



Part Three

What is the Holy Mass?



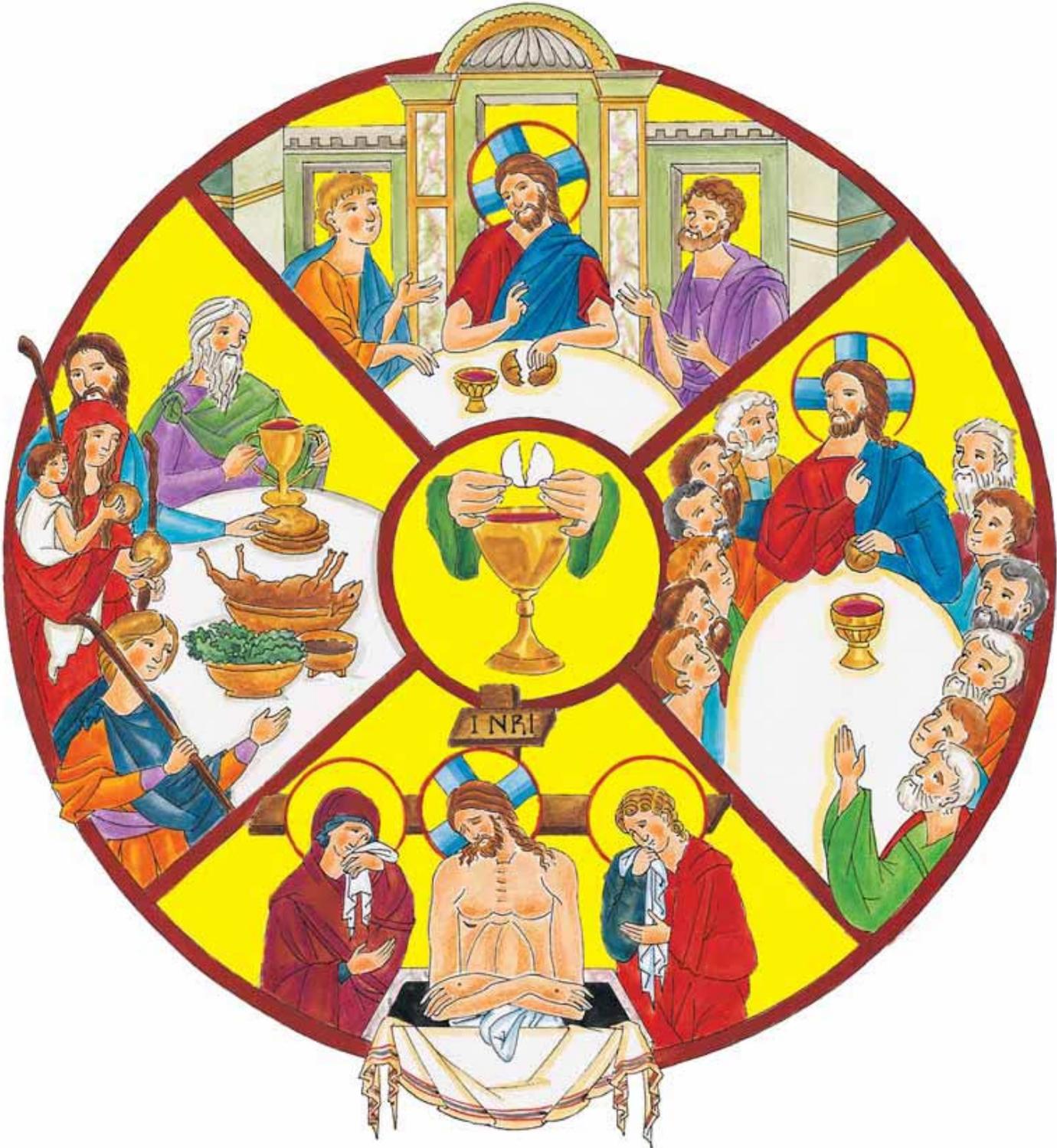
The Holy Mass is:

- 1. A celebration
of Christ's
Paschal Mystery**
- 2. His Real Presence**
- 3. A Banquet**



1

THE MASS IS A CELEBRATION OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF CHRIST (MEMORIAL)



12 In what way is the Holy Mass a celebration of Christ's Paschal Mystery?

The Holy Mass is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery, that is, of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ the Lord. This Mystery is made present and efficacious in the Eucharistic Celebration.

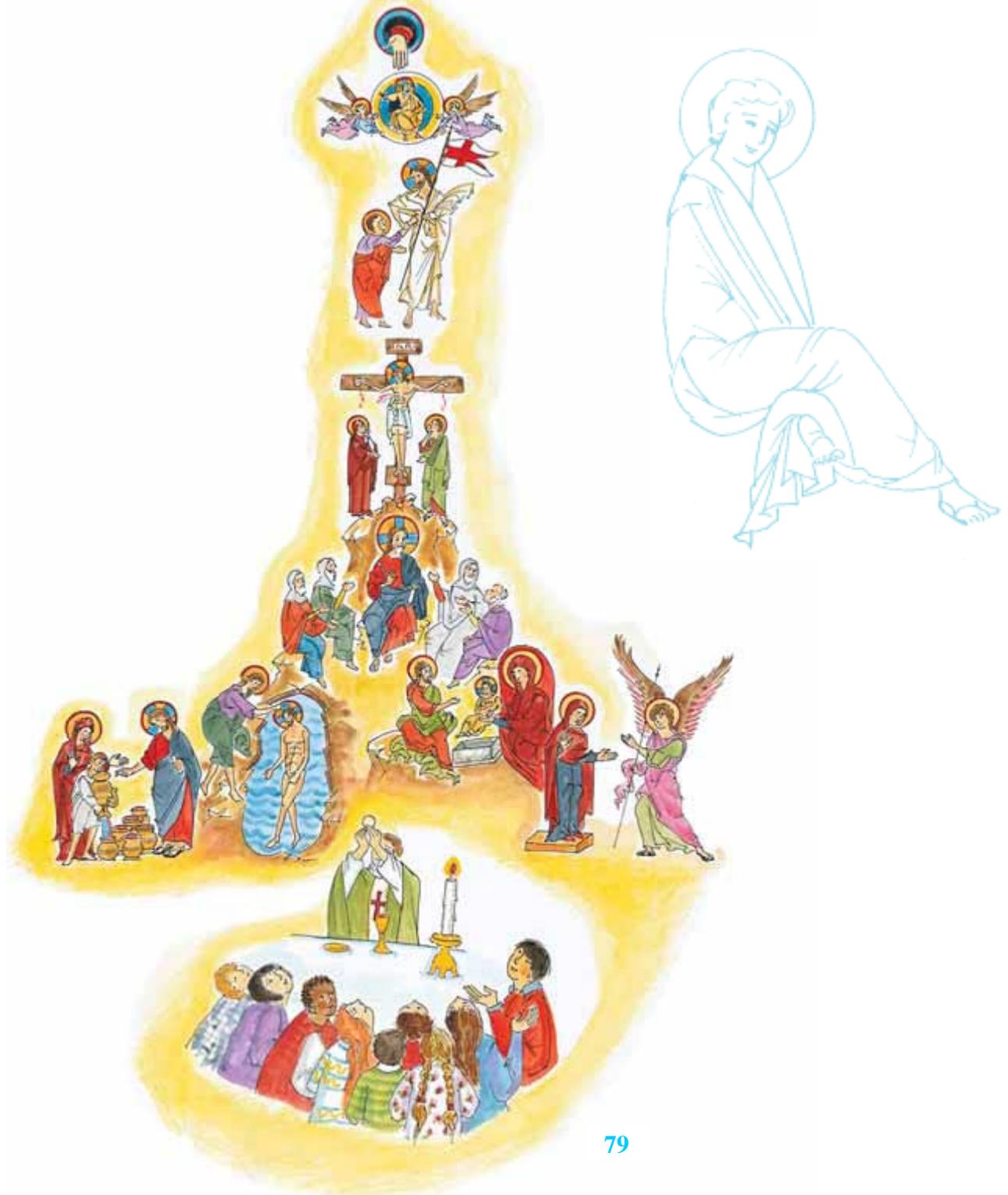


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In what way is the Holy Mass a memorial of Christ?

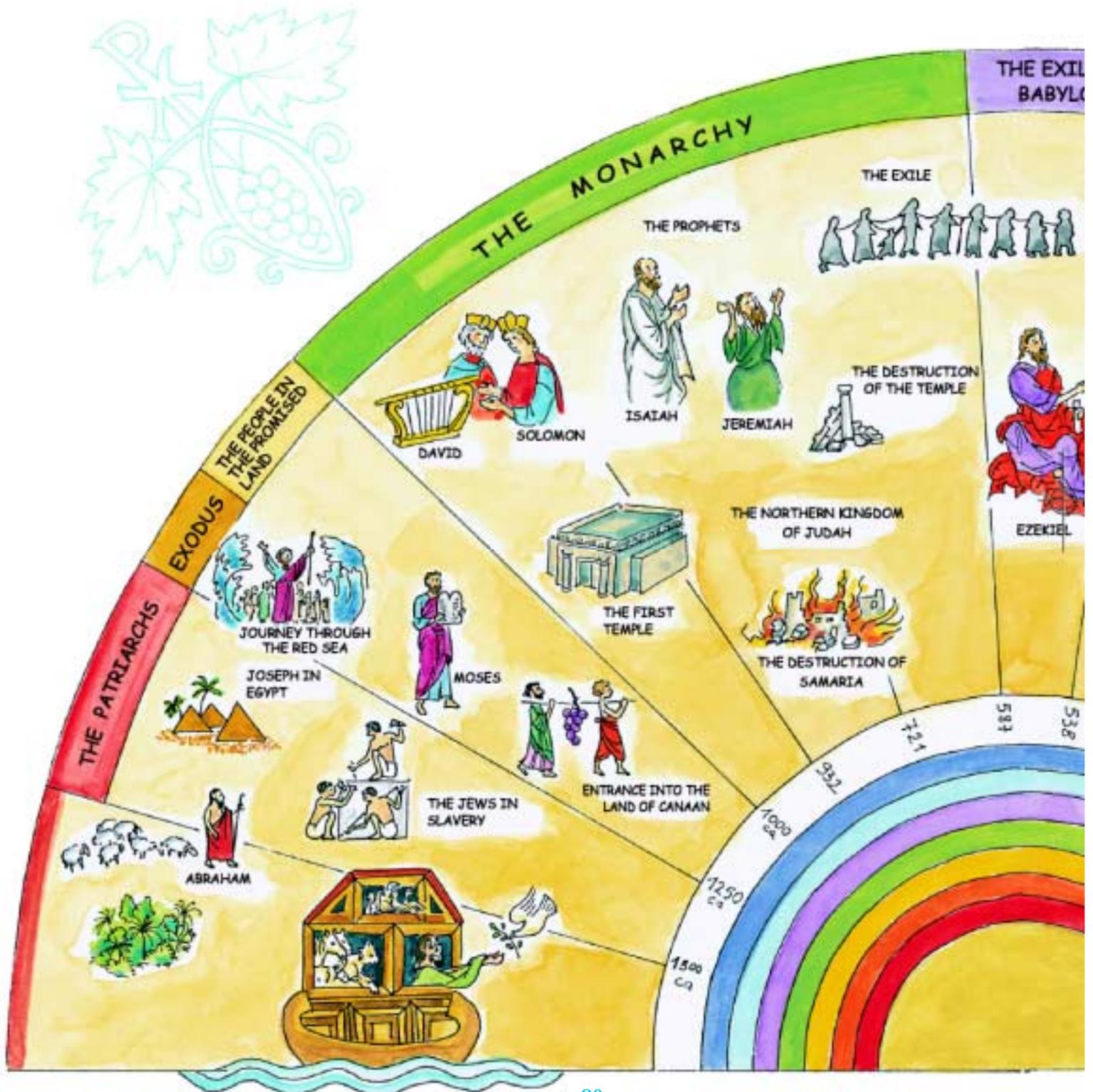


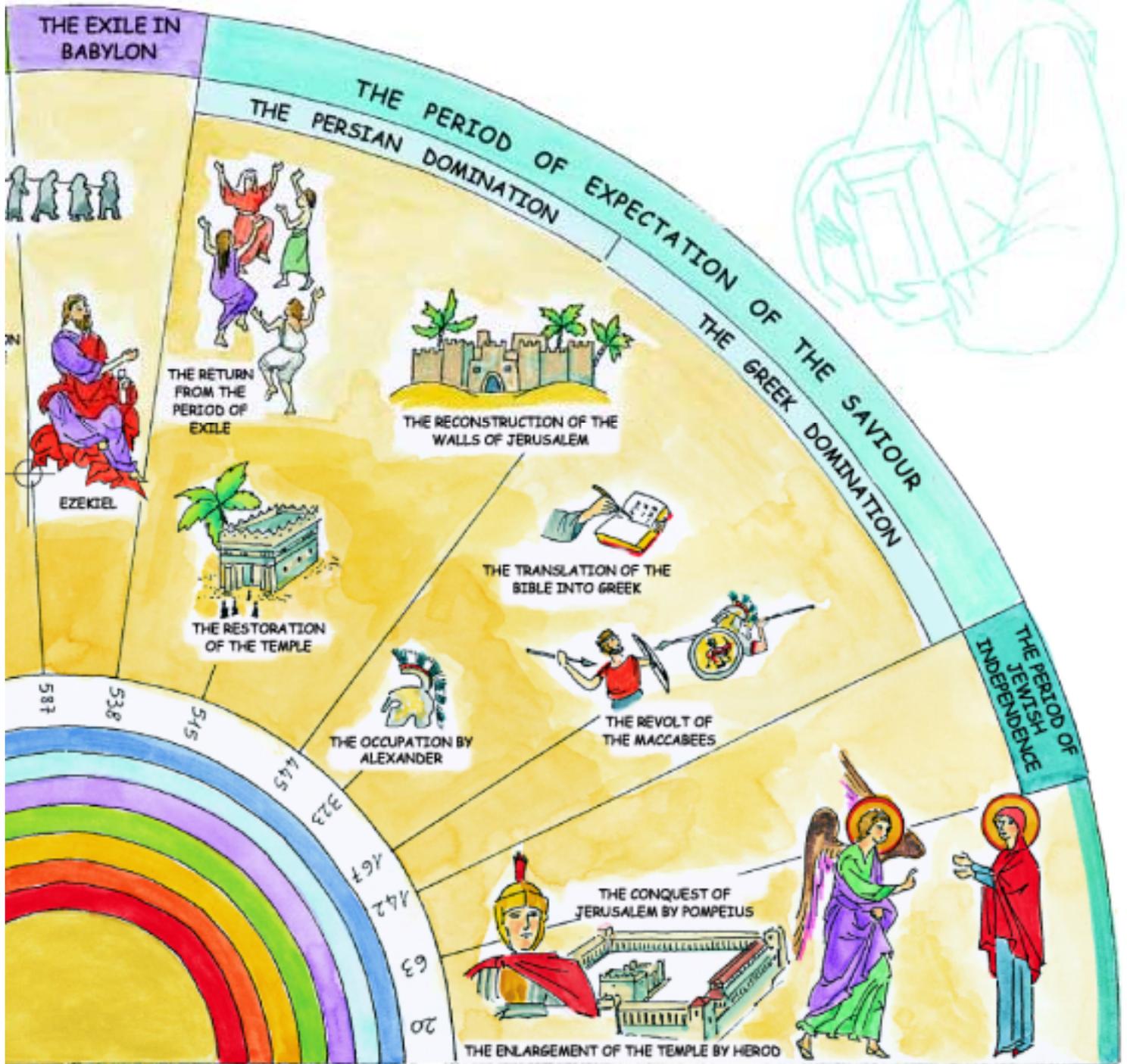
When it celebrates the Eucharist, the Church *remembers* Christ, and recalls what he did and said, from his Incarnation, his Death, Resurrection to Ascension into Heaven. The Church remembers Christ's entire life, which has its high point in those events that we celebrate every year at Easter.





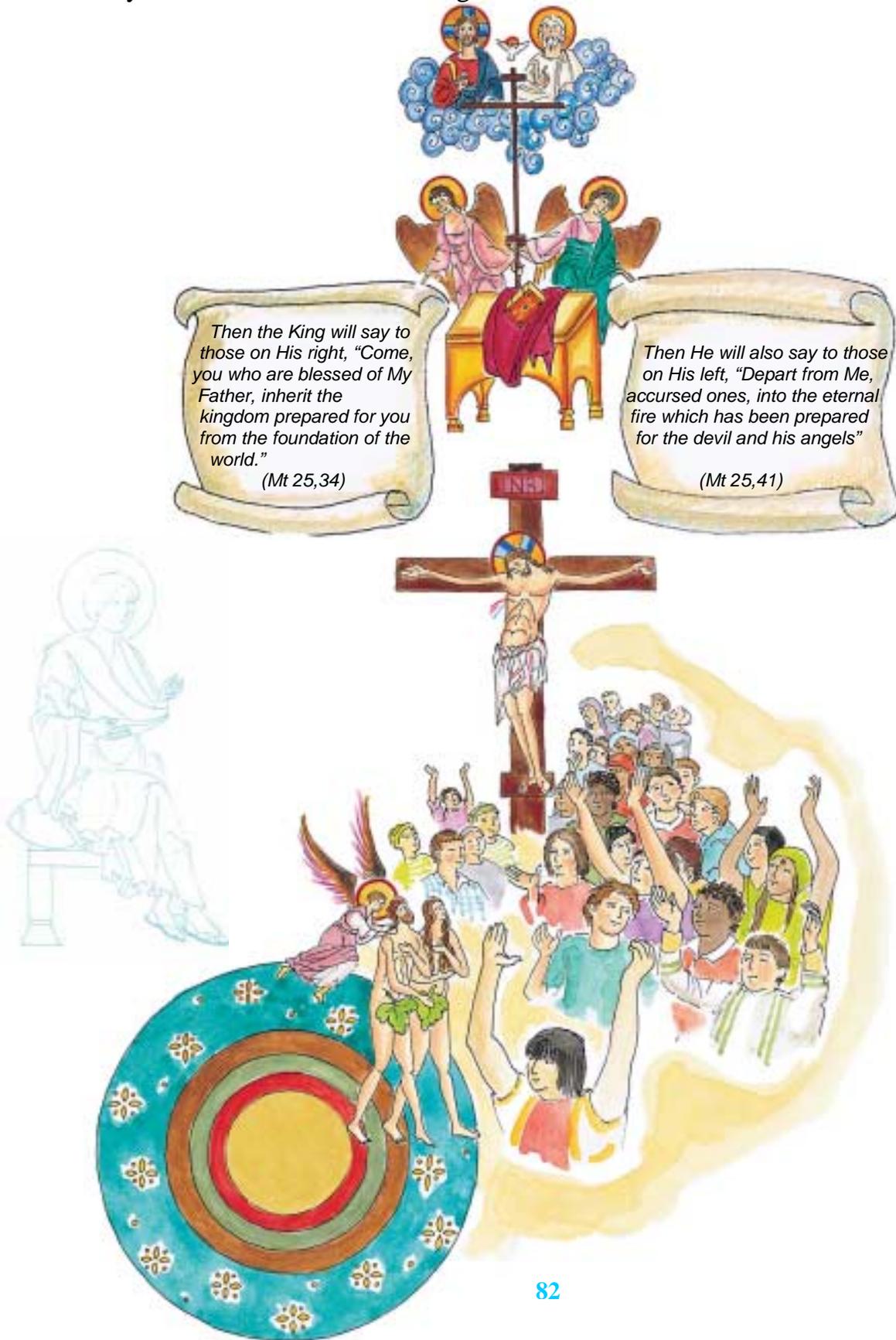
When it celebrates the Eucharist, the Church *remembers* the entire history of Salvation, prefigured in the Old Covenant (Old Testament – People of Israel).







When it celebrates the Eucharist, the Church *remembers* what God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — did for all mankind, from the time of creation until the day when the Lord will come again at the end of time.





This *memorial* is not just simply a type of remembering of things that took place in the past, but it is a making present of these things, making them efficacious, real, here and now, on the altar of the Eucharistic celebration.



When we use the word memorial, we mean that the Death and Resurrection of Christ:



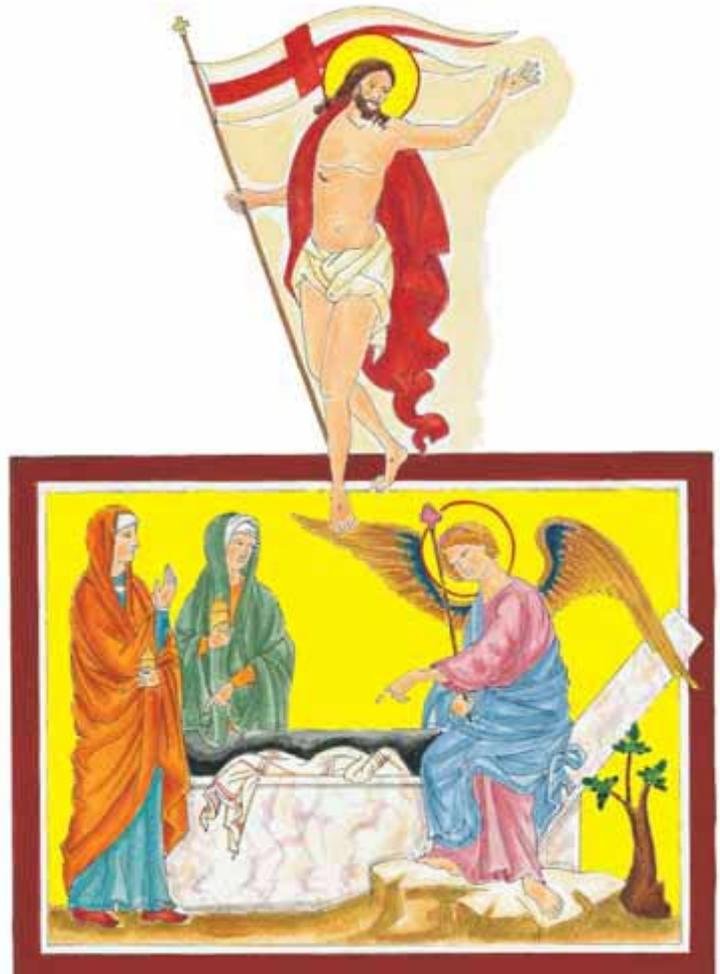
is *actualized*, that is to say made present here and now, in a special way. And for this reason our thoughts are not going back to the past, to something that has taken place a long time ago;



is *made present* here and now because of the power of the Holy Spirit, and not because of something that we ourselves are capable of doing.



The Holy Mass, precisely because it is not just a memorial of those things that occurred in the past, but makes present, real and efficacious the unique and perfect Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and his Resurrection, is called the *memorial* of the Christ's Easter. In this way, Jesus Christ makes the fruits of his Sacrifice available to all men and women, of every time and place.



“The Eucharistic Sacrifice makes present not only the Mystery of the Passion and the Death of the Savior, but also the Mystery of the Resurrection, in which the Sacrifice finds its crowning. It is because Christ is living and risen that he can make the Eucharist ‘the bread of life’ (Jn 6, 35-48), ‘living bread’ (Jn 6, 51)” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 14).





The **sacrificial aspect** of the Eucharist is already evident in the very words spoken by Jesus when he instituted this Sacrament: **“This is my Body which will be given up for you”** and **“This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood which will be poured out for you”** (*Lk 22, 19-20*) **“for the forgiveness of sins”** (*Mt 26,28*).



14

In what way is the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and the Holy Mass similar but also different?

The Sacrifice of the Cross and the Holy Mass are same sacrifice.



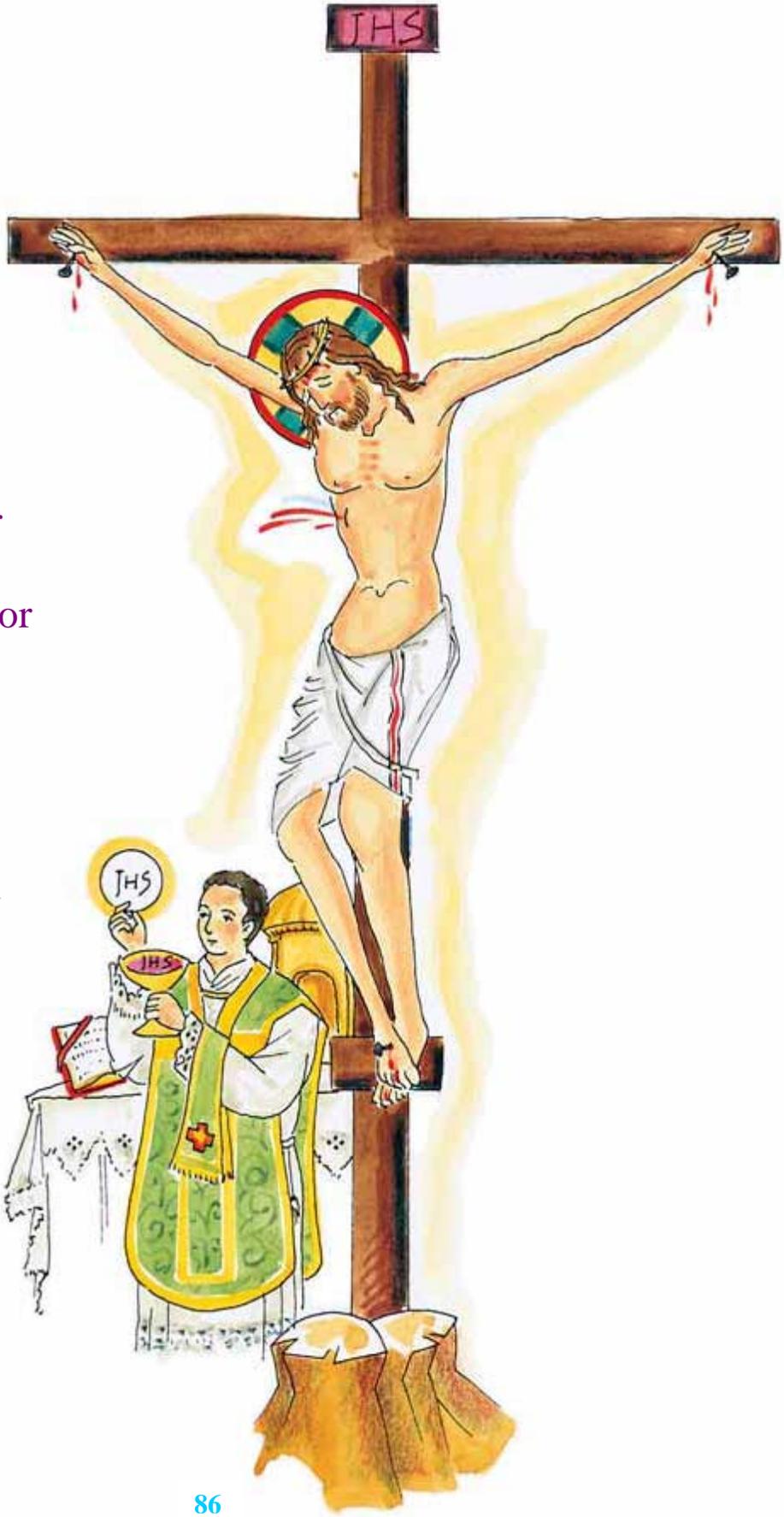
The identical aspects are:



The victim, the offerer, the mediator and the priest: **Christ**.



The purpose: **the salvation of all**.



Christ — Victim
— Offerer
— Mediator
— Priest

The purpose:
the salvation of all



There are some differences:



The way in which the offering is made:

- **Bloody** (that is with the real outpouring of blood and the physical presence of Christ) on the Cross.
- **Bloodless** (without the outpouring of blood and with the sacramental presence — under the form of bread and wine — of Christ) during the Holy Mass.



The number of times it takes place: while the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary took place just once (it was a unique, definitive and unrepeatable event), the Holy Mass takes place many times.



The place: while the Sacrifice of Christ took place on Calvary, the Holy Mass takes place in every part of the world.



When: Christ's Paschal Mystery took place two thousands years ago, and the Holy Mass is celebrated every day until the end of time.



The number of those who participated: when it took place on the Cross, there were only a few persons present. When the Holy Mass is celebrated everyone is invited to participate, irrespective of race, place of birth, age or culture.

15 How is Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross made present during the Holy Mass?

Christ's sacrifice, as a **bloody** sacrifice, was made once and for all, as a pure victim, to the Father on Calvary for the salvation of all men and women. This sacrifice is made present and efficacious on the altar, **in a sacramental way, under the Eucharistic species** (see question and answer n. 18).



16 What are the characteristics of Christ's Sacrifice?

It is a Sacrifice:



of love: the Eucharist, because it makes present the Death and Resurrection of Christ, expresses in a supreme way the offering that Jesus made of his own life to the Father for us, and for this reason it shows and makes present Christ's love for the Father and the Father's love for him;



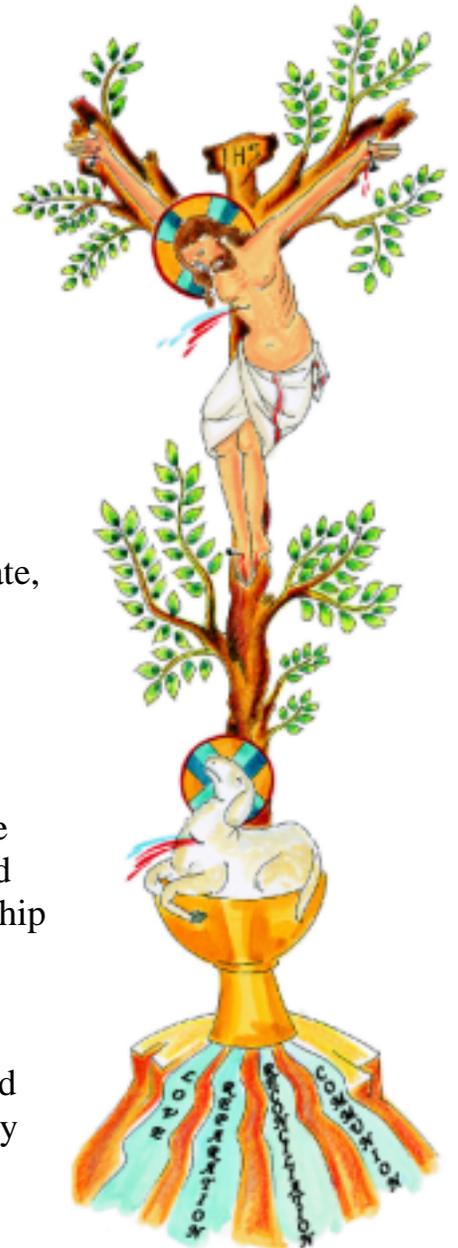
of reparation: because Christ offers his life as an expiate, to erase out the sins of all men and women, and he does it for us, taking our place, taking our sins upon himself. **"He carried our sins in his body on the wood of the Cross"** (Is 53,12);



of reconciliation: because Christ reconciles us with the Father, with each other and with the created world, and he does this with his Blood, which shows the relationship of communion that God had already established in the Old Testament with His People.



of communion: because in the Sacrifice of his Son God unites us to himself and to each other, through the Holy Spirit who is Love.



17 How is the Holy Mass also the sacrifice of the Church?

In the Holy Mass, the Sacrifice of Christ, who is the Head, also becomes the sacrifice of the Church, which is His Body.

He unites his Church to himself:



In **interceding** with his Father for the whole Church, for humanity and for the faithful departed.



In **offering himself** together with Him to the Father: Christ unites to himself the life, sufferings, prayers, and work of all those who participate in the Holy Mass. In the Eucharist the Church offers the Sacrifice of Christ, offering itself with Him: in this way it participates in His Easter, passing from the slavery of sin to freedom, from sadness to joy, from death to life.

