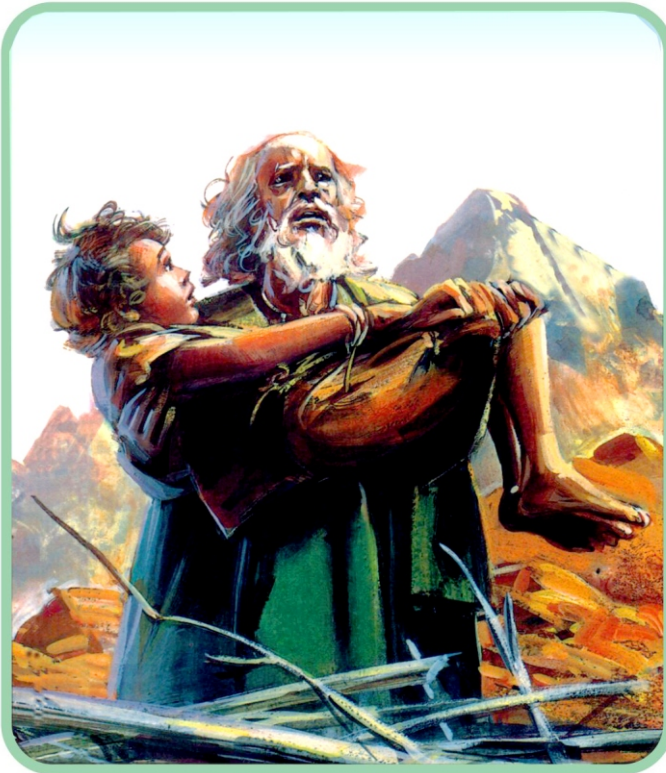
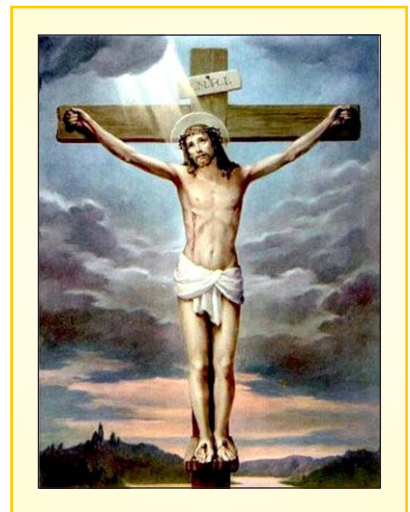


HOLY QURBANA THE HIGHEST FORM OF WORSHIP



As promised by God, Abraham was given a son. He was named Isaac. One day, God said to Abraham, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the Land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering...” (Gen.22:2). Placing his trust in God, Abraham got ready to sacrifice his son. And God was highly pleased with Abraham's readiness to obey his command.

“... God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). Having understood fully the wish of his Father, Jesus sacrificed himself on Calvary in order to set us free from the menaces of sin. **The holy Qurbana is a sacramental celebration of the most solemn adoration rendered by Jesus through his own self-dedication.** Hence, the holy Qurbana is the most solemn form of worship.



Holy Qurbana : The Sacrifice and Banquet

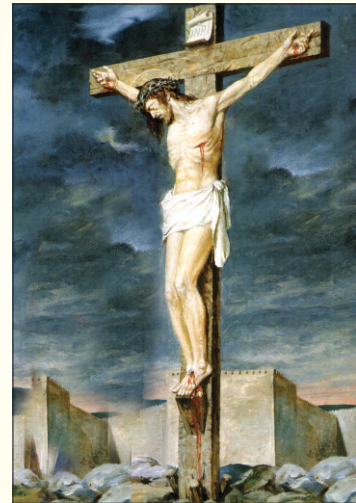
The holy Qurbana is both a sacrifice and a banquet; the celebration of the Qurbana on the altar is a re-enactment of the sacrifice of love, offered by Jesus to our eternal Father, on Calvary. **Jesus was both the celebrant and the sacrificial offering in the sacrifice of Calvary.** He said: "... I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." (Jn. 10: 17-18). As St. Paul said: "...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:2).

In the midst of the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus instituted the sacrament of the holy Qurbana, the very sacrifice of his own life. **What he did during the Last Supper was the sacramental form of the sacrifice, yet to be fulfilled on Calvary.** Taking a loaf of bread, Jesus blessed it, broke and gave to his disciples and said, "Take, eat, this is my body." Jesus did specify that the bread was he himself. He was hinting that he was the lamb to be sacrificed on the wooden cross on Calvary.

The holy Qurbana is a heavenly banquet prepared for us by Jesus. **We eat and drink, here, the body and blood of the resurrected Christ.** Those who participate in the Qurbana feed from the sacrificial offering at the completion of the sacrifice. Those who are invited for a wedding feast share the meal to show their complete participation. **Similarly, those who participate in the Qurbana ought to receive communion for the completion of eucharistic participation.**

ACTIVITY - 1

Discuss about the similarities and differences between the sacrifice of Jesus and the sacrifice of Abraham as mentioned in the passage Gen. 22: 1-19. Based on this discussion find out the unique particularities of the sacrifice of Jesus.



Holy Qurbana: The Celebration of the Messianic Event

During the Last Supper, giving the bread and wine as his body and blood Jesus told them, 'Do it in memory of me.' The holy Qurbana is a sacrifice on the altar being performed in memory of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection as commanded by him. In this paschal mystery all the mysteries in the life of Jesus are commemorated through signs and symbols. **The mysteries such as his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and his glorious second coming are recalled and celebrated in the holy Qurbana.**

Holy Qurbana: The Prayer of the Church Community

The holy Qurbana is the official form of worship of God by the community of the Church. The holy Qurbana is the worship of God, the Father, rendered by the Church, the body, in union with Jesus, the Head. In the holy Qurbana, all those in heaven and on earth unite and worship God.

The Church basically is a worshipping community. **All the activities of the Church focus on the zenith of worshipping God.** The proclamation and observance of her faith and salvific experience are being echoed in the holy Qurbana. Jesus is the cornerstone of the Church built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets; and in this temple, we conduct our worship of God.

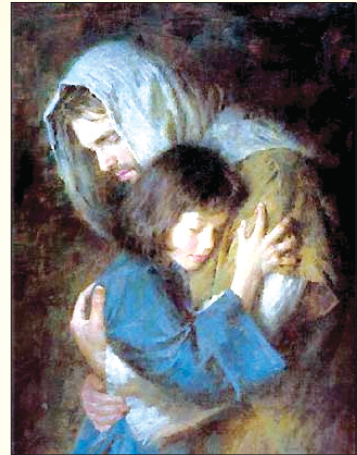


Jesus who is Present in the Liturgy of the Church

The Church joins her groom, Jesus, and performs her liturgical services. The Church is his body (Eph. 1:23). The Holy Qurbana is the eternal and holy form of worship of God in honour of the Father offered by Jesus. As the document on the Sacred Liturgy teaches 'it is Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross, through the ministry of the priest, performing the oblation in the holy Qurbana. He is present in the bread and wine, in a special way. He is present in all the sacraments with his own power. Whenever the sacraments are celebrated or the Holy Bible is read in churches, prayers are being recited, Jesus is invariably present there'. (Liturgy 7); and he is actually officiating them. Every rite in the liturgy is sacred and solemn as it is performed by Jesus the priest, in union with the Church, his body (Liturgy 7).

Holy Qurbana: The Power-House of Christian Life

From the liturgy, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain. The power of the Church emanates from there itself. (Liturgy 10). The holy Qurbana is the power-house of Christian life, because we commemorate and celebrate the great, awesome, holy, life-giving and divine mystery of the passion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus who has taught us the message of love in giving up himself for the sake of others. (4th G'hanta). When we participate in these divine mysteries, we are filled with divine grace; and grow in the love of God and men. We get strength and inspiration to incorporate our sorrows in life with the agony endured by Jesus and make them redemptive.



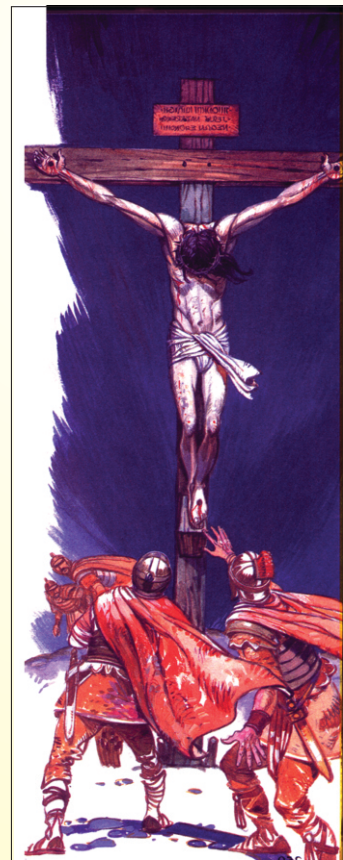
The mother of the destitutes, the blessed Mother Teresa, received strength to see Jesus in the poor, the sick, the infants and the old, left out on the streets and serve them, from the Holy Eucharist. Similarly, the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary strengthened many saintly souls like Fr. Damien and Maxmillian Kolbe to sacrifice their lives for the sake of others. **The Holy Eucharist supplies energy for a God-centred and man-centred life.**

Holy Qurbana is Continued in Our Life

The sacrifice on the altar should not end, but continue in our daily life. **As Jesus on the altar has become the bread of our life, broke himself and fed us, we must give ourselves to others and impart life to them no matter whatever is the sphere of our activity.** Jesus after blessing and giving his body and blood to his disciples, said: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19). This commandment reminds us of the necessity of breaking and sharing in our lives.

Mother Teresa, who came out to nurse and serve the old and the sick forsaken on the streets, saw Jesus in them and continued the sacrificial life of Jesus. Even today we come across many philanthropists ready to share their wealth, health and time with others.

When we look after the helpless, sick and the old, or help classmates in their studies, comfort the afflicted, pray for the repentance of the sinners, obey and assist our parents and execute our daily chores, we proceed with our life of sacrifice; we become bread for others.



The Holy Eucharist should become the powerhouse of our life. Let us continue our life of sacrifice drawing sustenance from Jesus, the bread of life by receiving holy communion; thereby we will be worthy of the eternal banquet in heaven.

The Three Forms of the Holy Qurbana

There are three forms for the holy Qurbana of the Syro-Malabar Church:

1. The most solemn form (raza).
2. The solemn form.
3. The simple form.

The different parts of the Holy Qurbana

Only when we comprehend fully the meaning of the prayers and rituals of every liturgical action, can we have an experiential participation in the holy Qurbana.

1. Introductory Rites
2. Liturgy of the Word
3. Preparation of the Gifts
4. Anaphora (Consecration)
5. Rite of Reconciliation
6. Breaking of the Bread
7. Holy Communion
8. Concluding Prayers



**LET US
READ AND
MEDITATE THE
WORD OF GOD**

(1 Cor. 11 : 23 - 29)

A Verse to Remember

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord."

(1 Cor. 11:27)

Let us Pray

O, Lord Jesus, bless and empower us to participate in the holy Qurbana actively and receive the holy communion, the Body and Blood of Jesus, worthily.

My Resolution

I will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus worthily whenever I participate in the holy Qurbana.

Teachings of the Fathers of the Church

We, who see Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, cannot but see him in the sick and the forsaken around.

(Saint Mother Teresa)

QUESTIONS

1. Why do we consider the holy Qurbana as the solemn form of worship of God?
2. The Church joins Jesus to worship God. Elucidate.
3. The holy Qurbana is not a private prayer by individuals, but a prayer by the community of the Church. Do you agree with this statement.? Give your reasons.
4. How does the holy Qurbana become the power-house of Christian life?
5. Write short note on 'The holy Qurbana: A sacrifice and a banquet'.