

Lord's Day 30

Questions 80, 81 & 82

Question 80: How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

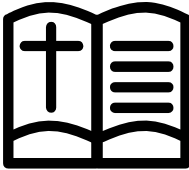
Answer: *The Lord's Supper declares to us that our sins have been completely forgiven through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ which he himself finished on the cross once for all. It also declares to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ, who with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father where he wants us to worship him.*

But the Mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests. It also teaches that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshiped. Thus the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus and a condemnable idolatry.



(Question and answer 80 were altogether absent from the first edition of the catechism but were present in a shorter form in the second edition. The translation here given is of the expanded text of the third edition.)

Historical Argument:



John
19:30, 4:21-24
Hebrews
7:27
9:12, 25-26
10:10-18
1:3, 8:1
1 Corinthians
6:17, 10:16-17
Acts
7:55-56
Matthew
6:20-21
Philippians
3:20
Colossians
3:1-3

One of the stated reasons why synods of the Christian Reformed Church have declined to change the catechism or to take out Q & A 80 has been their desire to preserve the historical character of the document. That may be a good reason. It's odd and unsightly to put modern patches on ancient fabric or to remove marks of age from monuments. But this historical document was written in the heat of a historical argument about the Lord's Supper. And in a debate the issues are shaped as much by the opposition as by one's own insight. The fathers (I don't know about the mothers) of the sixteenth century focused the debate on the interpretation of the words. "This is my body." And these ancestors of ours concluded and confessed that the interpretation of these words should be "in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments" (A.78)

With respect to Q & A 80, the argument that historical documents should be left intact has a weakness: the original document did not have this explicit statement on the Roman Catholic mass. Our present Q&A 80 appeared only in the third edition of the German version of the catechism. Therefore one might say that respect for historicity should require us to return to the first edition. (With respect to the whole of our confessional writings, the argument that we ought not tamper with historical documents strengthens our appreciation of history but weakens the relevance of the confession.)

(Comfort and Joy—A study of Heidelberg Catechism
by Andrew Kuyvenhoven)

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Question 81: Who are to come to the Lord's table?

Answer: *Those who are displeased with themselves because of their sins, but who nevertheless trust that their sins are pardoned and that their continuing weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to lead a better life.*

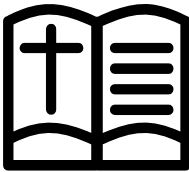
Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant, however, eat and drink judgment on themselves.



Heart of the Matter:

How are you strengthening your faith, on a day to day basis? _____

What are your continuing weaknesses? _____



Key scriptures:

1 Corinthians
10:19-22
11:26-32

1 Corinthians 11:26-32 *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."*

How do you examine yourself, what questions do you ask yourself before you take Communion? _____

How do you receive God's grace and Christ's sacrifice as you partake?

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Question 82: *Are those to be admitted to the Lord's Supper who show by what they say and do that they are unbelieving and ungodly?*

Answer: *No, that would dishonor God's covenant and bring down God's anger upon the entire congregation. Therefore, according to the instruction of Christ and his apostles, the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such people, by the official use of the keys of the kingdom, until they reform their lives.*



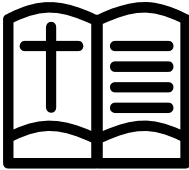
Heart of the Matter:

How should we prepare for the communion table:

Ourselves? _____

Children? _____

Church members? _____



Key scriptures:

1 Corinthians

11:17-32

Psalms

50:14-16

Isaiah

1:11-17

Psalm 50:14-16 *"Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me. But to the wicked, God says: 'What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?'"*

How would you lead someone to receive Jesus in their hearts, who were entangled in the wrong things of this world? _____

How would you help them prepare for Communion? _____

For yourself, write in a few words, a simple "THANK" offering.
