

Ten After Ten Session 68: The Sacramental Sacrifice: Thanksgiving, Memorial, Presence

1356 If from the beginning Christians have celebrated the Eucharist and in a form whose substance has not changed despite the great diversity of times and liturgies, it is because we know ourselves to be bound by the command the Lord gave on the eve of his Passion: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

1357 We carry out this command of the Lord by celebrating the memorial of his sacrifice. In so doing, we offer to the Father what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine which, by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the words of Christ, have become the body and blood of Christ.

1358 We must therefore consider the Eucharist as:
–thanksgiving and praise to the Father;
–the sacrificial memorial of Christ and his Body;
–the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his Spirit.

1359 The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation... Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity.

1360 The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification.

1361 The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of praise by which the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation. This sacrifice of praise is possible only through Christ.

1362 The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church which is his Body.

1363 The memorial is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real.

1364 In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ’s Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present.

1365 Because it is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice... In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

1366 The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its memorial and because it applies its fruit.

1367 The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: “The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered

himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different.” “And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner... this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.”

1368 The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men... Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering.

1369 Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, the Pope is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist, wherein he is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church. The bishop of the place is always responsible for the Eucharist, even when a priest presides; the bishop's name is mentioned to signify his presidency over the particular Church.

1370 To the offering of Christ are united not only the members still here on earth, but also those already in the glory of heaven. In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice.

1371 The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for the faithful departed who “have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified,” so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ.

1373 Christ Jesus... is present in many ways to his Church: in his word, in his Church's prayer, in the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned, in the sacraments of which he is the author, in the sacrifice of the Mass, and in the person of the minister. But he is present... most especially in the Eucharistic species.