

ago [at the Synod of Constantinople against Sotericus in 1156-57], "is like that offered once by the Only-begotten Incarnate Word; it is offered by him (now as then), since it is one and the same sacrifice" (Apostolic Letter *Dominicae Cenae*, n. 9).

4. The Eucharist, as the sacrifice of the New Covenant, is the development and fulfillment of the covenant celebrated on Sinai when Moses poured half the blood of the sacrificial victims on the altar, the symbol of God, and half on the assembly of the children of Israel (cf. Ex 24: 58).

This "blood of the covenant" closely united God and man in a bond of solidarity. With the Eucharist the intimacy becomes total; the embrace between God and man reaches its apex. This is the fulfillment of that "new covenant" which Jeremiah had foretold (cf. 31: 31-34): a pact in the spirit and in the heart, which the Letter to the Hebrews extols precisely by taking the prophet's oracle and linking it to Christ's one definitive sacrifice (cf. Heb 10: 14-17).

5. At this point we can illustrate the other affirmation: the Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise. Essentially oriented to full communion between God and man, "the Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of the whole of the Church's worship and of the Christian life. The faithful participate more fully in this sacrament of thanksgiving, propitiation, petition and praise, not only when they wholeheartedly offer the Sacred Victim, and in it themselves, to the Father with the priest, but also when they receive this same Victim sacramentally" (Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, n. 3e).

As the term itself originally says in

Greek, Eucharist means "thanksgiving"; in it the Son of God unites redeemed humanity to Himself in a hymn of thanksgiving and praise. Let us remember that the Hebrew work *todah*, translated "praise", also means "thanksgiving". The sacrifice of praise was a sacrifice of thanksgiving (cf. Ps 50 [49]: 14, 23). At the Last Supper, in order to institute the Eucharist, Jesus gave thanks to his Father (cf. Mt 26: 26-27 and parallels); this is the origin of the name of this sacrament.

6. "In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ" (CCC, n. 1359). Uniting herself to Christ's sacrifice, the Church in the Eucharist voices the praise of all creation. The commitment of every believer to offer his existence, his "body", as Paul says, as a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12: 1), in full communion with Christ, must correspond to this. In this

way, one life unites God and man, Christ crucified and raised for us all and the disciple who is called to give himself entirely to Him.

The French poet Paul Claudel sings of this intimate communion of love, putting these words on Christ's lips: "Come with me, where I Am, in yourself, / and I will give you the key to life. / Where I Am, there eternally / is the secret of your origin ... / Where are your hands that are not mine? And your feet that are not nailed to the same cross? I died and rose once and for all! We are very close to one another / How can you separate yourself from Me / without breaking My heart?" (La Messe là-bas).

