

Self-giving : Christ offered himself

1. 'gave himself up' [paradidômi : παραδιδωμι]

‘The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God loving me and giving himself up for me’(Galatians 2:20)

‘God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all’(Romans 8:32).

‘Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’(Ephesians 5:25).

‘He gave himself up to the one who judges justly’(1 Peter 2:23).

## 2. “gave himself” [didômi : δίδωμι]

‘Christ gave himself [δίδωμι] for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father’ (Galatians 1:4).

‘God our saviour desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself [δίδωμι] as a ransom for all’ (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

‘The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all, training us to live religious lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of Jesus Christ, the glory of our great God and saviour, who gave himself [διδωμι] for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds’ (Titus 2:11-14).

‘For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give [διδωμι] his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45 = Matthew 20:28).

3. “offered himself” [prosp̄herô : προσφερω]

‘He offered himself without blemish to God.’

(Hebrews 9:14)

‘Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins.’

(Hebrews 10:12)

4. “offered himself up” [anapherô : αναφερω]

‘He offered himself up once for all’(Hebrews 7:27. See 9:28)

5. sacrifice of self [thysia autou : θυσια αυτου]

‘to annul sin by the sacrifice of himself’(Hebrews 9:26).

6. “lay down one’s life” [tithêmi psychên  
τιθημι ψυχην]

‘I lay down my life for my sheep ... The Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may 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 again; this charge I have received from my Father’ (John 10:15-18).

‘No one has greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends’ (John 15:13).

This self-offering of Christ, expressed in his living, and finally in his way of dying, was a perfect sacrifice, achieving all that a sacrifice was meant to do:

(i) It gave perfect worship to God, because Jesus lived the obedience of faith (See Romans 1:5) accepting that God is love, that God is faithful, and so that God will certainly keep his promises.

(ii) It conquered sin, because Jesus, in his flesh, did not sin, in spite of the fact that he was tested in every respect as we are. He thereby showed that we do not have to live under sin's dominion, and he gave us his Spirit to make it possible for us not to sin.

(iii) It established a relationship between God and mankind that made it possible for all to live in divine communion. Jesus' self-offering is a revelation of love.



: love for God - shown in adhesion to God's will  
(Hebrews 5:8; 10:5-10)

: love for people - shown in his identification and  
solidarity with us (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15)

This is the meaning which Jesus gave to his  
death at the last supper:

‘This is my body which will be given for you ...  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood which  
will be poured out for you’ (Luke 22:19-20)

The Epistle to the Hebrews,  
and indeed the whole of the New Testament,  
makes it clear that the sacrifice which Jesus  
offered to God was the sacrifice of himself.

Whatever we may offer,  
if we do not offer ourselves,  
it is not an offering of love.

No one and no thing can substitute for ourselves when it comes to the communion of love.

“You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they rest in you”.

It is we who long to be in communion with God, and it is for ourselves that God longs.

Because Jesus offered himself, it was he who entered into perfect communion with his Father.

In this he showed us the way.

The Church is called to offer itself in communion with Christ  
and to draw the world into communion with God  
till the whole world becomes a single sacrifice of praise.

To be a Christian is to live Christ's life, that is, to love.

‘For their sake I consecrate myself,  
so that they too may be consecrated in truth’(Jn 17:19)

‘The holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful, and so must it be. It is expressed in many ways by individuals who, each in his or her own state of life, tend to the perfection of love’( LG 39).

To love is to offer oneself with Christ in the obedience of faith to God and in self-giving for others.

‘This has taught us love - that he gave up his life for us; and we ought to give our life for our brothers’(1 John 3:16).

- Each time Jesus speaks of his mission to his disciples, he is misunderstood.
- Each time he calls them aside to explain that the essence of his mission, and the essence of their following him, is found in self-giving, the kind of self-giving demonstrated in the accounts of the loaves:

- It is this same lesson that is highlighted in the final scene of the public ministry of Jesus:

‘Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of two cents. Then he called his disciples and said to them, ‘I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.’

(Mark 12:41-45).