The Work of Christ as Priest

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Very esteemed brethren in the faith of Jesus Christ. It is because of the mercy of God that we are meeting this day to share these papers that have been assigned to each one of us. It is a real honor and privilege to be able to be with all of you, my brethren, in such a conference and to participate as a presenter for the first time. I hope that this humble work will serve to strengthen our faith.

May God pour out his blessings in these days!

The Offices of Christ

Everything that Christ did as the God-man in His state of humiliation, and what He still does as such in His state of exaltation, belongs to His divine office or work. Christ executed perfectly and still executes to perfection everything that is necessary for our salvation. Because of this, the mediating work of Christ includes everything that He did and still does to provide mankind with salvation.

From the moment of the incarnation, conception, birth, circumcision, obedience, etc. of Christ our Lord, everything tends to the same end, the salvation of the sinful world. "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). See 1 John 3:8. So, Christ came into the world to save sinners (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:15, John 4:9-10).

And as Savior of the sinner He had to accomplish three works: First, He had to teach men the way to salvation (Luke 4:18; John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1; Matthew 17:5). Second, He had to reconcile the world with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:1; 1 John 2:2). Third, He had to govern His church as Her head (Luke 1:33; Ephesians 1:20-23; John 18:33-37). Finally, all of these things that Christ performed as true God-man (Prophet, Priest, and King) were necessary for our salvation. Although Christ carried out his three offices simultaneously and conjunctly, it is necessary to speak about each one of them individually in order to have greater clarity.

Sacerdotal Office

A high priest was a minister especially assigned for worship and to execute sacrifices and rites in the name of the community. He was the highest religious dignitary, representing the nation before the Lord. Therefore, a high priest was one who represented men before God and had the task of presenting offerings and sacrifices for the sin of the people. With the goal of fulfilling these duties, a priest needed not only to pay attention to the fulfilling of precise ritual details, but also to have interior feelings with his sacred work.

In the same way, a high priest had certain essential duties: First, the service of the Lord in the sanctuary. Second, the teaching of the law to the people. Third, the consultations with Jehovah on behalf of the people (Exodus 28:30; Ezra 2:63; Numbers 16:40; 18:5; Jeremiah 18:8; Micah 7:11). He was also subjected to certain norms. For example, it was prohibited to him to be married to a dishonorable or repudiated woman. He had to be married to an Israelite who was a virgin, or a widow of proven genealogy. There were laws that determined what the conduct of the high priest ought to be. In the exercise of his functions the high priest wore sacred vestments whose use was prohibited outside of the temple.

The most important function of the high priest was to make atonement for the sins of the people once a year. Carrying the blood of atonement, protected by the cloud of perfume around him, he walked through the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place and took his place before the mercy seat (atonement cover) on the ark. He made atonement for himself, for his house, and for all the people (Leviticus 16:11-19). Afterwards he came out and confessed all of the sins of Israel over the head of the male goat, and the animal was conducted into the desert, bearing the sins of the people far away from the

presence of Jehovah (Leviticus 16:20-22). In all of this, Aaron acted as a type of Christ. So then, the earthly priests had the highest privilege of passing through the veil once a year to enter the Most Holy Place, in a material sanctuary.

The qualities of a priest were to be able to sympathize with those he represented and to have been divinely designated for this task (to have been called by God). This means that no man can of his own accord establish himself as high priest, nor can he maintain this office validly by the gift of some earthly authority. Aaron was designated for the priesthood after the proclamation of the pact on Sinai and the order to construct the tabernacle (Exodus 27:21; 28:1ff). In the beginning Aaron had only been the prophetic spokesman for Moses (Exodus 4:14-16; 7:1). In his time Moses was the only one who was admitted to the presence of God, be it on the mountain or in the tabernacle of testimony (Exodus 19:3, 19; 20:21; 24:12-18; 33:7-11; etc.). But once the tabernacle was raised and ready for the sacrifices, it became necessary to have a permanent priesthood. At that time Aaron was consecrated together with his sons, purified, anointed and dressed in the priestly garments (Leviticus 8).

Aaron and his successors, who represented the nation of Israel in the presence of God, were Israelites who knew the conditions under which the people lived. The work of high priest was the presentation to God of the offerings and sacrifices for sin. This was presented annually on the Day of Atonement. This was the occasion on which the high priest must fulfill the sacrificial functions. Because of this, with the goal of accomplishing these duties with dignity, a priest not only must pay attention to the precise fulfillment of various ritual details, but he must also have internal feelings in agreement with his sacred work. The high priests had to be patient and of good character, which in reality did not happen in any of those earthly high priests. Even if his acts had been perfect, yet the character of the man made him irremediably inadequate for the priesthood. No priest in Israel was disposed to "deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray" (Hebrews 5:2).

Because of this, a high priest could not make an adequate atonement for sins when he himself was full of feelings of indignation against those who were guilty. Even Aaron himself was not in a condition to intercede as a priest before God for the people. So, it was necessary for the high priest to present a sacrifice for his own sin and then for the people. Only after Aaron had presented a calf as an offering for sin, to atone for himself and for his family, could he proceed with the expiatory ritual in favor of the people. So, Aaron, as well as his successors, were sinful men and were obligated to make atonement first for their own sins. In the same way, they could only offer sacrifices of animals, incapable of erasing sins; and they were mortal men and their priesthood was constantly interrupted (Hebrews 7:23).

But Christ our Lord, since he was holy, eternal, innocent, without blemish, had no need to make a preliminary sacrifice for himself. He endured the common weaknesses and temptations of men, but did not yield to them. So, as it was necessary that the animals were physically clean, so also the life that Christ presented to God on the cross was a life free of contamination. As the servant of the Lord "he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth" (Isaiah 53:9). The holiness of our Lord, His active obedience to God, is essential for the efficacy of His sacrifice.

Qualities of Christ for the Priesthood

The same two qualifications for any high priest are present in Christ: First, His divine call. Second, His ability to sympathize with His people. Christ, the Son of God, did not assume the dignity of the high priesthood on His own initiative, but was called by God, who acclaimed Him His Son in Psalm 2:7. "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." Also, He acclaimed Him as permanent High Priest (Hebrews 7:24).

Christ as High Priest of His people is faithful and merciful, because He was made like His brethren in all aspects and was exposed to all the tests and temptations that they have had to endure. These temptations and tests fell upon Him, the Word says, "during the days of Jesus' life on earth" (Hebrews 5:7). This is an expression that emphasizes the condition of human weakness that He shared during his earthly life.

For example: Mark tells us that on the last night of His life Jesus began to feel very afflicted and anguished. Three times He expressed to his disciples who were accompanying Him the sentiment of the words, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." He told them, "Stay here and keep watch." Then He went in a little farther, fell to the ground and asked God His Father to make it possible that this moment of pain not arrive. In His prayer He said, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:33-36).

So, the High Priest (Christ) was tested in the same human way, but he did not commit any sin. Rather, He offered for us the only perfect and effective sacrifice, in such a way that His priesthood is sufficient to perfectly save us (Hebrews 4:14; 5:6; 7:21; 8:6; 9:11-14; 10:11-14). In the same way He did not look for a way to avoid temptations and tests through supernatural means. At no point can the objection be sustained that His Father helped Him to endure these temptations and tests because He was the Son of God, or that they were easier for Him than for us.

Christ recognized the will of His Father and fulfilled it to perfection. Therein lies His obedience. "In spite of being the Son," no exception from the law was conceded to him. From the beginning Christ marched on the way of obedience to God (see Isaiah 50:5). For this reason, even the sufferings of Christ were the necessary price of His obedience and this qualified Him to be the Savior and High Priest of His people. Christ has brought eternal salvation with His perfect obedience. "Israel will be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation" (Isaiah 45:17).

The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place

The Holy Place formed a rectangle 20 cubits long by 10 wide (Exodus 26:16, 18, 22-24). The priests entered this place every day (Hebrews 9:6). The Most Holy Place beyond the curtain had a cubic form, 10 cubits on each side. The priest entered there only once a year (Hebrews 9:7). So, in the tabernacle and the temple the Holy Place was in continuous use. Day by day, morning and afternoon, the designated priests entered it to light the lamps (Exodus 27:29ff), and at the same time to burn incense on the altar (Exodus 30:7ff). Again week after week the designated priests entered in the Holy Place to put fresh bread on the table for the bread of propitiation (Leviticus 24:8ff). In conclusion, those were offices that took place in the first part of the tabernacle/temple and any member of the priesthood could execute them.

In contrast, no one except the high priest was permitted to enter the "second part" of the tabernacle, the Most Holy Place, and even in that he was only permitted to enter once a year, on the day of atonement, and the conditions for entering were very strictly prescribed (see Leviticus 16). For example: the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place only on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tisri) in each year; with garments of white linen reserved for special sacrificial occasions.

He entered twice in the Most Holy Place. On the first occasion he took the blood of the calf that had been sacrificed as an offering for his sin and that of his household and he sprinkled it on the front of the mercy seat (atonement cover) and before the mercy seat, which was covered the whole time by the cloud that rose from the incense being burned on the golden altar. Later, when the male goat had been killed as an offering for the sins of the people, he brought that blood into the Most Holy Place and splattered it on and before the mercy seat.

Later, having completed this part of the ritual of atonement, he left the sanctuary and confessed the "national" sins over the head of the second male goat designated by lot; then it was sent into the desert in the place of the people.

Aaron and his successors entered the earthly Most Holy Place on the day of atonement by virtue of the sacrifices of animals (blood of male goats . . . of calves). Christ, however, has entered the heavenly sanctuary by virtue of His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). He took His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary. The Aaronic high priests had to present themselves repeatedly before God, because the redemption that their ministry procured was no more than a sign and had a temporary character; but Christ entered there once for all time. All of the offerings (blood of animals) that were presented on the day of atonement or at any time, possessed a ceremonial cleanness, an external efficacy. They served to effect an external purification, but the blood of Christ, His sacrifice, did not effect only a mere cleansing, but a clean conscience before God.

Imperfection of the Old Priesthood

No priest of the lineage of Aaron could have been described as "a priest forever," for the simple reason that each one of them died at his appropriate time. But the High Priest of Christians is immortal, having died once for all and having risen from death. The declaration, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek," announced the abrogation of the former law that instituted the Aaronic order. It was inevitable that the former law be abrogated sooner or later because, in spite of the ritual sacrifices and the priestly ministry, it did not procure any real peace of conscience, nor immediate access to God. The perfect life of our Lord Jesus Christ made it possible for him to be the letterperfect fulfillment of "You are a priest forever." To be sure, the Aaronic priests were called according to a hereditary principle, but none of them could enjoy the priestly dignity perpetually.

Aaron served his people as high priest during the pilgrimage in the desert; but there arrived the day in which Aaron and his son Eleazar were taken by Moses to the top of Mount Hor. There, Moses took the vestments off of Aaron and placed them on Eleazar, and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain, and Moses and Eleazar descended. Later, after the establishment in the land of Canaan, Eleazar died (Joshua 24:33) and was succeeded by his son, Phinehas and so the history continues. Generation after generation, the priests died, and their office passed to another.

There were many priests, but death impeded them from continuing to serve. However Jesus, our Lord, is eternal and doesn't die, his priestly office does not pass to another. He is the only one who is irreplaceable, perfect for all time, the only holy and perfect one. Because of this, all of those who have Christ as their High Priest and Mediator before God, have in Him a Savior whose redeeming power is perpetually available to all. He lives for all time, eternally committed to bless and protect those who have been delivered to Him. So, the way by which it is possible to approach God is through Christ. It is a way that is always open because, in the presence of God, He represents His people as "priest forever."

Superiority of the New Priesthood

Whatever the reasons, the new priest is better because the new priest is Christ. He withstood difficult temptations on earth. He learned by suffering how difficult the way of obedience could be. He interceded for his disciples so that their faith would not fail when the time of testing came. He offered His life to God as an offering for sin in favor of the people. Because of this, Jesus is the unchangeable High Priest who helps all of those who come to God through Him. He is precisely the High Priest that we needed: "Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

Jesus has the unique qualification of having experienced the complete force of temptation without having succumbed to it even once. He is holy, free from all guilt and contamination. He came to earth "in the likeness of flesh." He lived among sinners, received sinners, ate with sinners, was known as a friend of sinners. However, He was separate from sinners and now is exalted above all the heavens to share the throne of God.

A high priesthood carried out at any earthly altar is inferior to the heavenly High Priest who depends on a perfect sacrifice offered once for all time for the exercise of his office. Since its beginning, the earthly sanctuary was designed to be only a "figure" and "shadow" of the heavenly reality. On the other hand, the tabernacle did have the intention of serving as a place of dwelling for God among His people on the earth. The high priests of the lineage of Aaron ministered in an earthly sanctuary, but Jesus exercises His High Priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly was only a model or a pattern.

Because of this, the ministry of Jesus is very superior to any earthly ministry. If the old "testament" or covenant had been perfect, it would not have been necessary to replace it with the new. And the new must be better because it would not have made sense to replace the old testament with another that wasn't better. The new testament implies the abolition of the old sacrificial order due to a perfect and unrepeatable sacrifice.

One Sacrifice Forever

Before presenting an offering for sin in favor of his people, Aaron and his successors had to present first an offering for themselves. But Jesus did not need to present a daily sacrifice nor even an annual sacrifice for

the sin of the people. He presented one permanent and valid sacrifice in favor of his people when he offered his own life as an offering so perfect and effective that it needs no repetition.

Even less did He have the need to present a sacrifice for Himself. He is holy, innocent, without blemish (Hebrews 7:26). He is personally free from all guilt and the tyranny of sin, and for this reason He is the one most capable of being the effective High Priest. "He . . . provided purification for sins" (Hebrews 1:3). And He was called precisely "that he might make atonement for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17), since it is the function of all high priests "to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebrews 5:1).

The sacrifice that our Lord Jesus Christ offered was that He offered himself "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He spoke of the new testament in His blood which was poured out for many (the Lord's Supper) (Mark 14:24). This clearly indicated that our Lord was presenting Himself to God as a sacrifice for others. And when His hour had come and He was extended on the cross, instead of having His heart full of bitter resentment against His executioners; He offered His life to God as a sacrifice for His people.

How effective and acceptable this sacrifice was before God! Under the old law the high priest was surrounded by weaknesses and because of them he had to offer sacrifices for sins, as much for himself as for the people. However, Jesus our High Priest is not subject to these earthly conditions. He is the one whom God addressed as His Son, whose high priesthood is absolutely effective and eternally adequate to fulfill the necessity of His people. Christ was capable of doing what man could not do because of his sinful nature. God sent His own Son in a condition similar to that of sinful man, and as a sacrifice for sin.

Christ has fulfilled once for all time what generations of levitical sacrifices had never accomplished: "One sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:12). Probably many or the majority of those who were first converted to Christianity had been accustomed to some form of adoration in which the sacrifices of animals played a part. The fact that His new form of adoration had no place for such sacrifices was in itself a recognition that they had been pronounced obsolete forever by the death of Christ. So, truly the sacrifice of Christ had purified His people from the moral contamination of sin and had assured them of the permanent maintenance of a correct relation with God, "because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Hebrews 10:14).

The sacrifice of Christ has made His holy people "perfect" for all time. Because of this, three spectacular effects have been attributed to this sacrifice of Christ: Through Christ the conscience of His people has been cleansed of guilt; through Him they have been made capable of approaching God as acceptable worshippers; and through Him they have experienced the fulfillment of all that had been promised in the olden days and have been brought into a perfect relationship with God.

It also meant that their past sins and iniquities had been eternally erased from God's files, for He promises, "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17). In that sacrificial law of the old testament there was an "annual reminder of sins," while in the new pact there is no more memory of them.

Perfect Sacrifice

Christ as High Priest of His people has not entered into any material sanctuary, but into the presence of God in heaven to present Himself before God on our behalf (Hebrews 9:24). One who is personally holy, innocent and without blemish (Hebrews 7:26) is in His home and is acceptable in the presence of God. But now He appears in the presence of God not only on His own behalf but also in favor of sinners. If we want to present ourselves before God, we must be clean of sin because God is holy. To appear before God by ourselves is impossible; since only through the representation of Christ our High Priest do we remain clean and able to present ourselves before the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24).

When Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, He did it once for all time and His entrance into the presence of God in favor of His people was by virtue of His own blood. This makes a contrast with the entrance of the high priest of Israel into the material Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. The high priest of Israel, having entered to present the sacrificial blood ("blood that is not his own"), had to leave again immediately only to enter and repeat the same ceremony the following year, and the year following that, and so on indefinitely. But the sacrifice of Christ, being a real sacrifice and not a sign, is perpetually effective, and, because of that, does not need repetition (Hebrews 9:25). If the sacrifice of Christ had been in need of repetition, then he would have had to endure suffering and death an infinite number of times through the years of world history. The Word says: "Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:25-26). So the purpose of the coming of Christ was to make sacrifice for our sins.

We read in 1 John 3:5. "But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins." "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:12-15).

Christ died once by divine design, and His death was followed by salvation for all of His people. This is so because in His death he bore "the sins of many," offering His life to God as an atonement for them. Or as Isaiah writes, ". . . because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). So, the presentation of the life of our Lord to God was a sacrifice so perfect that any repetition is not possible nor necessary. He was offered "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

Likewise, the Aaronic priests never sat down in the sanctuary. They remained on their feet during the whole development of their sacred duties, and these were never complete because their sacrifices always had to be repeated continually every year. But whether the repetition was every year or daily, the main point is that repetition was necessary. None of those sacrifices could remove sin or purify the conscience with a permanent effect. The completion of a sacrifice only meant that another similar must be offered in due time, and so on indefinitely. It was to show this that the priests did not sit down in the presence of God when a sacrifice had been presented to Him.

But the perfection of the sacrifice that Christ made of Himself is shown in that when He had presented it to God, he sat down. No other sacrificial service can be required of the priest who appeared in the fullness of time to lay aside sin and to sanctify His people once and for all. A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and of an accepted sacrifice. The heavenly High Priest certainly has a continuous ministry to intercede for His people at the right hand of His Father.

Intercession of Christ

The heavenly High Priest certainly has a continuous and permanent ministry to intercede in favor of His people. And His intercession rests on the base of the presented and accepted sacrifice once and for all and not on a constant or repeated offering of His sacrifice. Christ is really the only mediator between God and men, because He possesses divinity and humanity perfectly in the same person. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). So, men are able to approach God with all security because they have a priest who intercedes for them.

Therefore, if we have Jesus as our High Priest, who has made propitiation for the sin of His people and has suffered their weaknesses and provides mercy and grace to help them in the time of need and intercedes always in favor of His people at the right hand of God the Father, then "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Romans 8:33,34).

It is important to speak about the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ because in some periods of time it has been grotesquely misrepresented in popular Christian thinking. It must not be thought that Christ is interceding for us as an orant always standing before His Father with his arms extended and blabbering with strong cries and tears for our cause. In no way. Christ is our High Priest who asks what He desires of His Father who always hears and grants His requests. It is certain that the life itself of our Lord in heaven is His prayer. His self-sacrifice completed once is infinitely acceptable and effective. His contact with the Father is immediate and uninterrupted. His priestly ministry in favor of His people never ends, so the salvation of which He assures us is absolute.

Christ our High Priest has been seated at the right hand of the Father as a sign that His sacrificial work is completed. But even more, the value of His sacrifice and the dignity of His person are evident by the fact that He has been seated not merely in the presence of God, but at the right hand of God. From the shame of the cross, He has been exalted to the place of heavenly glory. Because of that, His people are able to appropriate His priestly help, assured that in Him they have access to the grace of God and His power. God the Father says to you: "Sinner, you thought that because of your sins and weaknesses I could not save your soul, but behold that My Son is here at my side, and I look at Him and work with you because of My contentment with Him." So the glorified Christ intercedes as the God-man in favor of His people and provides the believer with the absolute security of his salvation.

Access to God Through the Sacrifice of Christ

In view of all that Christ has accomplished for us, we confidently approach God in prayer. We maintain our Christian confession and hope; we help each other by gathering together regularly for mutual support, because the day for which we are waiting will soon be manifested. The "freedom" that the believers have in Christ to enter the heavenly sanctuary through Him is contrasted with the restrictions that existed in the earthly sanctuary. In this all the people could not make use of its privilege, but only the high priest as their representative, and even he could not do so when he chose, but only at determined times and under certain conditions.

But those who have been purified, consecrated and made perfect by the sacrifice of Christ, have received a free right of access to the holy presence of God. The sacrifice of Christ our Lord has restored the relationship between God and man. And now in Him we have that invitation to approach "confidently the throne of grace." So believers have free entrance to the heavenly place. That is, we have the right of access to the heavenly throne by means of the sacrifice of Christ in favor of His people.

Jesus, our High Priest, who entered once and for all in the Most Holy Place by His own blood (Hebrews 9:12), has procured for His people an equal right to enter by the same blood that He spilled as a sacrifice in favor of His people. Now the way by which one enters the presence of God is a new way that had not existed before He opened it and entered there. So it is a new and living way. In effect Christ Himself as Sacrifice and Priest for His people is the way to God. The Lord says in John 14:6: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." It is a way that crosses the veil into the Most Holy Place. It is because of the sacrifice of Christ that the way of access to God has been opened. From one point of view, the veil kept man apart from God; but through the death of Christ the veil was torn and the new way was consecrated through Christ, by which man is able to approach God.

So, brethren, if Christ our Lord is our High Priest who intercedes for us besides, then we have the privilege of approaching Him with all confidence. Then those who venture to enter the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Jesus are purified and made able to be in the divine presence by that same blood. So then, since we have a great High Priest who is merciful and faithful, let us approach with a sincere heart and remain firm, retaining to the end our confidence that we have been made participants of Christ, and let us remain firm without doubting in the hope of the faith that we profess. Remember and do not forget that we have a merciful High Priest who intercedes for us, His children, and that only through Him are we able to receive all the strength we need to maintain our confession and resist the temptations of the devil. Christ our Savior has been made more sublime than the heavens. For these reasons, Christ is a great High Priest who intercedes for us.

I hope that this little essay has been pleasing to all of you and serves in some way to increase our knowledge and strengthen our faith. I repeat my thanks to all of you for giving me the opportunity to share together the Word of God during these days. May God bless you and enlighten you in your tasks. Amen.