned to what was always believed - "**Transubstantiation**". As for the word itself, it was first used by the theologians Magister Roland about 1150, Stephen of Tournai about 1160, and Peter Comestor about 1170

We see that the Early Church *vehemently* believed in this doctrine in the writings of the Fathers, such as Ignatius of Antioch, a student of John the Apostle, when speaking of the heretics who rejected this belief: *"They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes. (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2-7:1 [A.D. 110])."*

At the beginning of the 3rd Century, Tertullian wrote *"He took bread, offered it to His disciples and made it into His body by saying, 'This is My body'" (Against Marcion 212 AD);* About 140 years later, Cyril of Jerusalem wrote, *"Once at Cana in Galilee by a mere nod He changed water into wine; should it now be incredible that He changes wine into blood?" (Catechetical Lectures [Mystagogic], 350 AD) [55].*

28. Auricular (out loud) Confession of sins to a priest instead of to God, instituted by pope Innocent III in Lateral council

1215

Oh, **really?** Well, the Bible shows that this is a doctrine that goes all the way back to the beginning. First of all, Jesus gave the Church the authority to forgive or retain sins – and that this would be upheld on earth **and** in heaven (**Matt. 16:15, Matt. 18: 15-18, John 20:21-23**).

2 Cor. 5:18-20 explicitly refers to the sacrament of Reconciliation:

"And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Similarly, **2 Cor. 2:10-11** states:

"Whomever you forgive anything, so do I. For indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for you in the presence of Christ, so that we might not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not unaware of his purposes."

In about **244**, Origen speaks of the sinner who "**does not shrink from declaring his sin to a priest of the Lord**". A few years later, Cyprian of Carthage stated, *"Finally, of how much greater faith and more salutary fear are they who...confess to the priests of God in a straightforward manner and in sorrow, making an open declaration of conscience." (C&F p.43)*

Again, the anti-Catholic *refuses* to understand that simply because something is declared or reiterated,

It does NOT mean that it wasn't a practice of the Early Church. It is something that is being officially declared usually because of a controversy or heresy. A perfect example of this is the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union of Jesus, declared at the 1st Council of Ephesus in 431. **1215, indeed...**

29. Adoration of the wafer (Host), decreed by pope Honorius III

1220

This claim would be almost comical, if not so tragically ignorant. It implies that Catholics worship a piece of bread and a cup of wine. This is misleading and dishonest. We worship Jesus and believe that the bread and wine are transformed into his body and blood. From the earliest writings of the Church we see the Eucharist was believed to be the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Again, at the beginning of the **2nd Century**, Ignatius of Antioch – student of St. John the Apostle, wrote about the heretics of his time who rejected this belief:

"They (the heretics) abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes (Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 6:2-7:1 [A.D. 110])."

In his Epistle to the Romans (110 AD), he wrote *"I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ...and for drink I desire His Blood" [59].*

Contrary to what many Protestants believe – the Eucharist is by no means a mere symbol. Jesus Himself declared it to be His Flesh and Blood, indeed, His Body (**Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20, John 6:51-58**).

Conclusion

Many Protestant ministers tell their congregations that the Church today should resemble the Early Church. *"If your church does not look like the early church of the Bible", they say, "then you're in the **wrong** church."*

You might even hear this from Pastors of some of the many "mega-churches" that exist today which, ironically, look **nothing** like the early Church. The plain fact is that when you research the writings of the Early Church – you will find a staunch belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Baptismal Regeneration, Confession, Papal Primacy, Church Authority, the Perpetual Virginity of Mary and many other doctrines that are found only in the Catholic Church today.

Simply put, you will see that the Early Church was transparently and unashamedly Catholic.

The Catholic Church, having been instituted by Jesus Christ himself and not by mere men, understands that when Jesus commissioned his Apostles to *"make disciples of all nations"* (**Matt. 28:19-20**), the Church would change from that point forward. It would continue to grow from the acorn to the oak – the mustard seed to the mustard plant (**Mark 4:30-34**) - because it is the living Body of Christ. So, if it looks just like the Church of the Bible – then it never grew and its fruits have dried up. Consequently, if it rejects the teachings of the Early Church then it is something else entirely.

The Church is not a large, worldwide conglomeration of constantly splintering sects with differing doctrines and traditions. This is **not** the unity that Jesus prayed for so fervently in **John 16**. The Church is the united Body of Christ that is truly One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It is the **only** Church instituted by Jesus Christ and can trace every one of its bishops, doctrines and traditions back to the Early Church of the Bible. Every single Protestant denomination was instituted by flawed human beings and can only trace its origins as far back as the 16th century.

If you're **not** part of the only Church instituted by Christ, then you should ask yourself:

*"If **my** church **wasn't** instituted by Jesus, **who** started it?"*

*"**Why** am I **not** part of the Church instituted by Christ?"*