

The few words the Master used to establish the priesthood express clearly one of the chief ends He had in view in bringing the great sacrifice, of remaining with us in that humble, hidden, obscure manner, entrusting Himself to the rude hands of His sinful subjects, and obeying their words of consecration,—“*Do this for a commemoration of Me.*” He gives them all, and asks in turn to be remembered.

The Holy Eucharist is essentially a memorial. “He has made a memorial of His wonderful works, the merciful and loving Lord. He hath given food to them that fear Him.” St. Paul thus understood the Blessed Sacrament. Quoting these holiest words of the Last Supper, he adds: “*For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord until He come.*” St. Thomas of Aquin, the angelic expositor of the Blessed Sacrament, and the angelic composer of that most beautiful Office, gives us the very same interpretation. In the first lesson of the second nocturn, we find the expression of his deep thoughts well worthy of our special attention: “God in His goodness,” he teaches us, “bestowed upon His Christian people boundless gifts which confer upon us an inestimable dignity. The great nations of old made themselves gods according to their own heart, but no nation could even imagine a deity so closely united with itself as our true great God is united with us. For the only-begotten Son of God assumed our human nature to make us partecipate in His divine nature. He became the Son of Man to make us sons of men and sons of God.”

“The second indescribable gift,” says St. Thomas, “which elevated us to a new dignity was the Crucifixion. The Son of God having taken our nature, and having made it divine and precious in the sight of heaven, gave it back to us. He gave us His Body for our reconciliation, and His Blood to wash away our sins. To make all future generations remember and understand these gifts, which make us children of God, Jesus left as a memorial His Body and Blood, under the appearance of bread and wine, to be received by the Faithful. “*Deus, qui nobis sub Sacramento mirabili passionis tue memoriam*