

## QUESTION 48

### The Mode of Effecting that Belongs to Christ's Passion

Next we have to consider the effect of Christ's passion: first, its mode of effecting (question 48); second, the effect itself (question 49).

On the first topic there are six questions: (1) Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of meriting (*per modum meriti*)? (2) Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of making satisfaction (*per modum satisfactionem*)? (3) Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of offering a sacrifice (*per modum sacrificii*)? (4) Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of redeeming (*per modum redemptionis*)? (5) Is being a redeemer peculiar to Christ? (6) Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of efficient causality (*per modum efficientiae*)?

#### Article 1

##### Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of meriting?

It seems that Christ's passion was not a cause of our salvation through the mode of meriting (*passio Christi non causaverit nostram salutem per modum meriti*):

**Objection 1:** The principles of our sufferings do not exist within us. But no one merits or is praised except because of something whose principle exists within him. Therefore, Christ's passion did not bring about anything through the mode of meriting.

**Objection 2:** As was explained above (q. 34, a. 3), from the beginning of His conception Christ merited both for Himself and for us. But it is superfluous for something to be merited again if He had already merited it in other ways. Therefore, Christ did not merit our salvation through His passion.

**Objection 3:** The root of merit is charity. But in His passion Christ's charity did not increase to a higher degree than it was before. Therefore, it is not the case that by suffering He merited our salvation more than He did before His passion.

**But contrary to this:** In commenting on Philippians 2:9 ("Because of this God exalted Him ..."), Augustine says, "The humility of the passion merits glory, the glory of humility is its reward." But He was glorified (*clarificatus est*) not only in Himself but also in His faithful ones, as He Himself says in John 17:10. Therefore, it seems that He merited the salvation of His faithful ones.

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 7, aa. 1-9 and q. 8, aa. 1-5), Christ was given grace not only as a single person but also as head of the Church, in order that grace might overflow from Him to His members. And so Christ's works are related both to Himself and to His members in the way in which the works of any other man constituted in grace are related to himself. But it is clear that if anyone constituted in grace suffers for the sake of justice, then by that very fact he merits salvation for himself—this according to Matthew 5:10 ("Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice ..."). Hence, through His passion Christ merits salvation not only for Himself but also for all His members.

**Reply to objection 1:** Suffering as such has its principle from the outside. But insofar as an individual voluntarily undergoes the suffering, it has a principle from within.

**Reply to objection 2:** From the beginning of His conception Christ merited eternal salvation for us, but on our part there were certain impediments by which we were prevented from attaining the effect of the previous merits. Hence, as was explained above (q. 46, a. 3), in order to remove those impediments, Christ had to suffer.

**Reply to objection 3:** As is clear from the arguments adduced above for the fittingness of Christ's passion (q. 46, a. 3), Christ's passion had a certain effect that His preceding merits did not have—not because of a greater charity, but because of the genus of the work that was fitting for such an effect.

## Article 2

### Was Christ's passion a cause of our salvation through the mode of making satisfaction?

It seems that Christ's passion was not a cause our salvation through the mode of making satisfaction (*passio Christi non causaverit nostram salutem per modum satisfactionis*):

**Objection 1:** As is clear in the case of the other parts of [the virtue of] penance (*in aliis poenitentiae partibus*), making satisfaction seems to belong to the same individual to whom the sinning belongs; for being contrite and confessing belong to the same individual to whom sinning belongs. But Christ did not sin—this according to 1 Peter 2:22 (“... who committed no sin”). Therefore, He did not make satisfaction by His own passion.

**Objection 2:** An individual does not make satisfaction to anyone by a greater offense. But a greater offense was perpetrated in the case of Christ's passion, since, as was explained above (q. 47, a. 6), those who killed Him committed the most grievous sin of all. Therefore, it seems that satisfaction could not be made to God through Christ's passion.

**Objection 3:** Making satisfaction implies a sort of equality to the sin, since it is an act of justice. But Christ's passion does not seem to be equal to all the sins of the human race, since Christ suffered with respect to His flesh and not with respect to His divine nature (*non secundum divinitatem sed secundum carnem*)—this according to 1 Peter 4:1 (“Since Christ, therefore, has suffered in the flesh ...”). Now the soul, in which sin exists, is more important than the flesh. Therefore, Christ did not through His passion make satisfaction for our sins.

**But contrary to this:** In Christ's person Psalm 68:5 says, “Then did I pay for what I had not stolen.” But an individual does not pay without having made complete satisfaction. Therefore, Christ, by suffering, made complete satisfaction for our sins.

**I respond:** An individual makes proper satisfaction for an offense when he delivers to the offended party something that the latter loves to the same degree, or to a greater degree, than the degree to which he hates the offense. But in suffering out of love and obedience, Christ delivered to God something more than was required to compensate for the total offense caused by the human race (*quam exigeret recompensatio totius offensae humani generis*):

First of all, because of the *magnitude of the charity* out of which He suffered.

Second, because of the *dignity of His own life*, which He laid down for the sake of making satisfaction; for this was the life of God and of a man.

Third, because of the *great extent of His suffering and the magnitude of the pain* which He took on. This was explained above (q. 46, aa. 5-6).

And so Christ's passion made not only sufficient satisfaction but also superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race—this according to 1 John 2:2 (“He is a propitiation for our sins—and not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world”).

**Reply to objection 1:** The head and the members are, as it were, a single mystical person. And that is why Christ's making satisfaction applies to all the faithful as His members. Again, as will become clear below (Supplement q. 13, a. 2), insofar as two men are one in charity, the one can make satisfaction for the other.

Now the argument about confessing and being contrite is not similar, since making satisfaction consists in an exterior act to which one can apply instruments, and friends, too, are counted among the instruments.

**Reply to objection 2:** Christ's charity was greater than the malice of those who crucified Him. And so Christ was able to make satisfaction by His passion to a greater degree than the degree to which the crucifiers were able to offend by killing Him—so much greater that Christ's passion was sufficient,

even more than sufficient (*et superabundans*), to make satisfaction for the sins of those who crucified Him.

**Reply to objection 3:** The dignity of Christ's flesh should be measured not only with respect to the nature of the flesh but with respect to the assuming person, i.e., insofar as the flesh was the flesh of God, from whom it has an infinitely great dignity.

### Article 3

#### Did Christ's passion operate through the mode of a sacrifice?

It seems that Christ's passion did not operate through the mode of a sacrifice (*passio Christi non fuerit operata per modum sacrificii*):

**Objection 1:** The reality should correspond to the prefigurement. But in the sacrifices of the Old Law, which prefigured Christ, human flesh was never offered; indeed, such sacrifices were regarded as unspeakable—this according to Psalm 105:38 (“They poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan”). Therefore, it seems that Christ's passion cannot be called a sacrifice.

**Objection 2:** In *De Civitate Dei* 10 Augustine says, “The visible sacrifice is a sacrament, i.e., a sacred sign, of an invisible sacrifice.” But Christ's passion is not a sign; instead, it is something signified by other signs. Therefore, it seems that Christ's passion is not a sacrifice.

**Objection 3:** If an individual offers a sacrifice, he makes something sacred, as the very name ‘sacrifice’ shows. But those who killed Christ did not make anything sacred, but instead perpetrated a great evil. Therefore, Christ's passion was more a crime than a sacrifice.

**But contrary to this:** In Ephesians 5:2 the Apostle says, “He delivered Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God with a fragrant odor.”

**I respond:** Properly speaking, a sacrifice is any work that is done to give the honor which is owed properly to God, in order to appease Him. Hence, in *De Civitate Dei* 10 Augustine says, “A true sacrifice is every work that is done in order that we might cling to God in holy fellowship, i.e., any work that is ordered toward the goal of that good wherein we can be truly happy.” Now Christ, as Augustine adds in the same place, “offered Himself in His passion for our sake,” and this very work, i.e., enduring the passion voluntarily, was acceptable to God to the highest degree, since it proceeded from charity. Hence, it is clear that Christ's passion was a true sacrifice. And as Augustine adds later in book 10, “The primitive sacrifices of the holy men were many and varied signs of this true sacrifice, with the one being prefigured by the many in the same way that one reality is expressed in many verbal formulations, in order that one might commend that reality in many different ways without becoming tedious.” And as Augustine explains in *De Trinitate* 4, “Since there are four things to consider in every sacrifice, viz., (a) *to whom* it is offered, (b) *by whom* it is offered, (c) *what* is offered, and (d) *for whom* it is offered, the same one and true mediator reconciles us with God through a sacrifice of peace: He remained one with Him *to whom* He offered it, He made one within Himself those *for whom* He offered it, He Himself was the one *who made* the offering and He Himself was *what* He offered.”

**Reply to objection 1:** Even though the reality corresponds to the prefigurement in some respect, it does not correspond to it in *every* respect, since the reality has to exceed the prefigurement. And so it was fitting for the prefigurement of the sacrifice by which the flesh of Christ was offered for us to be the flesh not of men, but of other animals signifying the flesh of Christ, which was the most perfect sacrifice of all. First of all, because by the fact that the flesh belongs to a human nature, it is fittingly offered for human beings, and they partake of it under the Sacrament [of the Altar]. Second, because by the fact that the

flesh was passible and mortal, it was fit for being immolated. Third, because by the fact that the flesh was without sin, it was efficacious in washing away sins. Fourth, because by the fact that it was the flesh of the one making the offering, it was acceptable to God because of the charity of the one making the offering of His own flesh.

Hence, in *De Trinitate* 4 Augustine explains, “What else is so fittingly partaken of by men, or offered up for men, as human flesh? And what else could be so appropriate for this immolation as mortal flesh? What else is so clean for washing away the vices of mortals as the flesh produced in and from the virginal womb without the contagion of carnal concupiscence? And what could be so favorably offered and received as the flesh of our sacrifice, which was made the body of our priest?”

**Reply to objection 2:** Augustine is here speaking of the visible, prefigurative sacrifices.

And yet the very passion of Christ, even though it was signified by other prefigurative sacrifices, is nonetheless the sign of a reality to be observed by us—this according to 1 Peter 4:1-2 (“Since Christ therefore has suffered in the flesh, you should also arm yourselves with the same intent; for one who has suffered in the flesh has stopped sinning, in order that he might live the rest of his time in the flesh no longer according to the desires of men, but according to the will of God.”)

**Reply to objection 3:** On the part of those who killed Christ, His passion was a crime, but on His own part it was a sacrifice of one who was suffering out of charity. Hence, it is Christ Himself who is said to have offered this sacrifice, and not those who killed Him.

#### Article 4

##### Did Christ’s passion effect our salvation through the mode of redeeming?

It seems that Christ’s passion did not effect our salvation through the mode of redeeming (*passio Christi non fuerit operata nostram salutem per modum redemptionis*):

**Objection 1:** No one pays for or redeems what has not ceased to belong to him. But men never ceased to belong to God—this according to Psalm 23:1 (“The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness, the world and all the things that dwell in it”). Therefore, it seems that Christ did not redeem us by His passion.

**Objection 2:** As Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 13, “The devil had to be overcome by Christ in justice.” But justice demands that he who has seized another’s property should be deprived of it, since “fraud and deceit should benefit no one,” as human laws likewise declare. Therefore, since the devil deceived man by treachery and subjugated man, who is God’s creature, to himself, it seems that it was not fitting for man to be set free from the devil’s power through the mode of redeeming.

**Objection 3:** If an individual buys or redeems anything, he pays a price to the one who possessed it. But Christ did not pay His blood, which is said to be the price of our redemption, to the devil, who held us captive. Therefore, it is not the case that Christ redeemed us by His passion.

**But contrary to this:** 1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “You were redeemed from the vain way of life handed down from your fathers, not with perishable gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” And Galatians 3:13 says, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming a curse for our sake.” But as was explained above (q. 46, a. 4), He is said to have become a curse for our sake insofar as He suffered for us on the wood of the cross. Therefore, through His passion He redeemed us.

**I respond:** There were two ways in which man had been tied down by sin:

First, by *servitude to sin*, since, as John 8:34 says, “Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.” And 2 Peter 2:19 says, “By whatever a man is overcome, of this he is likewise judged to be a slave.”

Therefore, since the devil overcame man by inducing him to sin, man became subject to servitude to the devil.

Second, with respect to *the debt of punishment (quantum ad reatum poenae)*, by which a man is tied down in accord with God's justice. This, too, is a sort of servitude. For servitude involves an individual's being subject to what he does not will, whereas it belongs to a free man to behave as he wishes.

Therefore, since Christ's passion made sufficient and superabundant satisfaction for the human race's sin and debt, His passion was a sort of price by which we were liberated from both ways of being tied down. For the very satisfaction by which an individual makes satisfaction for himself or for another is in some sense a price by which he redeems himself from sin and punishment—this according to Daniel 4:24 ("Redeem your sins with alms"). Now Christ made satisfaction not by giving money or anything of that sort, but by giving what was the greatest thing of all, viz., Himself, for us. And this is why Christ's passion is said to be our redemption.

**Reply to objection 1:** There are two ways in which man is said to belong to God:

In one way, *insofar as he is subject to God's power*. And on this score man never ceased to belong to God—this according to Daniel 4:22 ("The Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and He gives it to whomever he wills").

In the other way, *through a union of charity with God*—this according to Romans 8:9 ("If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him").

Thus, in the first way, man never ceased to belong to God. In the second way, he ceased to belong to God because of sin. And so insofar as a man has been liberated from sin, with Christ's passion making satisfaction, he is said to be redeemed through Christ's passion.

**Reply to objection 2:** By sinning man had been tied down to both God and the devil (*homo peccando obligatus erat et Deo et diabolo*).

For as regards *the sin (quantum ad culpam)*, he had offended God and had subjected himself to the devil by consenting to him. Hence, by reason of the sin he had not become a servant of God but instead had withdrawn from God's service (*a Dei servitute recedens*) and fallen into servitude to the devil (*diaboli servitutem incurrerat*)—something that God justly permitted because of the offense committed against Him.

On the other hand, as regards *the punishment (quantum ad poenam)*, man was tied mainly to God as the highest judge, whereas he was tied to the devil as his torturer—this according to Matthew 5:25 ("... lest perhaps your adversary deliver to the judge and the judge deliver you to the officer," i.e., "to the cruel angel of punishments," as Chrysostom puts it).

Therefore, even though, as regards himself, it was unjust of the devil to hold man, deceived by his treachery, under his servitude, both with respect to sin and with respect to punishment, it was nonetheless just for man to suffer, with God permitting it with respect to sin and ordaining it with respect to punishment. And that is why justice required that man be redeemed in relation to God, though *not* in relation to the devil.

**Reply to objection 3:** Since redemption was required for the liberation of man in relation to God, but not in relation to the devil, the price was to be paid not to the devil, but to God. And that is why Christ is said to have offered His blood, which is the price of our redemption, not to the devil, but to God.

## Article 5

### Is it peculiar to Christ to be a redeemer?

It seems that it is not peculiar to Christ to be a redeemer (*esse redemptorem non sit proprium Christi*):

**Objection 1:** Psalm 30:6 says, “You have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.” But to be the Lord God of truth belongs to the whole Trinity. Therefore, it is not peculiar to Christ.

**Objection 2:** The one who is said to redeem is the one who pays the price of redemption. But God the Father gave His Son as the redemption for our sins—this according to Psalm 110:9 (“The Lord sent redemption to His people”), where a Gloss adds, “That is, Christ, who gives redemption to the captives.” Therefore, it is not only Christ, but also the Father, who redeems us.

**Objection 3:** Not only the suffering of Christ, but also the suffering of the other saints, was beneficial for our salvation—this according to Colossians 1:24 (“I rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church”). Therefore, it is not only Christ who should be called a redeemer, but the other saints as well.

**But contrary to this:** Galatians 3:13 says, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming a curse for our sake.” But Christ alone became a curse for our sake. Therefore, Christ alone should be called our redeemer.

**I respond:** In order for an individual to redeem, two things are required, viz., (a) an act of paying and (b) the price paid. For if an individual pays a price for the redemption of some entity, then if that price is not his own price but is set by another (*si [pretium] non est suum sed alterius*), he himself is not said to be the redeemer *in the principal sense*; instead, it is the one who set the price.

Now the price of our redemption is Christ’s blood, i.e., His corporeal life, which exists in His blood and which Christ Himself paid in full (*quam ipse Christus exsolvit*). Hence, both these things, [viz., the act of paying and the price] belong to Christ *immediately* insofar as He is a man, whereas they belong to the whole Trinity as a *first* and *remote* cause, to whom, as its first author, Christ’s [human] life itself belonged, and by whom the man Christ Himself was inspired to suffer for us. And so being the redeemer in this immediate sense is peculiar to Christ as a man, even though the act of redeeming can itself be attributed to the whole Trinity as its first cause.

**Reply to objection 1:** A Gloss explains this as follows: “You, the God of truth, have redeemed me in Christ, who cries out, ‘Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.’” And so the redemption belongs *immediately* to the man Christ, but it belongs *principally* to God.

**Reply to objection 2:** The man Christ paid the price of our redemption immediately, but at the command of the Father as its primordial author.

**Reply to objection 3:** The sufferings of the saints benefit the Church, not, to be sure, through the mode of redeeming, but instead through the mode of exhortation and example—this according to 2 Corinthians 1:6 (“If we are afflicted, it is for your instruction and salvation”).

## Article 6

### Did Christ’s passion bring about our salvation through the mode of efficient causality?

It seems that Christ’s passion did not bring about our salvation through the mode of efficient causality (*passio Christi non fuerit operata nostram salutem per modum efficientiae*):

**Objection 1:** The efficient cause of our salvation is the magnitude of the divine power—this

according to Isaiah 59:1 (“Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened, that it cannot save”). But as 2 Corinthians 13:4 says, Christ “was crucified from weakness.” Therefore, it is not the case that Christ’s passion brought about our salvation as an efficient cause (*non passio Christi efficienter operata est salutem nostram*).

**Objection 2:** A corporeal cause acts as an efficient cause only through contact; hence, Christ, too, Himself cleansed the leper by touching him “in order to show that His flesh had healing power,” as Chrysostom says. But Christ’s passion was unable to touch all human beings. Therefore, it was unable to act as an efficient cause of the salvation of all human beings.

**Objection 3:** It does not seem to belong to the same individual to act through the mode of meriting and through the mode of efficient causality, since he who merits expects the effect from another. But Christ’s passion brought about our salvation through the mode of meriting. Therefore, not through the mode of efficient causality.

**But contrary to this:** 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, “The doctrine of the cross is to those who are saved the power of God.” But God’s power brings about our salvation as an efficient cause. Therefore, Christ’s suffering on the cross brought about our salvation as an efficient cause.

**I respond:** There are two types of efficient cause, *principal* and *instrumental*. The principal efficient cause of human salvation is, to be sure, God. But since, as was explained above (q. 2, a. 6 and q. 13, aa. 2-3 and q. 19, a. 1, q. 43, a. 2), Christ’s human nature is an instrument of His divine nature, it follows that all of Christ’s actions and sufferings act instrumentally, in the divine power, for human salvation. And on this score Christ’s passion is an efficient cause of human salvation.

**Reply to objection 1:** Christ’s suffering, as related to Christ’s flesh, fits in with His assumed weakness, but, as related to His divine nature, it is such that an infinitely great power flows from it—this according to 1 Corinthians 1:25 (“The weakness of God is stronger than men”). For the very weakness of Christ, insofar as it is the weakness of God, has a power that exceeds every human power.

**Reply to objection 2:** Even though Christ’s suffering is corporeal, nonetheless, it has a spiritual power from the united divine nature. And so it distributes its efficacy through spiritual contact, viz., through faith and the sacraments of the Faith—this according to the Apostle [in Romans 3:25] (“Whom God put forward through faith as a propitiator in His blood”).

**Reply to objection 3:** Christ’s passion, insofar as it is thought of in relation to His divine nature, acts through the *mode of efficient causality*, whereas thought of in relation to the will belonging to Christ’s soul, it acts through *the mode of meriting*.

On the other hand, insofar as His passion is thought of in relation to the very flesh of Christ, it acts in the *mode of satisfying*, because we are liberated by it from the debt of punishment. Again, the passion acts through the *mode of redeeming* insofar as through it we are liberated from servitude to sin, and *through the mode of sacrifice*, insofar as through it we are reconciled with God, as will be explained below (q. 49).