

Take-Home: Session 5

A Kingdom of Priests · Once for All

What We Found

Hebrews 7 agreed with us. Every argument we built about Melchizedek in Session 3 (the loaded silence, the tithe and the blessing, the oath, the "for ever") is the letter's own argument, and it adds the summit: this priest "holds his priesthood permanently," and "always lives to make intercession" for those who draw near through him. Then Hebrews answered Session 2's "once in the year" with the New Testament's great word: once for all. The Levitical priest stood daily because his work never finished; Christ offered a single sacrifice and sat down. We faced the hard question honestly: then what is the Mass? And we found the beginning of the answer where we did not expect it: in heaven, where John sees "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain": the risen Lamb bearing the marks of his one sacrifice at the center of heaven's unending worship (the abiding presence the Church names at CCC 1085); and in Malachi, who foresaw a pure offering made "in every place" among the nations "from the rising of the sun to its setting." One question stayed open on purpose: by whose command does the Church enter that offering? Next session has a date attached: the night before he died.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John Chrysostom

"Do we not offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of his death... We do not offer another sacrifice, as the high priest of old, but always the same." One victim, one offering, made present: the fourth century answering our question before we asked it.

Homilies on Hebrews, Homily 17

VOICE OF THE CHURCH The Didache

This early church manual, commonly dated to the late first or early second century, tells Christians to gather on the Lord's day, break bread, and give thanks, first confessing sins "so that your sacrifice may be pure," and it invokes Malachi's pure-offering oracle (adapting 1:11 and 1:14) of that assembly. (An early Church document, not a single saint's writing.)

Didache, chapter 14

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John Paul II

St. John Paul II teaches, in substance, that the Mass makes sacramentally present the one sacrifice of the Cross: it does not add to it and does not multiply it; the sacrifice remains one, embracing every generation. (A summary of his teaching in his encyclical on the Eucharist.)

Ecclesia de Eucharistia

Live It This Week

- Once this week, name your hardest situation out loud, then pray: "Jesus, you live for ever to intercede for me. I hand this to the priest who never goes off duty."
- If you attend Mass this week, at the elevation of the host, silently pray Revelation 5:6: "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain."
- Find your sealed guess from Session 1. It comes with you next week. STILL SEALED.

Memory Verse

"Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."

Hebrews 7:25 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Bring your sealed guess sheet from Session 1, unopened. That is the whole assignment. Guard it like a Levite.

Catechism References

CCC 1085; CCC 1364; CCC 1366 to 1367.