

## **The new covenant in the blood of our Lord**

(Mathews Mar Barnabas)

May I explain the importance of the Holy Eucharist (Holy Qurbana) celebrated by our Lord before His self-sacrifice on the cross.

There are two important aspects connected with it. 1) Through the Holy Qurbana we receive our Lord into us. 2) We make a dedication to lead a godly life. It is the new covenant that we make with God.

Let us see how we make this covenant with God. In the book of Exodus chapter 24, we find how a covenant was made between the Israelites and God. This is the old covenant. This covenant which God made with the Israelites was the covenant He made at Mount Sinai as recorded in the book of Exodus.

“Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do.” And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Ex. 24:3-8)

But in Exodus 32:15-20, we find how the Israelites made a calf of gold and worshipped it, breaking the covenant they had made with God.

In our Lord we find the new covenant. "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (St. Lk. 22: 19-20).

Concerning this new covenant, God spoke through prophet Jeremiah as follows "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34) The thought that our Lord shed his blood for us will make a real change of heart. If the Lord lived for us and died for us, we must live and die for Him.

It is the new covenant which was fulfilled in the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed on the cross. It is in this new covenant that we participate in the Holy Baptism in which we renounce Satan and proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ. When we drink the blood of the new covenant in the Holy Eucharist (Holy Qurbana), the covenant is being renewed again and again. But many of us break our covenant in practical life, forgetting the importance that the new covenant was made in the blood of the incarnate Lord while the old covenant was made in the blood of the animals. In fact every baptism and Holy Qurbana must be occasions of the new covenant making a thorough change in the hearts of the faithful.