

The Early Christians Believed in the Real Presence

*So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us,
either by word of mouth or by letter.
2 Thessalonians 2:15*

Many Catholics and non-Catholics alike think that the Roman Catholic Church invented the doctrine of transubstantiation. Transubstantiation means that the bread and wine presented on the altar at the Mass become the the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit at the consecration. The consecration is the time when the priest calls upon the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood. However, the Body and Blood retain the appearance of bread and wine.

I pray that this research article will inspire lukewarm Catholics to become excited about their Faith which has faithfully been passed on for over 2000 years. I pray that the Holy Spirit will grant you Faith to believe in Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and to receive Him at Mass and visit Him in the tabernacle. He is patiently waiting for you because he loves you and wants you to come home.

THE DIDACHE

The Didache or "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" is a manuscript which was used by 2nd century bishops and priests for the instruction of catechumens.

"On the Lord's own day, assemble in common to break bread and offer thanks; but first confess your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure. However, no one quarreling with his brother may join your meeting until they are reconciled; your sacrifice must not be defiled."-Ch 14

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

"They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His graciousness, raised from the dead."

"Letter to the Smyrnaeans", paragraph 6. circa 80-110 A.D.

"I have no taste for the food that perishes nor for the pleasures of this life. I want the Bread of God which is the Flesh of Christ, who was the seed of David; and for drink I desire His Blood which is love that cannot be destroyed."

"Letter to the Romans", paragraph 7, circa 80-110 A.D.

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR—beheaded with six of his companions some time between 163 and 167 A.D.

"This food we call the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things we teach are true, and has received the washing for forgiveness of sins and for rebirth, and who lives as Christ handed down to us. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Savior being incarnate by God's Word took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the Word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus."

"First Apology", Ch. 66, inter A.D. 148-155.

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS—second bishop of Lyons in 177 A.D.

[Christ] has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be his own Blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own Body, from which he gives increase to our bodies."

Source: St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, 180 A.D.:

"For just as the bread which comes from the earth, having received the invocation of God, is no longer ordinary bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly, so our bodies, having received the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, because they have the hope of the resurrection."

"Five Books on the Unmasking and Refutation of the Falsely named Gnosis". Book 4:18 4-5, circa 180 A.D.

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"The Word is everything to a child: both Father and Mother, both Instructor and Nurse. 'Eat My Flesh,' He says, 'and drink My Blood.' The Lord supplies us with these intimate nutrients. He delivers over His Flesh, and pours out His Blood; and nothing is lacking for the growth of His children. O incredible mystery!"

"The Instructor of the Children" [1,6,41,3] ante 202 A.D.,

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE—beheaded for his Faith in the year 258 A.D.

"So too the the sacred meaning of the Pasch lies essentially in the fact, laid down in Exodus, that the lamb - slain as a type of Christ - should be eaten in one single home. God says the words: 'In one house shall it be eaten, ye shall not cast its flesh outside.' The flesh of Christ and the Lord's sacred body cannot be cast outside, nor have believers any other home but the one Church."

"The Unity of the Catholic Church". Ch.8, circa 249-258 A.D.,

"The priest who imitates that which Christ did, truly takes the place of Christ, and offers there in the Church a true and perfect sacrifice to God the Father."

Source: St. Cyprian wrote to the Ephesians circa 258 A.D.;

ST. EPHRAIM, deacon

And extending His hand, He gave them the Bread which His right hand had made holy: 'Take, all of you eat of this; which My word has made holy. Do not now regard as bread that which I have given you; but take, eat this Bread, and do not scatter the crumbs; for what I have called My Body, that it is indeed. One particle from its crumbs is able to sanctify thousands and thousands, and is sufficient to afford life to those who eat of it. Take, eat, entertaining no doubt of faith, because this is My Body, and whoever eats it in belief eats in it Fire and Spirit.

-*"Homilies" 4,4 ca. 350 A.D.,*

ST. ATHANASIUS—ordained a deacon in 319 A.D., attended Council of Nicaea

"The great Athanasius in his sermon to the newly baptized says this: 'You shall see the Levites bringing loaves and a cup of wine, and placing them on the table. So long as the prayers of supplication and entreaties have not been made, there is only bread and wine. But after the great and wonderful prayers have been completed, then the bread is become the Body, and the wine the Blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

-*"Sermon to the Newly Baptized" ante 373 A.D.,*

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

St. Cyril served as Bishop of Jerusalem in the years 348-378 A.D.,

Since then He Himself has declared and said of the Bread, (This is My Body), who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since He has affirmed and said, (This is My Blood), who shall ever hesitate, saying, that it is not His blood?

-*"Catechetical Lectures [22 (Mystagogic 4), 1]"*

"Contemplate therefore the Bread and Wine not as bare elements, for they are, according to the Lord's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ; for though sense suggests this to thee, let faith stablish thee. Judge not the matter from taste, but from faith be fully assured without misgiving, that thou hast been [made worthy of] the Body and Blood of Christ.

-*"Catechetical Lectures [22 (Mystagogic 4), 6]"*

"Keep these traditions inviolate, and preserve yourselves from offenses. Do not cut yourselves off from Communion, do not deprive yourselves, through the pollution of sins, of these Holy and Spiritual Mysteries."

-*"Mystagogic Catechesis [23 (Mystagogic 5), 23]"*

ST. HILARY OF POITERS, Bishop of Poitiers in 350 A.D

For He Himself says: 'My Flesh is truly Food, and My Blood is truly Drink. He that eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will remain in Me and I in him.' As to the reality of His Flesh and Blood, there is no room left for doubt, because now, both by the declaration of the Lord Himself and by our own faith, it is truly the Flesh and it is truly Blood. And These Elements bring it about, when taken and consumed, that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. Is this not true? Let those who deny that Jesus Christ is true God be free to find these things untrue. But He Himself is in us through the flesh and we are in Him, while that which we are with Him is in God."

-*"The Trinity" [8,14] inter 356-359 A.D.*

ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

"We have been instructed in these matters and filled with an unshakable faith, that that which seems to be bread, is not bread, though it tastes like it, but the Body of Christ, and that which seems to be wine, is not wine, though it too tastes as such, but the Blood of Christ . . . draw inner strength by receiving this bread as spiritual food and your soul will rejoice."

Source: *St. Cyril of Alexandria, "Catecheses," 22, 9; "Myst." 4; d. 444 A.D.:*

ST. BASIL THE GREAT, ST. EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS, ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZ

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, EGERIA, AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS CLEMENS, ST. AUGUSTINE, MARCARIUS THE MAGNESIAN, ST. LEO I, ST. CAESAR OF ARLES, ST. FULGENE OF RUSPE

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths."

(2 Tim 4:1-4)

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[New Advent Catholic Supersite: The Fathers of the Church](#) - This is **the** online source to get Catholic writings on the Church Councils and Early Fathers. Highly Recommended!!!

[The Catholic Lifetime Reading Plan - The Age of Persecution](#) - Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (St Ignatius of Antioch, St Justin Martyr, St Irenaeus, Tertullian, St Cyprian, Lactantius)

[The Catholic Lifetime Reading Plan - The Patristic Age](#) - Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. (Eusebius, St. Athanasius, Prudentius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Jerome)