

## The Rending of the Veil of the Temple

A miraculous event took place during the crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew says, "And Jesus . . . yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom (Matt 27:50-51)." The rending of the veil has to do with the relationship of the Old Testament law and the New Testament law of Jesus Christ. God performed a supernatural act in the rending of the veil.

The rending of the veil symbolized the removal of the office of an earthly high priest. The veil was the very pivot of the Old Testament system. Only the high priest could pass within the area sheltered by the veil. Even he could pass through only once a year (Lev. 16). When Christ died, the veil was torn from top to bottom. With the end of the area sheltered by the veil, came the end of the Old Testament and its high priest.

The only high priest remaining is Jesus Christ, and he has entered the holy of holies not made with hands. The Hebrews writer said, "But Christ having come a high priest . . . through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb 9:11-12)."

Today, Jesus is the only high priest and the only mediator. Of his high priesthood, Hebrews says, "Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 6: 20)." Paul called Jesus "one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5)." Since the one and only high priest is in heaven, there is no need for a veil to separate the high priest from the priests. There is no longer need for daily sacrifices such as the ones offered when the old law was in force because the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient for all time. Jesus does not have to repeat the sacrifice: "Who needs not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself (Heb 7:27)." Today every Christian is a priest in the new sanctuary, the church. Peter wrote, "You also, as living stones . . . to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God (1 Peter 2:5)."

The rending of the veil symbolized the end of the Law of Moses and its rituals: "He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14)." Christ's law is in force and binding (Heb. 8:6-13). Christ frees us from sin when we obey his covenant (Heb 9:14-17).