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## **Christ, the Perfect Sacrifice**

by [St. Fulgentius of Ruspe](#)  
**Bishop and [Early Church Father](#)**

*Here St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, and Early Church Father, shows how all the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were merely foreshadows of the ultimate sacrifice, the only sacrifice that could take away all sin and reconcile the human race with God, the self-offering of Jesus Christ on the cross. This reading is taken by Fulgentius' treatise on faith addressed to Peter (Cap. 22, 62: CCL 91 A, 726. 750-751) and is used in the Roman Office of Readings for Friday of the 5th week in Lent with the biblical reading taken from Hebrews 7:11-28.*



The sacrifices of animal victims which our forefathers were commanded to offer to God by the holy Trinity itself, the one God of the old and the new testaments, foreshadowed the most acceptable gift of all. This was the offering which in his compassion the only Son of God would make of himself in his human nature for our sake.

The Apostle teaches that Christ offered himself for us to God as a fragrant offering and sacrifice. He is the true God and the true high priest who for our sake entered once for all into the holy of holies, taking with him not the blood of bulls and goats but his own blood. This was foreshadowed by the high priest of old when each year he took blood and entered the holy of holies.

Christ is therefore the one who in himself alone embodied all that he knew to be necessary to achieve our redemption. He is at once priest and sacrifice, God and temple. He is the priest through whom we have been reconciled, the sacrifice by which we have been reconciled, the temple in which we have been reconciled, the God with whom we have been reconciled. He alone is priest, sacrifice and temple because he is all these things as God in the form of a servant; but he is not alone as God, for he is this with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the form of God.

Hold fast to this and never doubt it: the only-begotten Son, God the Word, becoming man offered himself for us to God as a fragrant offering and sacrifice.

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In the time of the old testament, patriarchs, prophets and priests sacrificed animals in his honor, and in honor of the Father and the Holy Spirit as well.

Now in the time of the new testament the holy catholic Church throughout the world never ceases to offer the sacrifice of bread and wine, in faith and love, to him and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, with whom he shares one godhead.

Those animal sacrifices foreshadowed the flesh of Christ which he would offer for our sins, though himself without sin, and the blood which he would pour out for the forgiveness of our sins. In this sacrifice there is thanksgiving for, and commemoration of, the flesh of Christ that he offered for us, and the blood that the same God poured out for us. On this Saint Paul says in the Acts of the Apostles: Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as bishops to rule the Church of God, which he won for himself by his blood.

Those sacrifices of old pointed in sign to what was to be given to us. In this sacrifice we see plainly what has already been given to us. Those sacrifices foretold the death of the Son of God for sinners. In this sacrifice he is proclaimed as already slain for sinners, as the Apostle testifies: Christ died for the wicked at a time when we were still powerless, and when we were enemies we were reconciled with God through the death of his Son.



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