

## **Jesus and the Heavenly *Yom Kippur* (Corpus Christi, Year B)**

### **Hebrews 9:11-15—Jesus the High Priest**

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, *then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)* <sup>12</sup> *he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.* <sup>13</sup> For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* <sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of *a new covenant*, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. (Hebrews 9:11-15)

1. High Priest: leading officiant in sacrificial worship (cf. Exod 28)
2. Tabernacle: “tent”; dwelling place of God (9:11; cf. Exod 25:8-31:11; 36:1-40:38)
  - a. Outer Court: court of sacrifice (Bronze Laver, Bronze Altar of Sacrifice)
  - b. Holy Place: inner sanctum (Menorah, Bread of Presence, Altar of Incense)
  - c. Holy of Holies: innermost sanctum (Ark of the Covenant)
4. Blood: not the “blood of goats and bulls” but “the blood of Christ” (9:13-14)

<sup>15</sup> “Then he [Aaron] shall kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and *bring its blood within the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat;* <sup>16</sup> *thus he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, all their sins...* <sup>17</sup> *There shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement in the holy place...* (Leviticus 16:15-17)

5. Eternal Redemption: not just an *annual* redemption, like *Yom Kippur* (cf. Lev 16)
6. New Covenant: not the old covenant at the time of the Exodus (cf. Jer 31:31-33)

### **The Living Tradition**

Thomas Aquinas: Christ is *the high priest of heavenly goods*... Second, he shows the dignity of the inner tabernacle when he says, “by a greater” [Heb 9:11]... But this is *the tabernacle of heavenly glory*... [I]t is of a difference condition because the Old was made by human hands, but this by the hand of God... Third, he shows how he entered, because not without blood, but with the blood of calves and goats, as it says in Leviticus (Lev 16): but Christ not so, i.e., not with another’s blood... “but by his own blood,” *which he offered on the cross for our salvation*... Fourth, when he entered, because once a year.

*But Christ throughout all of time... “entered into the holies” and poured out his blood once: “Christ died once for our sins” (1 Pet 3:18)... Furthermore, he entered once, for from the fact that he entered heaven, he is there always. (Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Hebrews nos. 436-440 [trans. F. Larcher])*

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Corpus Christi, Year B)

1. What is the connect between the Ascension of Jesus as High Priest and the “blood of Christ” that we receive in the Eucharist?

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### For Further Reading

1. Saint Augustine. *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*. Translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2008.
2. Saint Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews*. Translated by Fabian R. Larcher, O.P. Lander, Wyo.: Aquinas Institute, 2012.