

**Lenten Devotional Reflection**  
**24 March 2020 (Lent Day 24)**

**Scripture: Hebrews 9: 15-end New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<sup>15</sup> For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. <sup>16</sup> Where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. <sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. <sup>18</sup> Hence not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment had been told to all the people by Moses in accordance with the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you.” <sup>21</sup> And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. <sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

<sup>23</sup> Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. <sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; <sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

**Message**

“For this reason” (*dia touto*) reveals a conclusion of the part about sin offering in Hebrews 9: 11-14 and brings out the relationship between Christ’s death (sacrifice of His blood) and people called by God (verse 15). To emphasize, the writer uses validity of a will as a metaphor to explain why Christ must die and Christ is the mediator of the New Testament (verses 16-17). The writer then reiterates the need of covenant inaugurated with blood by God’s covenant with the Israelites through Moses and points out the need of Christ’s shedding of blood.

In verses 23-28, the writer uses sacrifice rites as an analogy to explain Christ offered himself once for all to remove our sins. The Eucharistic Prayer in the Book of Common

Prayer (Chinese version p.137) and the Eucharistic Prayer in the Liturgy of Palm Sunday (2015 Chinese version, p.14) both highlight the one-time sacrifice of Christ and this sacrifice transcends everything. The writer expresses that the earthly sanctuary is a mere copy of the true one so Christ entered the heaven to offer himself only once to cleanse our sins. This cannot be replaced by other offerings. But the writer does not deny the importance of “earth” and reminds us the judgment after death and Christ will appear a second time. We, as people saved by God, should eagerly wait for the coming again of Christ and always be prepared to face Christ. This is the attitude we should have, not the way to get salvation.

### **Reflection**

1. If someone asks “why did Jesus sacrifice himself on the cross?”, how would you answer?
2. Due to the coronavirus epidemic, we cannot join the public worship. Has it changed your feeling on Holy Communion?
3. How do you prepare yourself for Christ’s second coming?

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