

**Priest and Victim**  
**(Feast of “Candlemas,” February 2, Year ABC)**

**Hebrews 2:14-18—Christ the Faithful High Priest**

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> *Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people.* <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. (Hebrew 2:14-18)

**The Living Tradition**

Saint Ambrose of Milan: See in what way the writer calls him created: “In so far as he took upon him the seed of Abraham,” plainly asserting the begetting of a body. How else, indeed, but in his body did he expiate the sins of the people? In what did he suffer, except in his body—even as we said above: “Christ having suffered in the flesh”? In what is he a priest, except in that which he took to himself from the priestly nation? *It is a priest’s duty to offering something*, and, according to the law, to enter into the holy places by means of blood. Seeing then that God had rejected the blood of bulls and goats, this High Priest was indeed bound to make passage and entry into the holy of holies in heaven through his own blood in order that he might be the everlasting propitiation for our sins. *Priest and victim, then, are one*; the priesthood and sacrifice are, however, exercised under the conditions of humanity, for he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith* 3.11).<sup>1</sup>

**Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Presentation, Years ABC)**

1. How is Jesus our “faithful high priest”? Where exactly does he make his priestly offering to the Father?

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**For Further Study**

1. The Mystery of Epiphany (CCC 528).
2. Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Volume 3 (pp. 89-119).

<sup>1</sup> In Erik M. Heen and Philip D. W. Krey, *Hebrews* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament X; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2005), 46.