

2017-05-07, Series on the Mass, Part 71

*The Communion in the Sacrifice*

Last week we looked at sacrifice in general and made some application of it to the individual's participation in it through the joining of his/her sacrifices to the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Today we will look at communion in this sacrifice.

In Judaism and paganism, sacrifices were offered to God, or to false gods, in the case of the pagans. Usually an animal was sacrificed; part of it was burnt, which is the part offered to God since we can no longer make use of it, and part of it was consumed by men. The union with God was accomplished through the intermediary, though a fictive one, of consuming the victim shared with Him.

In the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, the victim is God Himself and no longer a fictitious one. Dom Paul Delatte, O.S.B., in commenting on the Letter to the Corinthians, says that this revelation explains the "cries of joy" that the catechumens experienced when revealed the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist for the first time. Though the Bread will be divided in the breaking of the Host, the unity of Christ remains undivided and living. This is why we receive Holy Communion, to realize the unity of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, by all communicating with God. We are united to Christ by receiving Him, and we also united to one another in Him. But we can only receive Him in Communion, which is a strong form of union, if we have that fundamental union of Charity or Sanctifying Grace in the first place. This is why only Catholics and those in the state of grace may approach for Holy Communion.

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