

Reflection Saturday Week 12 Dedication of the Cathedral 2023

Taken from the address by Benedict XVI who visited the Cathedral in September 2010.

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Cathedral is dedicated to the Most Precious Blood, which is the sign of God's redemptive mercy poured out upon the world through the passion, death and resurrection of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The great crucifix dominating the nave portrays Christ's body, crushed by suffering, overwhelmed by sorrow, the innocent victim whose death has reconciled us with the Father and given us a share in the very life of God. The Lord's outstretched arms seem to embrace this entire church, lifting up to the Father all the ranks of the faithful who gather around the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice and share in its fruits. The crucified Lord stands above and before us as the source of our life and salvation, "the high priest of the good things to come", (*Heb 9:11*).

The mystery of the Precious Blood leads us to see the unity between Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, the Eucharistic sacrifice which he has given to his Church, and his eternal priesthood, whereby, seated at the right hand of the Father, he makes unceasing intercession for us, the members of his mystical body.

The outpouring of Christ's blood is the source of the Church's life. Saint John, as we know, sees in the water and blood which flowed from our Lord's body the wellspring of that divine life which is bestowed by the Holy Spirit and communicated to us in the sacraments (*Jn 19:34*; cf. *1 Jn 1:7*; *5:6-7*). Jesus, by his suffering and death, his self-oblation in the eternal Spirit, has become our high priest and "the mediator of a new covenant" (*Heb 9:15*). These words echo our Lord's own words at the Last Supper, when he instituted the Eucharist as the sacrament of his body, given up for us, and his blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant shed for the forgiveness of sins (cf. *Mk 14:24*; *Mt 26:28*; *Lk 22:20*).

Faithful to Christ's command to "do this in memory of me" (*Lk 22:19*), the Church in every time and place celebrates the Eucharist until the Lord returns in glory, rejoicing in his sacramental presence and drawing upon the power of his saving sacrifice for the redemption of the world. The reality of the Eucharistic sacrifice has always been at the heart of Catholic faith.

I ask you to unite yourselves ever more fully to the Lord, sharing in his sacrifice on the Cross and offering him that "spiritual worship" (*Rom 12:1*) which embraces every aspect of our lives and finds expression in our efforts to contribute to the coming of his Kingdom.