

## **The End of Animal Sacrifice (33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)**

### **Hebrews 10:11-14—The One Sacrifice**

<sup>11</sup> *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.* <sup>12</sup> *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,* <sup>13</sup> *then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet.* <sup>14</sup> *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified...* <sup>18</sup> *Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.* (Hebrews 10:11-14, 18)

1. Levitical Priesthood: “every priest stands daily at his service” (10:11)
2. Tamid: “daily” or “perpetual” sacrifice (10:11; cf. Exod 29:38-42; Num 28:3-8)
  - a. Morning Sacrifice (ca. 9 a.m.)
  - b. Evening Sacrifice (ca. 3 p.m.)
3. Sacrifice of Christ: a “single sacrifice for sins” (10:12)
4. Ascension: “he sat down at the right hand of God” (10:12; cf. Psalm 110:1-4)
5. Single Offering: a single “offering” (Greek *prosphora*; Latin *oblatio*) (10:14)
6. Holiness: he has “perfected” those who are “sanctified” (10:14)
7. Reconciliation: where there is “forgiveness” (Greek *aphesis*) (10:18)
8. End of Animal Sacrifice: “no longer any offering for sin” (10:18)

<sup>9</sup> *Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings;* for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. <sup>10</sup> *We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.* <sup>11</sup> *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.* <sup>12</sup> *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.* (Hebrews 13:9-12)

### **The Living Tradition**

Thomas Aquinas: When he says “and every priest indeed,” he compares the priests of the New and Old Testaments... [I]n the former, “every priest indeed standeth daily ministering and often offering the same sacrifices,” because they always offered a lamb: “which” daily sacrifices “can never take away sins,” because they were repeated... But that continual sacrifice prefigured by Christ and the eternity of him who is the lamb without blemish... [T]he old law offered many sacrifices without expiating for sins. “This man,” Christ, “offering one sacrifice,” because he offered himself once for our sins, “for ever sits at the right hand of God,” not as a minister, always standing, as the priests of the old law, but as the Lord: “the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand” (Ps 110:1)... (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Hebrews* no. 494-495, 497).

## Questions for Discussion and Reflection (33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. What error was the audience of the letter to the Hebrews tempted to fall into? What does this suggest about the date of the letter and the identity of its audience?

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## For Further Reading

1. St. Thomas Aquinas. *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Hebrews*. Trans. F. R. Larcher, O.P. Lander, Wyo.: Aquinas Institute, 2012.
2. Mary Healy. *Hebrews*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2016.
3. Erik M. Heen and Philip D. W. Krey, eds. *Hebrews*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament X. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2005.