THE QUESTION

What did the early church pray over the bread and cup at the Eucharist?

Asked by a THF member on May 20, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 13 numbered quotations · the 46 early Christian passages and 146 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-the-early-church-pray-over-the-bread-and-cup-at-the-eucharist

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

Early Eucharist prayers gave thanks to the Father through Jesus, retold Christ's words at the Last Supper, and remembered His death, rising and coming again. They offered the bread and cup to God, asked the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts, and prayed for the church to be gathered into one.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 7

Eucharist means giving thanks

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Didache calls the meal 'the Thanksgiving, or Eucharist' and gives the words to pray. Over the bread, the church thanks the Father for the life and knowledge made known through Jesus.

1 “Now about the Thanksgiving, or Eucharist, give thanks in this way.”

later in the same passage

“We thank You, our Father, for the life and knowledge that You made known to us through Jesus Your Servant.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 9 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 1, page 6** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

The prayer retells the Last Supper

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Liturgy of St. Mark tells how Christ took bread, looked up to His Father and gave thanks. The Apostolic Constitutions repeat His words over the bread as 'the mystery of the new covenant.'

2 “He took bread in His holy, pure, and spotless hands, and lifted His eyes to His Father, our God and the God of all, and gave thanks.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 27, page 8** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

3 “This is the mystery of the new covenant. Take of it, and eat. This is my body, which is broken for many, for the remission of sins.”"

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 43, page 8** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 3 OF 7

It remembers His death, rising and return

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

These liturgies echo Paul's words that eating and drinking shows the Lord's death until He comes. The Liturgy of St. Mark goes on to name His resurrection, ascension, place at God's right hand, and coming again.

4 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death and confess His resurrection, until He comes."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 28, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

5 "O Sovereign and Almighty Lord, King of heaven, as we show the death of Your only begotten Son, our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, and acknowledge His blessed resurrection from the dead on the third day, we also openly declare His ascension into heaven and His sitting at Your right hand, O God and Father, and we await His second terrible and dreadful coming."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 29, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

The bread and cup are offered to God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The prayer in the Apostolic Constitutions offers the bread and cup to God as Christ commanded. The Didache also calls the Lord's Day breaking of bread a sacrifice that must be kept pure by confessing sins first.

6 "Therefore, remembering His passion, death, resurrection from the dead, return into the heavens, and His future second appearing, in which He is to come with glory and power to judge the living and the dead, and to repay everyone according to his works, we offer to You, our King and our God, according to His constitution, this bread and this cup."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 43, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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7 “But on every Lord's Day, gather together, break bread, and give thanks after you have confessed your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 14 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 2, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 7

The Holy Spirit is called upon the gifts

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Apostolic Constitutions ask God to send the Holy Spirit on the offering so that the bread is shown to be Christ's body. The Liturgy of St. Mark likewise asks God to fill the sacrifice with blessing through the Holy Spirit.

8 “Accept them, to the honor of Your Christ, and send down Your Holy Spirit upon this sacrifice, the Witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that He may show this bread to be the body of Your Christ, and the cup to be the blood of Your Christ, so that those who partake of it may be strengthened for piety, may obtain the remission of their sins, may be delivered from the devil and his deceit, may be filled with the Holy Spirit, may be made worthy of Your Christ, and may obtain eternal life through Your reconciliation to them, O Lord Almighty.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 43, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

9 “O God, fill this sacrifice with Your blessing through the inspiration of Your all-holy Spirit.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 27, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 7

Through prayer the bread becomes holy

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin says the food blessed by Christ's word and prayer is the flesh and blood of Jesus. Origen says that after thanksgiving the bread becomes by prayer a sacred body that makes holy those who sincerely receive it.

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10 “We do not receive these as common bread and drink, but in the same way that Jesus Christ our Savior became flesh by the Word of God and had flesh and blood for our salvation, we have been taught that the food blessed by His word and prayer, which nourishes our blood and flesh through transformation, is the flesh and blood of Jesus who became flesh.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *First Apology* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 10, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

11 “And this bread becomes by prayer a sacred body, which sanctifies those who sincerely partake of it.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 33 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 32, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 7

They prayed for one gathered church

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Didache prayer compares grain scattered on the hills and made into one loaf to the church gathered into God's kingdom. Ignatius urges one Eucharist, because there is one flesh of Christ and one cup.

12 “Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and then was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 9 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 1, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

13 “Take care, then, to have only one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: so that, whatever you do, you may do it according to the will of God.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 6, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These prayers come from different early books and churches; the passages do not show that every church used the same words.
- The passages give the prayers but do not explain exactly how the Spirit makes the bread Christ's body.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 46 early Christian passages and 146 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–46, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 47–65, in Bible order), then 127 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *46 passages from 13 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · sources 1–2*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 9 **Quotes 1, 12, pages 2, 5** “or Eucharist, give thanks in this way. First, about the cup: "We thank You, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your Servant, which You made known to us… [continues online] **read ›**

2 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 14 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** “every Lord's day gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 3–6*

3 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (on point 7) “which is worthy of God, and urge you to have only one faith, and one type of preaching, and one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* “abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not acknowledge the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins, and whom… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (on point 7) “their office. Let no one do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let a proper Eucharist be considered as such when it is administered either by the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* **Quote 13, page 5** “care, then, to have only one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show the unity of His blood; one altar; as… [continues online] **read ›**

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Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · sources 7–11*

7 *Dialogue with Trypho* (on point 4) “we offer through this name, which Jesus the Christ commanded us to offer, specifically in the Eucharist of the bread and the cup, and which Christians present everywhere around the… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *First Apology* (1885 English; on point 1) “he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *First Apology* (1885 English; on point 1) on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *First Apology* **Quote 10, page 5** “by the Word of God and had flesh and blood for our salvation, we have been taught that the food blessed by His word and prayer, which nourishes our blood… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Dialogue with Trypho* (on point 3) to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a symbol of the bread of the Eucharist. This celebration, our Lord Jesus Christ established in remembrance of the… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · source 12*

12 *Diatessaron* 45 (1885 English; on point 2) “Mark 14:22a And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and divided… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 13–16*

13 *Against Heresies: Book V* (on point 6) therefore, the mixed cup and the made bread receive the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and body of Christ is formed, from which the substance of… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenæus* (1885 English; on point 4) “in this respect it is pure. For we make an oblation to God of the bread and the cup of blessing, giving Him thanks in that He has commanded the… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 6) “also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Against Heresies: Book V* “salvation, then the Lord did not redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist a communion of His blood, nor the bread we break a communion… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 17–21*

17 *Stromata* 1.19 “there are those who celebrate the Eucharist with mere water… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Instructor* 2.2 (1885 English; on point 6) “the mixture of both — of the water and of the Word — is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace… [continues online] **read ›**

19 *Instructor* 1.6 the Word declares that He Himself is the bread of heaven. For He says, "Moses did not give you that bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Stromata* 1.10 (1885 English; on point 2) “the Saviour, taking the bread, first spoke and blessed… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Stromata* 1.1 “let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 22–26*

22 *Against Marcion* 40 (on point 2) what He meant by the bread when He called the bread His own body. Likewise, when He mentioned the cup and made the new testament to be sealed in His… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *On Prescription Against Heretics* 36 (1885 English) “she seals with the water (of baptism), arrays with the Holy Ghost, feeds with the Eucharist, cheers with martyrdom, and against such a discipline thus (maintained) she admits no gainsayer… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *On Prayer* 6 shall be added," Matthew 6:33. Although we may rather understand, "Give us this day our daily bread," spiritually. For Christ is our Bread, because Christ is Life, and bread… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *De Corona* 3 “that day, we keep away from the daily bath for a whole week. We also receive the sacrament of the Eucharist in congregational meetings before daybreak, and from the hand… [continues online] **read ›**

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26 *On Prayer* 19 (1885 English) “then, the Eucharist cancel a service devoted to God, or bind it more to God… [continues online] **read ›**

Early Liturgies, *c. 200–400 AD · sources 27–29*

27 *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 **Quotes 2, 9, pages 2, 4** “When He had blessed, hallowed, and broken the bread… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “do in remembrance of me; for as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death, and confess His resurrection, till… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “do in remembrance of me; for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth my death and acknowledge my resurrection and ascension until… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · source 30*

30 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (1885 English; on point 4) “also refers to His honoured and undefiled body and blood, which day by day are administered and offered sacrificially at the spiritual divine table, as a memorial of that first… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 31–33*

31 *Commentary on Matthew* 11 (on point 6) so also what enters into the mouth does not sanctify the man, even though what is called the bread of the Lord may be thought by the simpler disciples to… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *Against Celsus* 33 **Quote 11, page 5** “this bread becomes by prayer a sacred body, which sanctifies those who sincerely partake of it… [continues online] **read ›**

33 *Against Celsus* 57 (on point 1) “we have a symbol of gratitude to God in the bread… [continues online] **read ›**

Dionysius of Alexandria, *c. 232–265 AD · source 34*

34 *Epistles and Epistolary Fragments* “had stood at the holy table and had stretched forth his hands to receive the blessed food, and had received it, and for a very long time had been a… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 35–42*

35 *Epistles* (on point 4) “brought out bread and wine.” Genesis 14:18. Now he was a priest of the Most High God, and he blessed Abraham. And that Melchizedek bore a type of Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

36 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 6) “pretend that with an invocation not to be contemned she sanctified bread and celebrated the Eucharist, and to offer sacrifice to the Lord, not without the sacrament of the accustomed… [continues online] **read ›**

37 *Epistles* (on point 2) “when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which shall be given for you. Do this in remembrance of me… [continues online] **read ›**

38 *Treatises* forever, it is clear that those who partake of His body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living. So, on the other hand, we must fear… [continues online] **read ›**

39 *Epistles* against gospel and apostolic discipline, in some places water is offered alone in the Lord's cup. By itself, water cannot represent the blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit also… [continues online] **read ›**

40 *Epistles* with this idea: although in the morning only water is clearly offered, yet when we come to supper we offer the mixed cup? But when we eat supper, we cannot… [continues online] **read ›**

41 *Epistles* (1885 English) “as the Eucharist is appointed for this very purpose that it may be a safeguard to the receivers, it is needful that we may arm those whom we wish to… [continues online] **read ›**

42 *Epistles* (on point 2) by joining wine and water together. For when He took the cup on the night before His passion, He blessed it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Drink all… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 43–46*

43 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quotes 3, 6, 8, pages 2, 3, 4** “as often as you eat this bread and drink… [continues online] **read ›**

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44 *Apostolic Constitutions* out. As for the deacons, after the prayer is over, let some of them attend to the oblation of the Eucharist, ministering to the Lord's body with fear. Let… [continues online] **read ›**

45 *Apostolic Constitutions* to receive the Eucharist? If they admit that they do, then it is plain that they are without the Holy Spirit, who always remains with the faithful. For Solomon says… [continues online] **read ›**

46 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) Always be thankful, as faithful and honest servants. And concerning the Eucharistic thanksgiving, say this: “We thank You, our Father, for the life that You have made known to us… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *19 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

47 **Matthew 7:6** Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. **read ›**

48 **Matthew 26:26** As they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it. He gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” **read ›**

49 **Matthew 26:27** He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “All of you drink it, **read ›**

50 **Mark 2:12** He rose immediately, took up the mat, and went out in front of them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” **read ›**

51 **Mark 14:22** As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had blessed it, he broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take, eat. This is my body.” **read ›**

52 **Mark 14:23** He took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them. They all drank of it. **read ›**

53 **Luke 22:17** He received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves, **read ›**

54 **Luke 22:19** He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **read ›**

55 **Luke 24:30** As he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. **read ›**

56 **John 6:54** He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. **read ›**

57 **Acts 2:42** They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **read ›**

58 **Acts 2:46** Day by day they continued steadfastly with one accord in the temple, breaking bread at home and sharing food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **read ›**

59 **Acts 20:7** On the first day of the week, when the disciples were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and continued his speech until midnight. **read ›**

60 **1 Corinthians 10:16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? **read ›**

61 **1 Corinthians 11:23** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, **read ›**

62 **1 Corinthians 11:24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **read ›**

63 **1 Corinthians 11:25** In the same way he also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink, in remembrance of me.” **read ›**

64 **1 Corinthians 11:26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. **read ›**

65 **1 Corinthians 11:27** Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord’s cup in a way unworthy of the Lord will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *127 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Leviticus 14:10

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Psalms 23:1

Isaiah 40:11 · 55:1 · 63:1

Ezekiel 34:13

Amos 2:6

Malachi 1:10

Matthew 1:1 · 1:18 · 2:9 · 5:45 · 6:32 · 6:33 · 6:34 · 7:9 · 11:27 · 12:31 · 12:37 · 15:11 · 15:13 · 15:14 · 15:17 · 15:26 · 18:12 · 19:4 · 19:18 · 22:29 · 22:35 · 23:4 · 23:6 · 23:19 · 23:25 · 23:30 · 24:22 · 25:35 · 26:24 · 26:29 · 26:36 · 26:39 · 26:40 · 26:41 · 26:46 · 26:51 · 26:63 · 27:3 · 27:45 · 27:48 · 27:50 · 27:59

Mark 2:8 · 7:27 · 13:14 · 14:25

Luke 1:35 · 7:43 · 10:22 · 11:5 · 11:11 · 12:16 · 12:29 · 16:9 · 20:36 · 22:15 · 22:20 · 24:39

John 1:14 · 1:18 · 2:19 · 4:1 · 6:32 · 6:33 · 6:35 · 6:51 · 11:52 · 14:2 · 14:16 · 15:1 · 16:11 · 20:27 · 21:18

Acts 2:3 · 8:20 · 8:30 · 10:36 · 20:28

Romans 2:14 · 6:23 · 7:14 · 8:36 · 11:16 · 11:32 · 14:23

1 Corinthians 2:6 · 2:15 · 8:8 · 12:4 · 12:12 · 13:12 · 15:8 · 15:36 · 15:53

2 Corinthians 2:17 · 3:7 · 3:16 · 4:4 · 12:3 · 12:9

Galatians 1:1

Ephesians 1:10 · 2:6 · 5:30

Philippians 3:19 · 4:17

Colossians 1:14

1 Thessalonians 2:5

2 Thessalonians 2:12

1 Timothy 2:2 · 4:5

2 Timothy 2:1

1 Peter 1:4 · 1:19 · 2:5 · 2:9

1 John 4:1

Revelation 3:21 · 13:11

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What did the early church pray over the bread and cup at the Eucharist?” on May 20, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY