

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Squaring Temple Traditions with Eucharist Third Week in Ordinary Time Saturday,
March 29, 2014 8:15 AM **Hos 6:1-6; Lk 18:9-14** (We have the Eucharist to help us
become part of Jesus' offering of himself to the Father.)

“For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”

This is from the prophet Hosea. It's important that we do read from the prophets because it is **only the prophets that really give a continuity between the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus.**

The prophets themselves, as you can tell from this reading, are **in conflict with many of the traditions of Israel.** In this case not the Law exactly, but the **Temple traditions.** They were relatively distinct. The Temple traditions were originally rooted in the vision that Moses had on the mountain, and they are rooted in a symbology and a symbolism that is actually rather difficult to unwrap. But what we had eventually was an actual physical Temple with actual **physical sacrifices** on and on and on **multiplied beyond count**, and this was supposedly what God wanted. **Hosea** makes it very clear, no, **that's not what God really wants.** And **Jesus** would later make that very clear again, especially but not only when he cleansed the Temple of the moneychangers, those that made these transactions possible. He didn't quote Hosea at that time, but he could have. He quoted Hosea other times, and the Letter to the Hebrews quotes Hosea.

So there is a connection between the Old and New. It's not always very clean and clear. The real problem is too often **the Lord of the Old Testament seems to be violent or commanding violence.** The whole idea of “‘Vengeance is mine,’ saith the Lord” reserves vengeance to the Lord, but that's the whole meaning of the Law and the way Law carried that out, so that's a problem. Punishing the guilty was violent. It was commanded by the Lord.

How do you square that with Jesus' message? This is a problem. Another one brought up here is how do you square the whole idea of sacrifice required by both the Law and the traditions of the Temple with Jesus' life? Well, **he squared it by becoming the sacrifice.** So God doesn't want gifts; **God wants your heart.** God doesn't want the blood of animals; God wants your blood. That's how Jesus took this. So **he became the sacrifice so that he is now both the offering and the knowledge of God. He is both love and sacrifice.**

Taking that seriously is really what is required of a good disciple. We have the Eucharist to help us become part of Jesus' offering of himself to the Father. It's not some thing we offer to the Father, although we are really to bring all that we own, but mostly who we are: **our bodies, minds, and wills we offer to the Father in conjunction with Jesus.** It's his offering we offer, but that includes ourselves. St. Augustine put it this way, very succinctly: "The whole Christ," that is the Church, all those baptized into Christ, the whole Christ, "offers the whole Christ," that includes the head, Jesus, and all the members, that is ourselves, "to the Father." That is why we gather for the Eucharist.