

Mysterium

Session 1 - Thursday, 2 June 2016
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BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD

1. After this I looked, and behold, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must be" (Revelation 4:1).
2. Then one of the elders said to me, "Weep not; behold; *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." And between the four living creatures and among the presbyters, *I saw a Lamb* standing, *as though it had been slain*... and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for *you were slain and by your blood you ransomed men for God* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation *and have made them a kingdom and priests to our God*, and they shall reign on earth" (Revelation 5: 5-6a, 9-10).

ABEL THE JUST – WHAT ARE WE OFFERING?

3. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD *an offering* of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of *the firstlings of his flock* and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell (Genesis 4:2-5).

ABRAHAM – TRUST TO THE EXTREME

4. And Isaac...said, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "*God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son*" (cf. Genesis 7-8).

PASSOVER – FREEDOM IN THE LAMB

5. "This month...shall be *the first month* of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel...*they shall take every man a lamb*...Your lamb shall be *without blemish*, a male *a year old*; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall *kill their lambs* in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them...and you shall not break a bone of it (cf. Exodus 12:1-13; 47).

NOTES

FOR PRAYER

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

6. “Then he shall *kill the goat of the sin offering* which is for the people, and bring its blood within the veil...sprinkling it upon the place of atonement and before the place of atonement; thus he shall make atonement...because of their transgressions, *all their sins* (Leviticus 16:15-16a).
7. Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. *The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him* to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness (Leviticus 16:20-21).
- 7.1. Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:4-6).

THE TRUE LAMB AND THE SINS OF *THE WORLD* - THE NEW TESTAMENT

8. Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
- 8.1. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24).
- 8.2. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).
9. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water...For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced” (John 19:33-37).
- 9.1. “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, *when they look on him whom they have pierced*, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a *first-born*...On that day there shall be a *fountain opened* for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem *to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness*” (Zechariah 12:10, 13:1).

NOTES

FOR PRAYER

9.2. Then he showed me *the river of the water of life*, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of *the Lamb* through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life...and the leaves of the tree were *for the healing of the nations*. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5).

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD: IN PERSONA CHRISTI

In Persona Christi=in the Person of Christ

10. In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the glory of his name. Such is the mystery of Christ, revealed and fulfilled in history according to the wisely ordered plan that St. Paul calls the "plan of the mystery" and the patristic tradition will call the "economy of the Word incarnate" or the "economy of salvation" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1066).
11. Christ accomplishes the mystery of the Father's will and gives the Father perfect glory in his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. This action of Christ is re-presented in the liturgy:
- 11.1. The liturgy is also a participation in Christ's own prayer addressed **to** the Father **in** the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal. Through the liturgy the inner man is rooted and grounded in "the great love with which [the Father] loved us" in his beloved Son. It is the same "marvelous work of God" that is lived and internalized by all prayer, "at all times in the Spirit" (CCC 1073).
- 11.2. Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father. Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §7).

FOR PRAYER

THE TRINITARIAN NATURE OF THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER: "I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU."

12. Who are we talking to?

12.1. The Father: Source and Goal of the Liturgy

12.2. In the Church's liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and the end of all the blessings of creation and salvation. In his Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit (CCC 1082).

13. Who is the speaker?

13.1. Christ's Work in the Liturgy

13.2. In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present... His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life (CCC 1085).

13.3. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

14. Who inspires the words?

14.1. The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Liturgy

14.2. In the liturgy the Holy Spirit is teacher of the faith of the People of God and artisan of "God's masterpieces," the sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith, which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine cooperation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church (CCC 1091).

14.3. In this sacramental dispensation of Christ's mystery the Holy Spirit acts in the same way as at other times in the economy of salvation: he prepares the Church to encounter her Lord; he recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly. By his transforming power, he makes the mystery of Christ present here and now. Finally the Spirit of communion unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ (CCC 1092).

FOR PRAYER