



A Ruined Pair of Slacks **by Joe Sixpack**

This is a true story. I once knew a man who had three sons. All the sons were well-behaved and respected their father with a love not commonly seen. He seldom had to punish his sons, as they were eager to please their father. However, the oldest son got it into his head that he simply was not going to obey his father on one particular matter. The father spanked his son repeatedly for this chronic act of disobedience. It got to the point that the father knew he would lose his son to the boy's own will if he didn't break this streak of disobedience, so he decided to get creative.

The next time the boy repeated his disobedience on the one matter, the father sent his son for the paddle. In times past, the boy would move slowly to retrieve the paddle, putting off as long as he could the coming spanking. This time, though, the boy walked quickly to get the paddle, then returned purposefully to his father, and handed the paddle over with an attitude of arrogant defiance.

The father, saddened by his son's attitude, told his young son that he would have to give a paddling more severe than he'd ever done before. He told the boy to turn around and take what was coming to him. The boy defiantly turned, then bent over to hold his ankles while he awaited the spanking. The boy heard the swoosh of the first blow headed toward his bottom, followed by the smack of the contact. The boy jerked and shuddered. Then came the second smack, and the boy shuddered a little less. By the third smack the boy realized he wasn't being struck at all.

On about the sixth smack, the boy looked around to see his father bring down the paddle again...on his own leg. He had been hitting himself so hard that blood was seeping through his trousers. The little boy stood upright and wrapped himself around his father's leg, sobbing almost hysterically while he begged his father to stop. The little boy began to shout, "I'm sorry, Daddy! I won't do it again! Please stop! I'm sorry!"

The father stopped and knelt down to hold his repentant son. As the boy's sobs lapsed into shaky intakes of breath, the father said, "Son, I need you to understand that when you do something wrong there has to be a price paid. Your disobedience was so bad that it merited extreme punishment, but I couldn't bring myself to give you what you deserved. *So I took the punishment you deserved in your place.*"

God is the father of us all. Jesus is His Son, but He is also the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Original sin offended an infinite Being, so it deserved an infinite punishment; hence the reason He created hell. All of our personal sins also offend the infinite Being and deserve infinite punishment. But being the all-merciful Father that He is, God chose instead to take our

punishment upon Himself by taking on a human body and nature, then going to the cross to die. That was the bloody sacrifice Jesus took on for us.

A sacrifice is the offering of a victim by a priest to God. The Mass and Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary are one and the same; because in the Mass Jesus makes Himself present on the altar so that we can celebrate the memory of the cross, as well as apply its saving power for the forgiveness of our sins. "The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: 'This is my body which is given for you' and 'This cup which is poured out for you in the New Covenant in my blood.' In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he 'poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"¹

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is at one and the same time: the sacrifice of the cross made present on our altars; a memorial of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension; and a sacred banquet at which we receive Him in Holy Communion. In both the Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross the victim is Jesus Christ. He acted as the High Priest who offered Himself to the Father on the cross; He continues to act as high priest of the same sacrifice in the Mass, but does so now through the ministry of His priests.

The difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass is in the manner of presentation. Christ, "who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner"² on the altar of the Sacrifice of the Mass. On the cross, Jesus offered Himself to the Father when He "yielded up his spirit".³ In the Mass, Jesus offers Himself to the Father in the Consecration. The double consecration of the bread and wine represents the mystical separation of His body and blood. When the body and blood are separated, death results. Reception of the Holy Eucharist is our participation in Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross.

The purpose of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross are one and the same. They both give glory, praise, and worship to the Father; they both provide expiation and reparation for our sins and the sins of all mankind; they both appeal to God for the natural and supernatural favors we need, particularly those which help us to become holy.

Next week, we'll look at the mechanics of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Then we'll begin looking at Holy Communion. After we finish with Holy Communion, we'll take a look at how to give proper respect to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist...and how so many people grieve Him today by taking Him for granted and showing Him so little respect. It's all a part of knowing What We Believe...Why We Believe It.

Got a question? Go to JoeSixpackAnswers.com.

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1365

² Council of Trent, 1743

³ Matthew 27:50