

Renewed Together in Christ

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Ex 24:3-8)

Words and Response

³When Moses came to the people and related all the words and ordinances of the LORD, they all answered with one voice, “We will do everything that the LORD has told us.”^a

Words written and an altar

⁴Moses then wrote down all the words of the LORD and, rising early in the morning, he built at the foot of the mountain an altar and twelve sacred stones* for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Preparation for the ratification

⁵Then, having sent young men of the Israelites to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice young bulls as communion offerings to the LORD, ⁶Moses took half of the **blood** and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar.

Ratification of the Covenant

⁷Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, “All that the LORD has said, we will hear and do.”⁸Then he took the **blood** and splashed it on the people, saying, “This is the **blood of the covenant** which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”^b

THE FOCUS: The Blood of the Covenant

COMMENTARY

- This Reading belongs to the covenant section of the book of Exodus, chapters 19:1-24,18.

Moses does a lot of things for Israel:



The Last Supper by Salvador Dali

- Related words and ordinances to the people (v.3).
- Wrote down words of the Lord (v.4).
- Erected an altar and 12 pillars (v.4).
- Sent young men, took half of blood and put in large bowls (v.5).
- Other half he splashed on the altar (v.6).
- Took book of covenant, read it (v.7).
- Took the blood and sprinkled (v.7).
- The blood sprinkled on the people is specified as the blood of the covenant (v.8) People’s response:
 - We will do.... (v.3).
 - All that the Lord has said...we will do... (v.7).
- The covenant is a relationship between God and Israel. God asks Israel to keep his words; Israel responds positively. The sprinkling of blood ratifies the covenant. (Everything is in order. Israel is willing to obey God.)

REFLECTIONS

God enters into relationship with his people, by revealing himself to them through his words and commandments.

The people enter relationship with God by positively and (w)holistically (all that the

Lord has said...) accepting and doing God's word.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 116:12-13)
I WILL TAKE THE CUP OF SALVATION, AND
CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

SECOND READING (Heb 9:11-15)

^{11*} But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be,* passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, ^{12ⁱ} he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the **blood** of goats and calves but with **his own blood**, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ^{13^j} For if the **blood** of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes* can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, ^{14^k} how much more will the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal spirit* offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

^{15*} For this reason he is mediator of a **new covenant**: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the **first covenant**, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

THE FOCUS: The Blood of the New Covenant

COMMENTARY

- Only in the book of Hebrews that Jesus is called the high priest.
- Contrast between Christ as High Priest and the Old Testament (OT) High Priests
- Christ has a higher kind of priesthood than the priesthood of the OT.
- Christ enters into a sanctuary, not made by human hands.

- Christ does not enter with the blood of animals, but his own blood. He offers himself unblemished to God.
- Take note of the Christology of the book of Hebrews:

Christ is the high priest.

Christ offers himself, not animals. He is the one offered to God.

Christ is the mediator of the new covenant.

The new covenant is contrasted with the old (first) covenant.

Old covenant can sanctify those who are defiled, clean their flesh, yet they die.

New covenant cleans consciences, and people are assured of eternal inheritance.

REFLECTIONS

In the OT, the high priest is the mediator between God and the people; in the NT, it is Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 14:12-16, 22-26)

The Passover

^{12^d} On the first day of the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, when they sacrificed the **Passover** lamb,* his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the **Passover**?" ¹³ He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water.* Follow him. ¹⁴ Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the **Passover** with my disciples?"'" ¹⁵ Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." ¹⁶ The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it

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just as he had told them; and they prepared the **Passover**.

The Last Supper

^{22*}While they were eating, he took **bread**, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; **this is my body**.” ²³Then he took **a cup**, gave thanks, and gave **it** to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is **my blood of the covenant**, which will be shed* for many. ²⁵Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” ^{26g}Then, after singing a hymn,* they went out to the Mount of Olives.

THE FOCUS: The Body and Blood of Jesus as the Christ

COMMENTARY

- Vv.12-16 tell where the disciples are to prepare for the Passover Meal.
- The Passover is definitely to be held, as the law prescribes, in the city of Jerusalem, but where exactly?
- According to a man carrying a jar of water, it is in the “upper room.”
- The Feast of the Unleavened Bread or the Passover celebrates the liberation of the Israelites in Egypt, when they went in haste, hurriedly prepared and ate food. There was no more time to bake bread with a dough. Read Exodus 12.
- Vv. 22-24 tell about the Last Supper where Jesus takes unleavened bread and offers it as his body and takes cup (of wine, understood) and offers it as his blood.
- Jesus takes the feast of the unleavened bread and passover to institute what we call the sacrament of the eucharist.
- The first eucharistic meal is done in the context of the passover meal.
- Jesus is conscious of himself as the bread to be eaten by the disciples and blood to be drunk.

- The OT passover is given a new meaning; it is the passover of Jesus from passion and death to resurrection.

REFLECTIONS

The body of Jesus is given as food, in the form of unleavened bread (no yeast). The kind of bread eaten as the Last Supper is the similar (the same) bread eaten in Ex 12, before the Israelites fled from Egypt.

The blood of Christ is given as drink, in the form of wine (grape wine). The kind of wine at the Last Supper is the similar (the same) as the wine drunk during the Passover meal. The Jews drank four cups of wine.

We can say more about the eucharist if we read what the other gospels say.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The First Reading talks about the ratification of the covenant through the blood of animals.

The Second Reading recognizes Christ as the high priest whose blood cleanses consciences and leads to eternal inheritance.

The Gospel Reading tells about the blood of Christ as the blood of the new covenant, shed for all.

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. In what way are we Eucharistic people?
2. The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is also Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests. All our prayers for them. (HM)