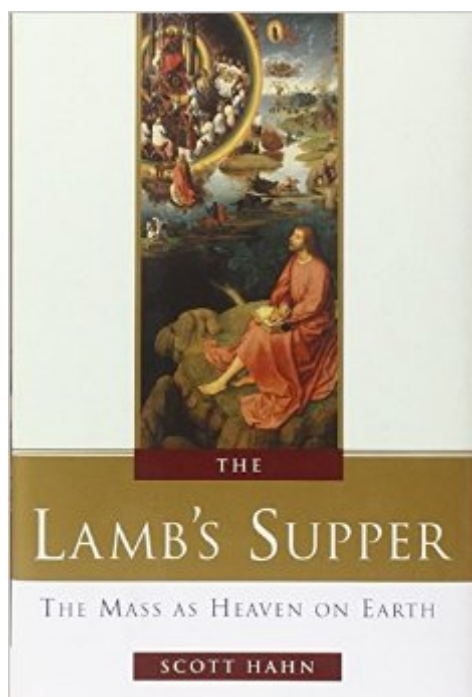


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The Lamb's Supper: The Mass As Heaven On Earth



Synopsis

Bestselling author Scott Hahn sheds new light on the Mass, offering readers a deeper appreciation of the most familiar of Catholic rituals. Of all things Catholic, there is nothing that is so familiar as the Mass. With its unchanging prayers, the Mass fits Catholics like their favorite clothes. Yet most Catholics sitting in the pews on Sundays fail to see the powerful supernatural drama that enfolds them. Pope John Paul II described the Mass as "Heaven on Earth," explaining that what "we celebrate on Earth is a mysterious participation in the heavenly liturgy." *The Lamb's Supper* reveals a long-lost secret of the Church: The early Christians' key to understanding the mysteries of the Mass was the New Testament Book of Revelation. With its bizarre imagery, its mystic visions of heaven, and its end-of-time prophecies, Revelation mirrors the sacrifice and celebration of the Eucharist. Beautifully written, in clear direct language, bestselling Catholic author Scott Hahn's new book will help readers see the Mass with new eyes, pray the liturgy with a renewed heart, and enter into the Mass more fully, enthusiastically, intelligently, and powerfully than ever before.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a must read for Christians in general, but most importantly for Catholic lay people like myself. Before entering into the heart of his work, Dr. Hahn presents a Biblical perspective on the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist that every Catholic should read and understand. But the most significant contribution of this book is the way in which it exposes the relationship between St. John's Revelation and the Church's celebration of the Liturgy. While Hahn claims that these truths

have been held by the Church since the beginning of Christianity, almost all of this information was new to me as a cradle Catholic. This book has truly transformed the way in which I approach every Mass. With the possible exception of some poorly chosen subtitles, *The Lamb's Supper* is nothing less than 5 stars!

I've read a lot of books on religious subjects, but very few as good as this one. "*The Lamb's Supper*" makes better sense of the Book of Revelation than any one of dozen or so titles that I've read on the subject in the last twenty years. Even more, it has changed the way I approach the Mass. Over the last few weeks, since reading "*The Lamb's Supper*," I've come to a much greater appreciation of what I've been doing as a cradle Catholic for over fifty years--going to Mass, where we share in the worship of heaven, in the presence of our Lord, alongside the holy saints and angels. I never really knew that, and I don't think that most Catholics do. But surely they should! There's something else. Speaking personally, I don't always find it easy to pray. That is probably where "*The Lamb's Supper*" has been the greatest help, in getting me to pray more and better. That's why I think that "*The Lamb's Supper*" is destined to become one of the truly great Christian Classics of this century, even though it will never displace my all-time favorite, "*The Imitation of Christ*".

What a delightful, wonderful, interesting, thought-provoking, and inspiring book this one is. Evangelical Biblical scholars have pondered the meaning of John's Book of Revelation for a long time. For too many, they read it as the "end times." Dr. Hahn did the same thing, as a Presbyterian minister. It wasn't until he became Catholic that he began to see Revelations as a blueprint for the Mass. Hahn demonstrates how Revelation gives us a glimpse of Heaven and of Mass. The premise of the book is that Mass itself is a little slice of Heaven on Earth. What Hahn offers is not something new. This is what the Church has taught for centuries. Yet, Hahn presents it as only he can. Hahn offers not only a beautiful view of Revelation, but also of Mass. It is a view that too few Catholics take to heart. Not only is this a simply delightful book, but it's also a short book - one that could easily be read in one sitting. I highly recommend it. Catholics will gain a new appreciation for Mass and all that they have taken for granted. Non-Catholics will appreciate an alternative view of The Book of Revelation.

Around the year 95, the Roman government banished a Christian to a rocky penal colony in the Aegean Sea for the capital crime of prophesying. The sentence did not have the desired effect. From the isolated island, Patmos, the Christian, a man named John, went right on foretelling the future.

Only now, instead of addressing small bands of hiding church members in hushed and rushed meetings, he had time to write out full accounts of his offending visions. These centered around the return of a deceased Jewish man -- an obscure, itinerant religious teacher who had been tortured and executed as a criminal six decades prior -- as king of all creation. The particulars of his visions, which John said had been delivered to him by an angel, were by turns terrifying and glorious. Passages on murderous, multi-headed beasts alternated with descriptions of docile cherubs adoring the Almighty; inconsolable wailing over deadly plagues preceded joyful flourishes from triumphant trumpets. Apocalypses, or revelations, were not new. The Hebrew Scriptures and oral traditions were steeped in them. But where those had been carefully guarded by elders and high priests, John made it clear that his revelations were to be read immediately by the addressee churches (seven congregations in Asia). His goal in writing seemed to be exhorting his brothers and sisters in the Christian faith to persevere no matter how severely they might be persecuted for their beliefs and practices. That didn't mean John made the precise significance of his letters obvious. He had to couch some of his visualizations in code language because despotic emperors of the day demanded to be worshiped as gods by citizens and subjects alike. John would have been swiftly silenced had a Nero, Caligula or Domitian discerned that he was referring to them when he wrote of evil monsters raging against their own creator. (Using the numerical equivalents assigned to Hebrew letters, the name Nero Caesar can be converted to the number 666.) Two millennia later, a Scripture scholar with the heart of a detective picks up the text, peels away the layers of subterfuge, dusts off the misconstrued meanings assigned John's cryptic prophecies over the centuries and lifts into the light a finding only remarkable for its everyday familiarity: the Catholic Mass. But for Scott Hahn, a former Protestant minister who followed scriptural and historical clues all the way into the Catholic Church, identifying Revelation as a cloaked playbill to the Mass is only the beginning. Digging deeper, he unearths an essential aspect of the Mass long embedded in Catholic theology, but largely overlooked at the popular level by even the most devout Catholics in the present day: The Mass mirrors the activities going on now and eternally in heaven. "We go to heaven when we go to Mass," writes Hahn, a theology professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville. "This is not merely a symbol, not a metaphor, not a parable, not a figure of speech. It is real." With this, his third book, Hahn, whose speaking voice is familiar to thousands, seems to be hitting his stride as an author. On these pages, as in his live presentations, he relays even the most esoteric scriptural minutiae with the enthusiasm of a sportscaster calling play-by-play at the big game. His command of the material is such that he could have written an occasionally groundbreaking scholarly commentary. But it's clear he's not interested in attracting accolades from academic circles. Instead

Hahn, whose passion for teaching plainly flows from an ardent love of learning, has set his mind to imparting the riches of his findings upon hungry hearts. The result is a shot of spiritual adrenaline for those about to attend Mass. "When Jesus comes again at the end of time, He will not have a single drop more glory than He has right now upon the altars and in the tabernacles of our churches," Hahn writes. "God dwells among Mankind right now because the Mass is heaven on earth." Is the average, rank-and-file Catholic aware of this Church teaching? Not likely, else the mute daydreamers wouldn't outnumber the vocal participants in so many parishes. Having observed this phenomenon in light of the exuberant Protestant tradition he left behind, Hahn seems to have perceived that many regular Sunday Mass-attendees -- the ones who show up out of a dry sense of duty -- are intuitively aware of the wonder of it all. They only want for information. Well, here it is. Richly sourced from writings of popes, theologians and Church fathers, Lamb's Supper dishes up everything Catholics need to know in order to savor the Mass as a vivid and revitalizing experience. The Mass-enrichment program this book provides is so worthwhile and edifying that this reviewer is loath to point out any of its minor shortcomings. Nevertheless, it does have one distraction that would have made for a wise editorial extraction. Hahn's winking subheads, chuckle-out-loud amusing as some of them are, are incongruent with his enlightening text. It's a case of the sublime getting stung by the silly. Fortunately, when you're scaling the Alps you don't fuss over a few bees buzzing around base camp. Thanks to Hahn's joy of discovery, you're approaching Mont Blanc. "I want to make clear that the idea behind this book is nothing new, and it's certainly not mine," writes Hahn. "It's as old as the Church, and the Church has never let go of it. ... [Yet] this idea, that the Mass is 'heaven on earth,' arrives [today] as news, very good news." So does this book. Don't miss it. David Pearson is features editor of the National Catholic Register.

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