

# THE HOLY EUCHARIST



# THE HOLY EUCHARIST

*Translated from the Italian of*

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE



In the tranquil embrace of the eighteenth century, amidst the ever-changing currents of human history, there emerged a luminous figure whose life and teachings continue to resonate with profound wisdom and devotion even today. This monumental five book set you now hold is a tribute to the enduring legacy of a man who remains an exemplar of piety, scholarship, and spiritual insight—Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

Born on September 27, 1696, Saint Alphonsus Liguori, during his earthly sojourn, achieved remarkable heights that would shape the course of Catholic theology and spirituality for generations to come. His sanctity and theological acumen were recognized by the Church when he was declared Venerable on May 4, 1796, followed by his beatification in 1816, and ultimate canonization in 1839. In 1871, his intellectual contributions were further acknowledged when he was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.

July 30, a date etched in the hearts of the faithful, marks the feast day of this Doctor of the Church. Saint Alphonsus Liguori earned the sobriquet “The Prince of Moral Theologians” for his profound insights into moral theology, a body of work that has served as a guiding light for countless souls seeking ethical and spiritual clarity.

This five book set showcases the richness and depth of Saint Alphonsus's theological and spiritual writings. His literary output, spanning over one hundred books, is a testament to his dedication to sharing the treasures of the Catholic Faith with the world. Through these pages, readers will have the privilege of delving into the profound wisdom of a man whose teachings have touched hearts and transformed lives for centuries.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori's singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary earned him the title of the "Marian Doctor of the Church." His works, such as *The Glories of Mary*, are a resplendent tribute to the Mother of God, illuminating her role in the Christian faith and her maternal intercession for all believers.

In addition to his theological contributions, Saint Alphonsus Liguori founded the Redemptorist Order, a spiritual family dedicated to imitating Christ's mission of proclaiming redemption to the most abandoned. His devotion to the Eucharist, explored in *The Holy Eucharist*, underscores the central importance of the Blessed Sacrament in the life of the Church and the believer.

This set also includes Saint Alphonsus's reflections on the passion and death of Jesus Christ, the incarnation, birth, and infancy of Jesus Christ, and *Preparation for Death*, addressing crucial aspects of Christian faith and the human experience.

As we embark on this literary journey through the works of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, may we be inspired by his unwavering faith, intellectual brilliance, and his deep love for Christ and His Church. May these volumes serve as a beacon of light, guiding readers toward a deeper understanding of their

faith, a closer relationship with God, and a more profound appreciation of the saintly legacy of Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

In the spirit of the saint himself, may these pages inspire us all to live lives of holiness, virtue, and unwavering devotion to Our Lord and His Mother, Mary.

—Conor Gallagher  
CEO and Publisher of TAN Books







PART I

THE SACRIFICE OF  
JESUS CHRIST

I acknowledge to have drawn this little treatise on the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ from a work composed by a learned French author.<sup>1</sup> His work is complete and somewhat diffuse. I

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<sup>1</sup> This is, however, not a mere abridgment that St. Alphonsus gives us. As was usual with him, he appropriated the subject and treated it after his own manner by confining himself to quoting on some points the opinion of the French author. What he ascribes to the latter is found, nearly word for word, in the book entitled “L’Idée du Sacerdoce et du Sacrifice de Jésus-Christ, par le R. P. De Condren, etc. Par un Prêtre de l’Oratoire.” We doubt, however, whether this excellent work is that which our Saint had before him; for it appears to us that such a work cannot be called anonymous, though the learned Oratorian who published it in 1677 gives in the title-page only his title, and the initials of his name in his dedication, by signing himself P. Q. (This is Father Pasquier Quesnel, who later on became unfortunately so famous.) This doubt is confirmed by the remark that we add further on, page 15, and is changed almost into certainty in view of a passage that we read on page 25, and that we have not seen in the aforesaid work. We therefore believe that there exists a more recent work in which “L’Idée” of Father De Condren is reproduced in an incomplete manner and without the name of the author.—Ed.

have composed and have published this abridgment because of the profit that may be derived from it, not only by the priests who say Mass, but by the faithful who are present at it.

My little work bears the title “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ,” for, although we distinguish by different names the Sacrifice of the Cross from the Sacrifice of the Altar, yet it is substantially the same sacrifice. In fact, we find at the altar the same victim and the same priest that one day offered himself on the cross. The Sacrifice of the Altar is a continuation or a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and differs from it only in the manner in which it is offered.

I.  
THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD  
LAW WERE FIGURES OF THE  
SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST



All the sacrifices of the old law were figures of the sacrifice of our divine Redeemer, and there were four kinds of these sacrifices; namely, the sacrifices of peace, of thanksgiving, of expiation, and of impetration.

1. The *sacrifices of peace* were instituted to render to God the worship of adoration that is due to him as the sovereign master of all things. Of this kind were the holocausts.

2. The *sacrifices of thanksgiving* were destined to give thanks to the Lord for all his benefits.

3. The *sacrifices of expiation* were established to obtain the pardon of sin. This kind of sacrifice was specially represented in the Feast of the Expiation by the emissary-goat,<sup>2</sup> which, having been laden with all the sins of the people, was led forth out of the camp of the Hebrews, and afterwards abandoned in the desert to be there devoured by ferocious beasts. This sacrifice was the most expressive figure of the sacrifice of the cross. Jesus Christ was laden with all the sins of men, as Isaias had foretold: *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us*

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<sup>2</sup> *Lev. xvi. 8.*

*all.*<sup>3</sup> He was afterwards ignominiously led forth from Jerusalem, whither the Apostle invites us to follow him by sharing in his opprobrium: *Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*<sup>4</sup> He was abandoned to ferocious beasts; that is to say, to the Gentiles, who crucified him.

4. Finally, the *sacrifices of impetration* had for their object to obtain from God his aid and his grace.

Now, all these sacrifices were abolished by the coming of the Redeemer, because only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was a perfect sacrifice, while all the ancient sacrifices were imperfect, was sufficient to expiate all the sins, and merit for man every grace. This is the reason why the Son of God on entering the world said to his Father: *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold, I come; in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will, O God.*<sup>5</sup> Hence, by offering to God the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we can fulfil all our duties towards his supreme majesty, and provide for all our wants; and by this means we succeed in maintaining a holy intercourse between God and ourselves.

We must also know that the Old Law exacted five conditions in regard to the victims which were to be offered to God so as to be agreeable to him; namely, sanctification, oblation, immolation, consumption, and participation.

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<sup>3</sup> "Et posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum."—*Isa.* liii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> "Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portant."—*Heb.* xiii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> "Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi; holocaustomata pro peccato non tibi placuerunt; tunc dixi: Ecce venio; in capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam."—*Heb.* x. 5.

1. The victim had to be *sanctified*, or consecrated to God, so that there might not be offered to him anything that was not holy nor unworthy of his majesty. Hence, the animal destined for sacrifice had to be without stain, without defect; it was not to be blind, lame, weak, nor deformed, according to what was prescribed in the Book of Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup> This condition indicated that such would be the Lamb of God, the victim promised for the salvation of the world; that is to say, that he would be holy, and exempt from every defect. We are thereby instructed that our prayers and our other good works are not worthy of being offered to God, or at least can never be fully agreeable to him, if they are in any way defective. Moreover, the animal thus sanctified could no longer be employed for any profane usage, and was regarded as a thing consecrated to God in such a manner that only a priest was permitted to touch it. This shows us how displeasing it is to God if persons consecrated to him busy themselves without real necessity with the things of the world, and thus live in distraction and in neglect of what concerns the glory of God.

2. The victim had to be *offered* to God; this was done by certain words that the Lord himself had prescribed.

3. It had to be *immolated*, or put to death; but this immolation was not always brought about by death, properly so called; for the sacrifice of the loaves of proposition, or show-bread, was accomplished, for example, without using iron or fire, but only by means of the natural heat of those who ate of them.

4. The victim had to be *consumed*. This was done by fire. The sacrifice in which the victim was entirely consumed by fire was called holocaust. The latter was thus entirely annihilated

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<sup>6</sup> Deut. xv. 21.

in order to indicate by this destruction the unlimited power that God has over all his creatures, and that as he created them out of nothing, so he can reduce them to the nothingness from which they came. In fact, the principal end of the sacrifice is to acknowledge God as a sovereign being, so superior to all things that everything before him is purely nothing; for all things are nothing in presence of him who possesses all things in himself. The smoke that came from this sacrifice and arose in the air signified that God received it as a sweet odor,—that is to say, with pleasure,—as is written of the sacrifice of Noe: *Noe . . . offered holocausts upon the altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor.*<sup>7</sup>

5. All the people, together with the priest, had to be partakers of the victim. Hence, in the sacrifices, excepting the holocaust, the victim was divided into three parts, one part of which was destined for the priest, one for the people, and one for the fire. This last part was regarded as belonging to God, who by this means communicated in some manner with those who were partakers of the victim.

These five conditions are found reunited in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. The Lord had commanded Moses<sup>8</sup> that, on the tenth day of the month on which the Jews had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt, a lamb of one year and without blemish should be taken and separated from the flock; and thus were verified the conditions enumerated above, namely: 1. The separation of the lamb signified that it was a victim *consecrated* to God; 2. This consecration was succeeded by the *oblation*, which took place in the Temple, where

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<sup>7</sup> “Noe . . . obtulit holocausta super altare; odoratusque est Dominus odorem suavitatis.”—*Gen.* viii. 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Exod.* xii. 3.

the lamb was presented; 3. On the fourteenth day of the month the *immolation* took place, or the lamb was killed; 4. Then the lamb was roasted and divided among those present; and this was the partaking of it, or communion; 5. Finally, the lamb having been eaten, what remained of it was *consumed* by fire, and thus was the sacrifice consummated.