



# Fathers of the Church

Handing Down the Very Life of God

Mary, Queen of Angels Family of Parishes Lenten Talk



# Fatherhood

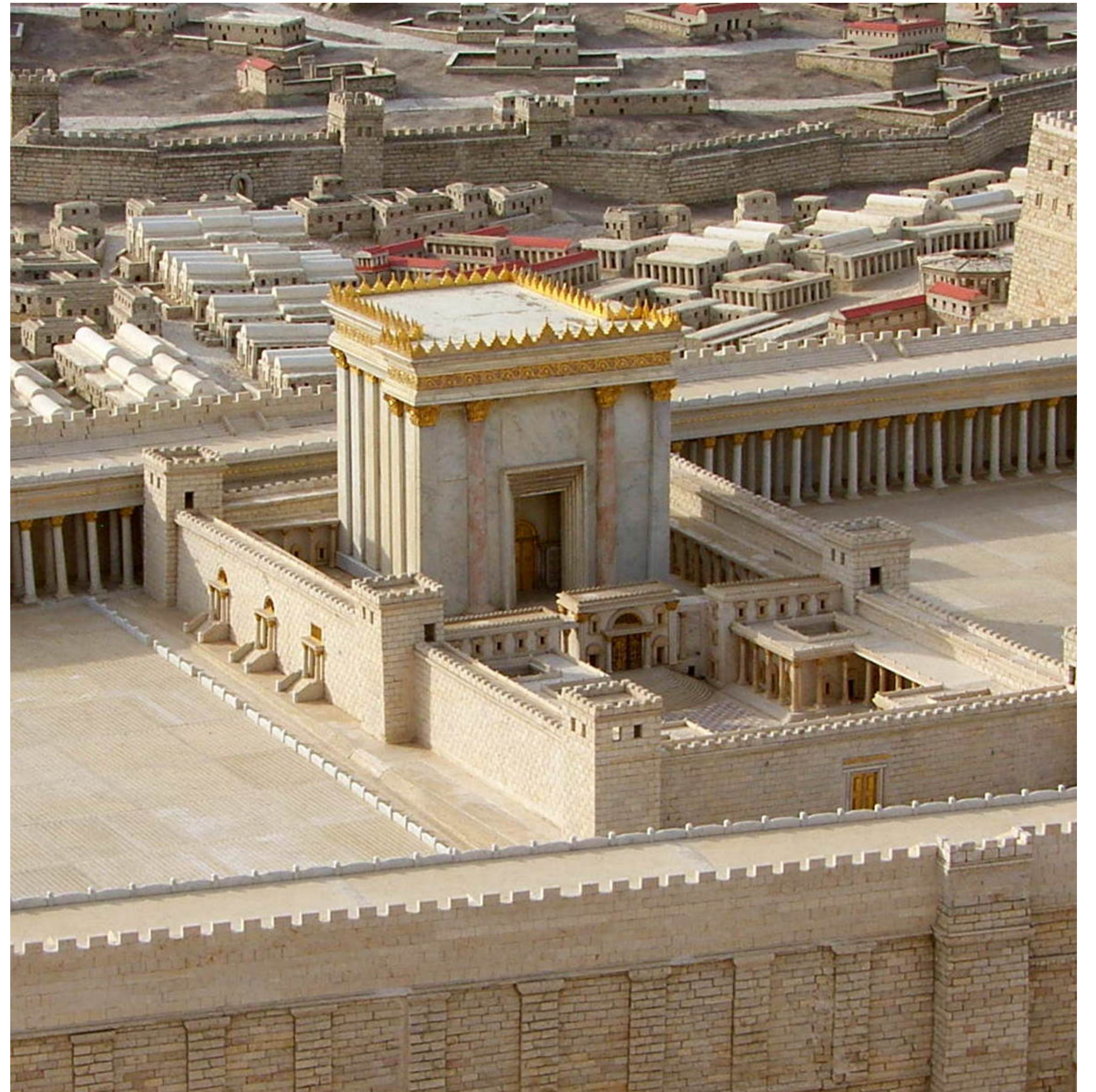
Giving all you have





# Malachi's prophecy

Oh, that there were one among you who would **shut the doors**, that you might not kindle fire upon my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting **my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering;** for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 1:10-11)

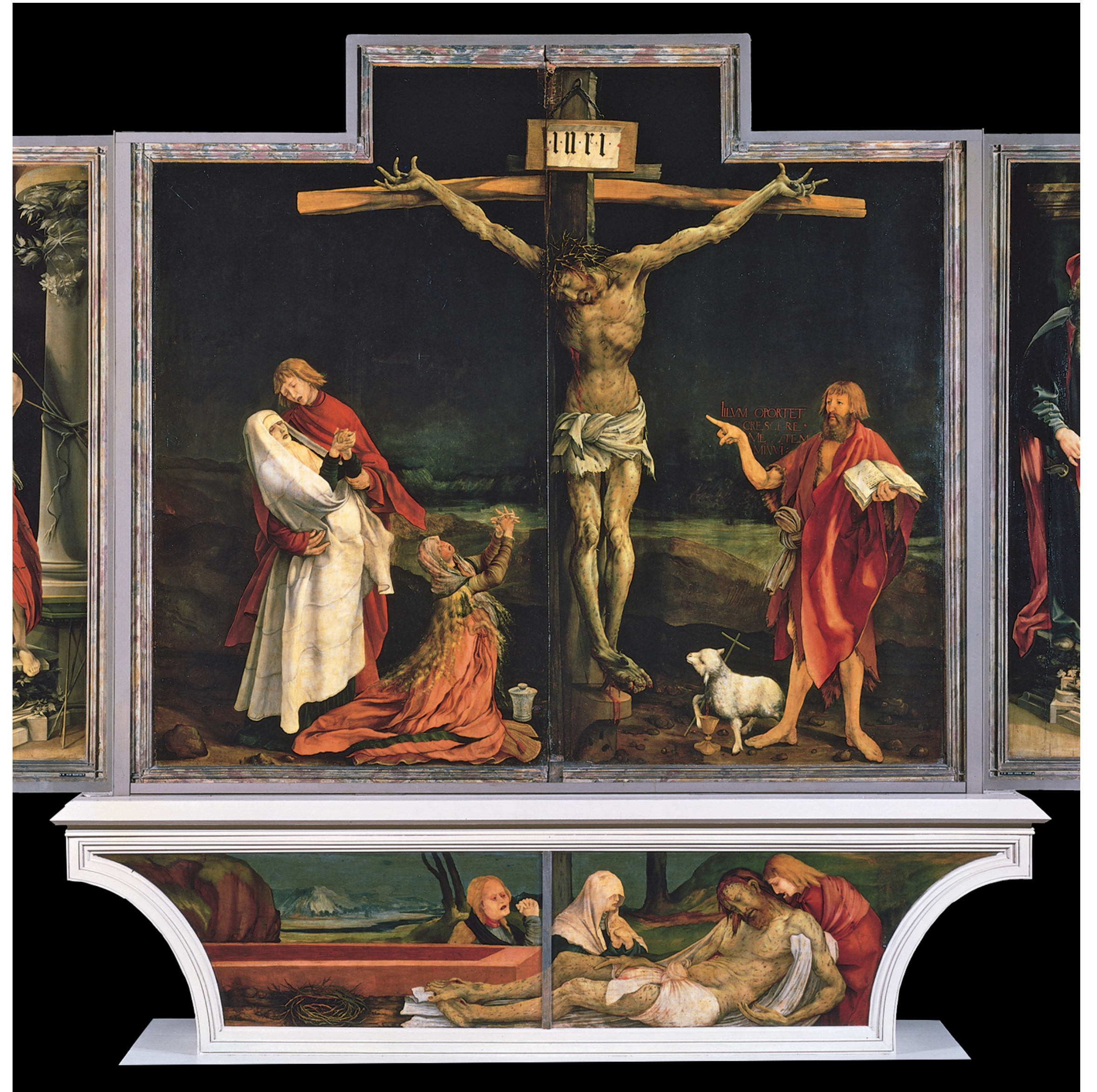




# Execution or Sacrifice?

“Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.”

(1 Corinthians 5:7)





# Handed Over

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(1 Corinthians 11:23-24)





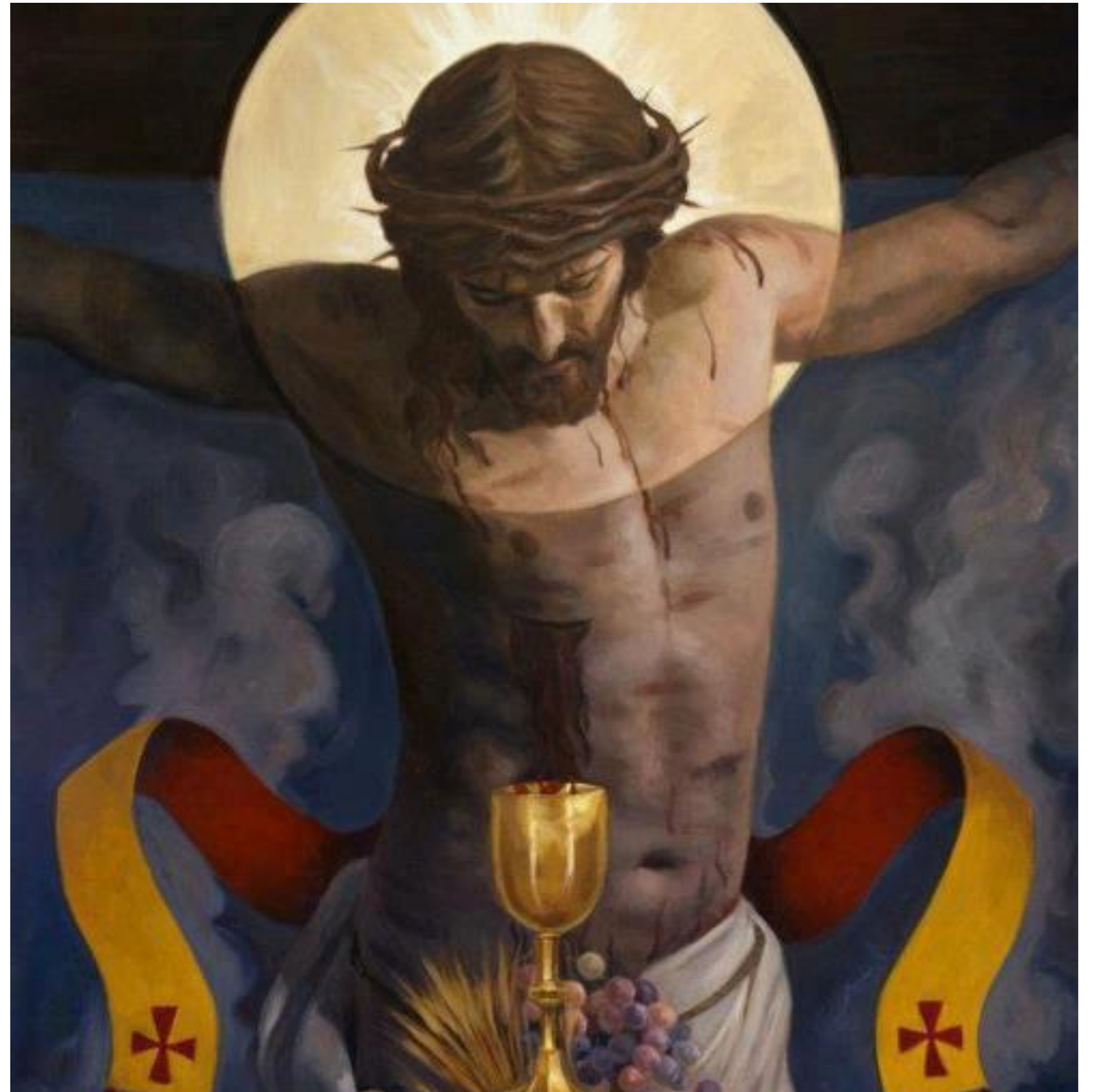
# The New Testament

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

(1 Corinthians 11:25)

“Long before the New Testament was a document, it was a sacrament.”

—Scott Hahn





# St. Ignatius of Antioch

“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, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible”  
*(Letter to the Romans 7:3 [A.D. 110]).*





# Does it look like I'm joking?

**Really real.**

“Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. . . . 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” (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 6:2–7:1 [A.D. 110]).





# St. Justin Martyr

For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the transmutation of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus”  
(*First Apology* 66 [A.D. 151]).





## You think we're making this up?

“God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [minor prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: ‘I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord, and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands; for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great among the Gentiles . . . [Mal. 1:10–11]. He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us [Christians] who in every place offer sacrifices to him, that is, the bread of the Eucharist and also the cup of the Eucharist” (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 41 [A.D. 155]).





On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together and offer prayers\* for ourselves . . .and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.' When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.

**St. Justin Martyr (*First Apology* 66 [A.D. 151]) quoted in Catechism 1345**



# St. Irenaeus

**Jesus to John to Polycarp to —>**

“He 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 unto our bodies. When, therefore, the mixed cup [wine and water] and the baked bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life—flesh which is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, and is in fact a member of him?” (*Against Heresies* 5:2 [A.D. 189]).



"Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking."



# Tertullian

“[T]here is not a soul that can at all procure salvation, except it believe whilst it is in the flesh, so true is it that the flesh is the very condition on which salvation hinges. And since the soul is, in consequence of its salvation, chosen to the service of God, it is the flesh which actually renders it capable of such service. The flesh, indeed, is washed [in baptism], in order that the soul may be cleansed . . . the flesh is shadowed with the imposition of hands [in confirmation], that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh feeds [in the Eucharist] on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may be filled with God” (*The Resurrection of the Dead* 8 [A.D. 210]).





# St. Cyprian of Carthage

**This is serious.**

“He [Paul] threatens, moreover, the stubborn and forward, and denounces them, saying, ‘Whosoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord’ [1 Cor. 11:27]. All these warnings being scorned and contemned—[lapsed Christians will often take Communion] before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest, before the offense of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, [and so] violence is done to his body and blood; and they sin now against their Lord more with their hand and mouth than when they denied their Lord” (*The Lapsed* 15–16 [A.D. 251]).





# St. Ambrose

## From one nature to another

Be convinced that this is not what nature has formed, but what the blessing has consecrated. The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed.... Could not Christ's word, which can make from nothing what did not exist, change existing things into what they were not before? It is no less a feat to give things their original nature than to change their nature. (St. Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* 9, 50)

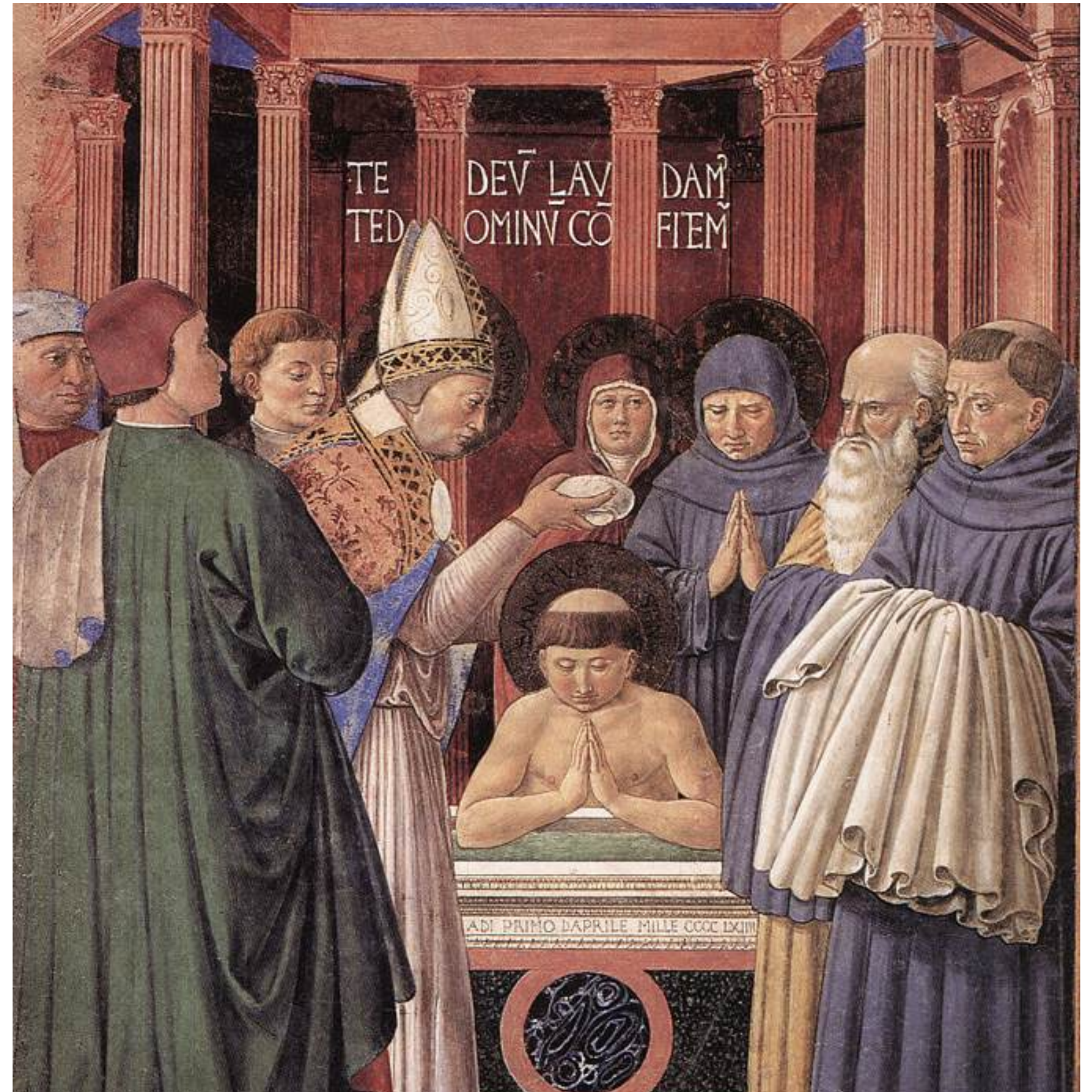




# St. Augustine

## Like father, like son

“I promised you [new Christians], who have now been baptized, a sermon in which I would explain the sacrament of the Lord’s Table. . . . That bread which you see on the altar, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what is in that chalice, having been sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ” (*Sermons 227* [A.D. 411]).





# St. Augustine

This wholly redeemed city, the assembly and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice by the high priest who in the form of a slave went so far as to offer himself for us in his Passion, to make us the Body of so great a head.... Such is the sacrifice of Christians: "we who are many are one Body in Christ" the Church continues to reproduce this sacrifice in the sacrament of the altar so well-known to believers wherein it is evident to them that in what she offers she herself is offered. (St. Augustine, City of God, X.6)





# St. Monica

## Church Mother

“Lay this body anywhere, let not the care for it trouble you at all. This only I ask, that you will remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be.”  
(Augustine, Confessions IX.11)





I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He who made the heaven and the earth condemn me; again, I fear not to worship the footstool of my Lord, because the Psalm bids me, “fall down before His footstool.” I ask, what is His footstool? And the Scripture tells me, “the earth is My footstool.” In hesitation I turn unto Christ, since I am herein seeking Himself: and I discover how the earth may be worshipped without impiety, how His footstool may be worshipped without impiety. For He took upon Him earth from earth; because flesh is from earth, and He received flesh from the flesh of Mary. And because He walked here in very flesh, and gave that very flesh to us to eat for our salvation; and no one eats that flesh, unless he has first worshipped: we have found out in what sense such a footstool of our Lord's may be worshipped, and not only that we sin not in worshipping it, but that we sin in not worshipping.

**St. Augustine, Exposition on Psalm 99**



# St. Gregory of Nyssa

The Eucharist unites the body, as Baptism the soul, to God. Our bodies, having received poison, need an Antidote; and only by eating and drinking can it enter. One Body, the receptacle of Deity, is this Antidote, thus received. But how can it enter whole into each one of the Faithful? This needs an illustration. Water gives its own body to a skin-bottle. So nourishment (bread and wine) by becoming flesh and blood gives bulk to the human frame: the nourishment is the body. Just as in the case of other men, our Savior's nourishment (bread and wine) was His Body; but these, nourishment and Body, were in Him changed into the Body of God by the Word indwelling. So now repeatedly the bread and wine, sanctified by the Word (the sacred Benediction), is *at the same time* changed into the Body of that Word; and this Flesh is disseminated among all the Faithful.

He gives these gifts by virtue of the benediction through which He **transelements** the natural quality of these visible things to that immortal thing. (Great Catechism, Chapter XXXVII)





# What's going on here?

## St. Gregory of Nyssa's Eucharistic Theology

1. Jesus metabolizes bread and wine into His body slowly
2. Jesus metabolizes bread and wine into His body instantaneously
3. Jesus metabolizes us into Himself through the Eucharist
4. Jesus saves us from bodily corruption through this metabolism



# St. John Chrysostom

## Golden-mouthed

“When you see the Lord immolated and lying upon the altar, and the priest bent over that sacrifice praying, and all the people empurpled by that precious blood, can you think that you are still among men and on earth? Or are you not lifted up to heaven?” (*The Priesthood* 3:4:177 [A.D. 387]).

“Reverence, therefore, reverence this table, of which we are all communicants! Christ, slain for us, the sacrificial victim who is placed thereon!” (*Homilies on Romans* 8:8 [A.D. 391]).





# Don't mess

“Let us then return from that table like lions breathing fire, having become terrible to the devil.”

St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on  
John XLVI





Those men [of John 6:52] then at that time reaped no fruit from what was said, but we have enjoyed the benefit in the very realities. Wherefore it is necessary to understand the marvel of the Mysteries, what it is, why it was given, and what is the profit of the action. We become one Body, and “members of His flesh and of His bones.” ( Eph. v. 30.) Let the initiated follow what I say. In order then that we may become this not by love only, but in very deed, let us be blended into that flesh. This is effected by the food which He hath freely given us, desiring to show the love which He hath for us. On this account He hath mixed up Himself with us; He hath kneaded up His body with ours, that we might be a certain One Thing, like a body joined to a head. For this belongs to them who love strongly; this, for instance, Job implied, speaking of his servants, by whom he was beloved so exceedingly, that they desired to cleave unto his flesh. For they said, to show the strong love which they felt, “Who would give us to be satisfied with his flesh?” ( Job xxxi. 31.) Wherefore this also Christ hath done, to lead us to a closer friendship, and to show His love for us; He hath given to those who desire Him not only to see Him, but even to touch, and eat Him, and fix their teeth in His flesh, and to embrace Him, and satisfy all their love. Let us then return from that table like lions breathing fire, having become terrible to the devil; thinking on our Head, and on the love which He hath shown for us. Parents often entrust their offspring to others to feed; “but I,” saith He, “do not so, I feed you with Mine own flesh, desiring that you all be nobly born, and holding forth to you good hopes for the future. For He who giveth out Himself to you here, much more will do so hereafter. I have willed to become your Brother, for your sake I shared in flesh and blood, and in turn I give out to you the flesh and the blood by which I became your kinsman.” This blood causes the image of our King to be fresh within us, produces beauty unspeakable, permits not the nobleness of our souls to waste away, watering it continually, and nourishing it. The blood derived from our food becomes not at once blood, but something else; while this doth not so, but straightway waters our souls, and works in them some mighty power. This blood, if rightly taken, drives away devils, and keeps them afar off from us, while it calls to us Angels and the Lord of Angels. For wherever they see the Lord’s blood, devils flee, and Angels run together. This blood poured forth washed clean all the world.

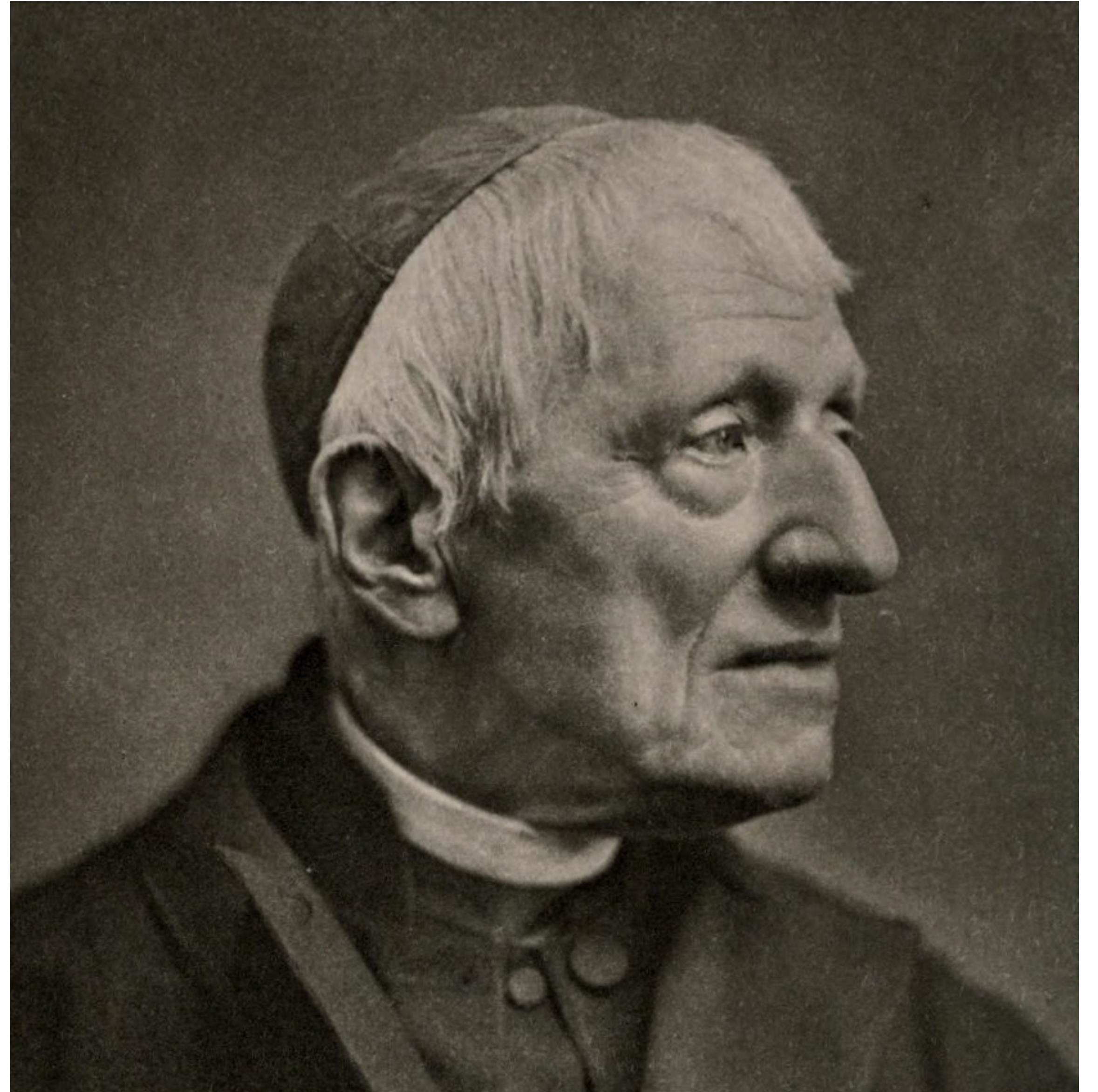
**St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XLVI**



# St. John Henry Newman

History is not a creed or a catechism, it gives lessons rather than rules; still no one can mistake its general teaching in this matter, whether he accept it or stumble at it. Bold outlines and broad masses of colour rise out of the records of the past. They may be dim, they may be incomplete; but they are definite. And this one thing at least is certain; whatever history teaches, whatever it omits, whatever it exaggerates or extenuates, whatever it says and unsays, at least the Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If ever there were a safe truth, it is this.

And Protestantism has ever felt it so. I do not mean that every writer on the Protestant side has felt it; for it was the fashion at first, at least as a rhetorical argument against Rome, to appeal to past ages, or to some of them; but Protestantism, as a whole, feels it, and has felt it. This is shown in the determination already referred to of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether, and of forming a Christianity from the Bible alone: men never would have put it aside, unless they had despaired of it... To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant.





# The Life of God

## Handing down the fullness

- The Eucharist is Jesus
- The present Catholic teaching about the Eucharist has always been held by Christians from the earliest age
- We partake today in the same life of God that passed through their hands
- The Fathers protect the Eucharist and provide mystical depth





# Second Vespers

of the 4th Sunday of Lent

God, + come to my assistance.

— **Lord, make haste to help me.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:

— **as it was in the beginning, is  
now, and will be for ever. Amen.**





Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
For with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
As of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
In the body and the blood;  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food.





God has appointed Christ to be the judge of the living and the dead.

*The Lord's revelation to my Master: †*

[Men] "Sit on my right: \*  
your foes I will put beneath your feet."

[Women] The Lord will wield from Zion  
your scepter of power: \*  
rule in the midst of all your foes.

[Men] A prince from the day of your  
birth †  
on the holy mountains; \*  
from the womb before the dawn I begot  
you.

[Women] The Lord has sworn an oath he  
will not change. †  
"You are a priest for ever, \*  
a priest like Melchizedeck of old."



*[All together after]* **God has appointed Christ to be the judge of the living and the dead.**

**[Men]** The Master standing at your right hand \*  
will shatter kings in the day of his great wrath.

**[Women]** He shall drink from the stream by the wayside \*  
and therefore he shall lift up his head.

**[Men]** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:

**[Women]** as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.



Happy the man who shows mercy for the Lord's sake; he will stand firm for ever.

*Happy the man who fears the Lord, \**  
[Men] who takes delight in all his  
commands.  
His sons will be powerful on earth; \*  
the children of the upright are blessed.

[Women] Riches and wealth are in his  
house; \*  
his justice stands firm for ever.  
He is a light in the darkness for the  
upright: \*  
he is generous, merciful and just.

[Men] The good man takes pity and  
lends, \*  
he conducts his affairs with honor.  
The just man will never waver: \*  
he will be remembered for ever.

[Women] He has no fear of evil news; \*  
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord.  
With a steadfast heart he will not fear; \*  
he will see the downfall of his foes.



*[All together after]* **Happy the man who shows mercy for the Lord's sake; he will stand firm for ever.**

**[Men]** Open-handed, he gives to the poor; †  
his justice stands firm for ever. \*  
His head will be raised in glory.

**[Women]** The wicked man sees and is angry, †  
grinds his teeth and fades away; \*  
the desire of the wicked leads to doom.

**[Men]** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:

**[Women]** as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.



Those things, which God foretold through his prophets concerning the sufferings that Christ would endure, have been fulfilled.

*Christ suffered for you, †*

**[Men]** and left you an example \*  
to have you follow in his footsteps.

**[Women]** He did no wrong; \*  
no deceit was found in his mouth.  
When he was insulted, \*  
he returned no insult.

**[Men]** When he was made to suffer, \*  
he did not counter with threats.  
Instead he delivered himself up \*  
to the One who judges justly.

**[Women]** In his own body \*  
he brought your sins to the cross,  
so that all of us, dead to sin, \*  
could live in accord with God's will.

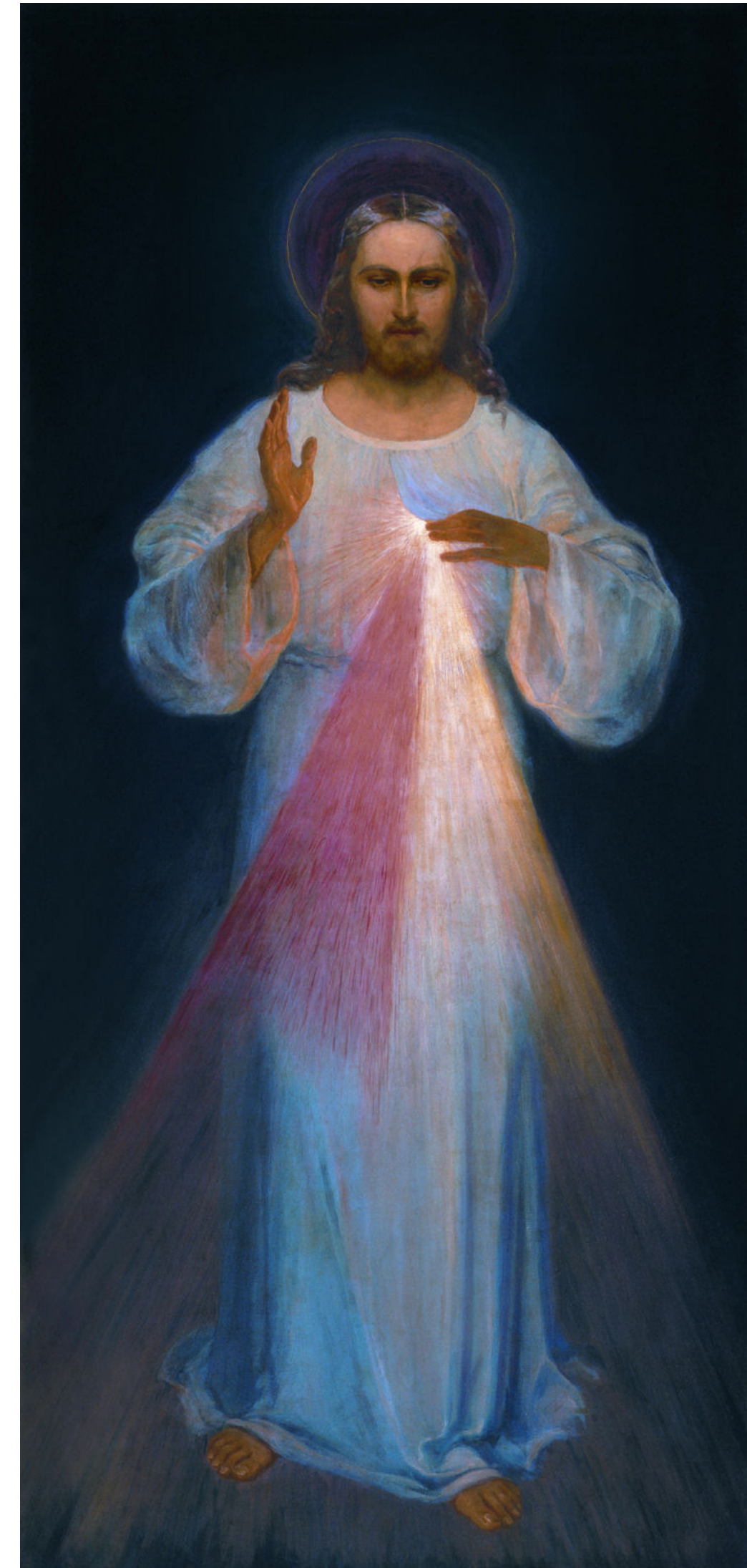


*[All together after]* **Those things, which God foretold through his prophets concerning the sufferings that Christ would endure, have been fulfilled.**

**[Men]** By his wounds you were healed.

**[Women]** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:

**[Men]** as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.





While all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, the award goes to one man. In that case, run so as to win!

Athletes deny themselves all sorts of things. They do this to win a crown of leaves that withers, but we a crown that is imperishable.

Listen to us, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against you.

— **Listen to us, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against you.**

Christ Jesus, hear our humble petitions,  
— **for we have sinned against you.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

— **Listen to us, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against you.**



My son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we had to feast and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost to us and now has been found.

*My + soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, †*

[All] my spirit rejoices in God my Savior \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: †  
the Almighty has done great things for me, \*  
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.



***[All together after]* My son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we had to feast and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost to us and now has been found.**

He has come to the help of his servant  
Israel \*  
for he has remembered his promise of  
mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.



For the petitions, the response is

**Come, Lord, to visit your family.**



