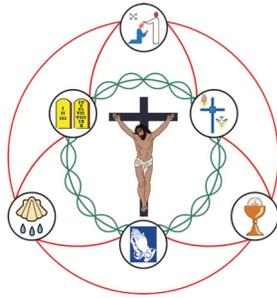


Our Moment Before God: Part XVII
The Words of Institution/The Holy
Communion



Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper the night He was betrayed. The Lord's Supper is the "*blood of new the covenant.*" It is Jesus' promise and assurance to us that we are partakers of His grace. Each time it is offered the Pastor speaks Christ's Words of Institution. In these words Jesus speaks to us and informs us that we are receiving His true Body and Blood for the forgiveness of our sin. But these words are much more than merely informative. They are transformative. They assure us that what Jesus says is present for us, is actually present for us – His very Body and Blood!

The early Christian Church celebrated the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day (Sunday). The Holy Communion was the center of their Christian Life together for they understood the Church was bound together in one body as they all partook of the one loaf (I Cor 10:17) and of the one cup (I Cor. 11:25).

Holy Communion's first purpose is to be the Meal of Forgiveness. It is not something we are doing for God – no, God is doing this for us, for our good. The above verses also show us that Holy Communion is a Meal of Unity. Thus the things that strike against unity of the

Church also strike against the purpose of the Lord's Supper. If we needlessly, sinfully stir up dissension in the Church among Christian brothers and sisters we are sinning against the Body and Blood of Christ.

Also, when someone holds to false doctrine or unites themselves with a church body that teaches error this too works against one of the purposes of the Lord's Supper. For this reason, the Holy Christian Church throughout the centuries has practiced *closed Communion* – that is, Holy Communion that holds to a true fellowship of confession and belief.

After the Words of Institution, the Pastor gives the Peace, "*The peace of the Lord be with you always.*" Your Pastor observes the ancient and churchly custom of slightly raising the elements (Christ's Body and Blood) up from the altar to clearly show that our true Peace with God comes through Christ's work, Christ's meal, and Christ's Body and Blood. That is the Peace of which we are peaking and which we are receiving. The people of God respond with the simple confession, "*Amen,*" which means, "*Yes, yes, it shall be so*" – this meal does indeed bring this promised peace. You will hear more about *The Pax Domini (Peace of the Lord)* next week in **Our Moment Before God.**