

Patristic Evidence

St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. A.D.110) “Consider how contrary to the mind of God are the heterodox in regard to the grace of God which has come to us. They have no regard to charity, none for the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, none for the man in prison, the hungry or the thirsty. 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 same Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in His graciousness, raised from the dead.”

“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.”

St. Justin Martyr (d. A.D.165) “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.”

St. Irenaeus (d. A.D.202) “The bread over which thanks has been given is the Body of their Lord, and the cup His Blood...”

“...He took from among creation that which is bread, and gave thanks, saying, ‘This is My Body.’...He taught the new Sacrifice of the new covenant, of which Malachias, one of the twelve prophets, had signified beforehand...By these words he makes plain that the former people will cease to make offerings to God; but that in every place Sacrifice will be offered to Him, and indeed, a pure one; for His name is glorified among the Gentiles.”

Origen (d. A.D.254) “I wish to admonish you with examples from your religion. You are accustomed to take part in the Divine Mysteries, so you know how, when you have received the Body of the Lord, you reverently exercise every care lest a particle of it fall and lest anything of the Consecrated Gift perish. You account yourselves guilty, and rightly do you so believe, if any of it be lost through negligence.”

St. Cyprian (d. A.D.258) “...And who is more a priest of the Most High God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when He offered sacrifice to God the Father, offered the very same which Melchisedech had offered, namely bread and wine, which is in fact His Body and Blood!”

St. Athanasius (d. A.D.319) “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.”