

Homily on Hebrews 10:11-14, 18: “The Power of Jesus’ One Perfect Sacrifice”

My friends, let’s start with a little mental image: picture a line of priests from all ages, each holding an endless list of the sacrifices they’ve offered. Now, imagine one priest coming in, offering just *one* sacrifice, and then sitting down with a victorious grin as if to say, “It’s done!” That’s the picture the Letter to the Hebrews paints for us today. This “one” priest is Jesus, whose single offering did what centuries of sacrifices couldn’t fully achieve. Today, we’ll explore why Christ’s sacrifice was—and still is—completely enough for the forgiveness of all sin.

The Incomplete Sacrifices of the Old Covenant

Let’s look back to the Old Covenant sacrifices, which the letter summarizes: daily, yearly, constantly repeated. The people of Israel offered animals, grains, and even incense for their sins. Every sacrifice helped them, but none could truly and permanently wipe the slate clean. Think of it like sweeping dirt under a rug—you might hide it, but it doesn’t go away. In the same way, these sacrifices were temporary coverings, not the permanent solution for sin. St. Augustine explained it this way: “The sacrifices under the Old Law were signs; Christ’s sacrifice is the reality.” The sacrifices were signs, like road signs pointing forward to the real destination: Jesus on the Cross.

The Complete and Eternal Sacrifice of Christ

When Jesus offered Himself, His sacrifice accomplished *in one act* what no other sacrifice could. The Catechism explains this beautifully: Christ’s sacrifice was the “offering of the Son of God made man, who in freedom and love offered his life to His Father” (CCC 614). Jesus didn’t just cover up sin; He tore down its power over us. St. John Chrysostom said, “He offered Himself once and forever, bringing forgiveness, making us holy.” So, while the priests of the old covenant had to keep standing and offering sacrifices day after day, Jesus “sat down” at the right hand of God, showing His work was perfectly complete.

The Image of “Enemies as His Footstool”

There’s a beautiful line that says Jesus “waits until His enemies are made His footstool.” It reminds us of Psalm 110, where the Messiah’s victory is prophesied. Now, who are these “enemies”? St. Paul tells us these enemies are not just earthly forces but spiritual ones: sin, death, and evil. Jesus, our King, has already won, but the final act—when all evil will be crushed under His feet—is still to come. Imagine it like watching the credits roll after a big action movie. The hero has won, but the full glory of victory is still being revealed. That’s what we’re waiting for: that final victory where Satan and sin are utterly defeated.

Forgiveness, Not Repetition

The Letter to the Hebrews also reminds us of a profound truth: “Where there is forgiveness... there is no longer any offering for sin.” Christ’s sacrifice doesn’t need repeating because it was *total*. Like a password that works every time, Jesus’ sacrifice

opened a path that doesn't expire or need updates. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that "Christ's Passion is of such power that, for those who are 'in Christ,' the one offering is eternally effective." This doesn't mean we stop needing forgiveness. Rather, we're reminded to return to that one sacrifice with humble hearts, trusting that it has forever reconciled us with God.

Analogy and Acrostic Reflection: "SACRIFICE"

To help us remember today's message, here's an acrostic on "SACRIFICE":

- **S**ingle act: Jesus offered Himself once, not repeatedly.
- **A**ll-sufficient: His sacrifice fully forgives us.
- **C**omplete: There's no further need for offerings.
- **R**edeemer: Jesus takes our place, canceling our sins.
- **I**ntercessor: He sits by the Father, praying for us.
- **F**inal: The last sacrifice—nothing else is needed.
- **I**mmortal: Its effect is eternal, as Jesus lives forever.
- **C**ovenant: He seals us into a New Covenant with God.
- **E**ternal: His love and sacrifice never fade.

Trust in the One Who Sits

Today's reading calls us to trust Jesus' complete, all-powerful sacrifice. We don't need to bring extra sacrifices; we only need to come with faith. Imagine Jesus in Heaven, not pacing around anxiously, but seated—our King who has conquered, waiting for us to join Him in eternal glory. So, each time we feel we've fallen short, remember: Jesus has already paid the price, so come to Him with faith and humility, and let Him be your sacrifice and salvation.

Let's celebrate the gift of our eternal High Priest, who invites us to live in His grace, fully forgiven and forever loved. Amen.