

# Is the sacrifice of the Mass in contradiction to Scripture?



**Question:** Why do you have the sacrifice of the Mass since the Letter to the Hebrews says that “there is no more offering for sin”? Are you not saying that sacrifices need to be offered continually in contradiction to Scripture?

**Answer:** It is true, Hebrews does teach the following: “Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins. But this one offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God; now he waits until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated. ... Where there

is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin” (Heb 10:11-14, 18).

But note first, this is a reference to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant where the Levitical priests offered sacrifices repeatedly. Some were offered daily, and some were offered yearly or in conjunction with voluntary sacrifices, thanksgiving and vows made by individuals that were occasionally required or expected. However, as Hebrews says, Jesus, by one perfect sacrifice has fulfilled all the sacrifices of the old law associated with sin and hope for sanctification. What the old sacrifices could merely point to and hope for, Jesus’ sacrifice actually accomplishes, once and for all who will receive it.

But what of the phrase, “Where there is forgiveness of these [sins], there is no longer any offering for sin”? For indeed, the Catholic Church offers Mass and confession daily. The answer must emphatically be that the Mass is not a new offering for sin but a participation in, and a making present of Christ’s once for all and perfect sacrifice of Calvary. In no way do we see ourselves as sacrificing Christ anew. “We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God” (Rom 6:9-10). No, we do not re-offer the sacrifice of Jesus. Rather it, and its effects, are made present. We draw from the founts of mercy Christ made available to us by his perfect sacrifice that was offered once. Since it is perfect, it need not be offered

again. But the same text says it was offered for all. And hence, in the Mass, the fruits of Christ's one and perfect sacrifice are made available to all the faithful down through time. And hence, Jesus himself commanded regarding the Mass, "Take and eat, this is my Body, this is my Blood. ... Do this in memory of me."

*Msgr. Charles Pope is the pastor of Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian in Washington, D.C., and writes for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. at [blog.adw.org](http://blog.adw.org).*