

## Second Hand Preacher

### *Ascension*

May 8, 2016

#### **Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23**

“You had to be there.” How often have we heard that as someone is describing an event we missed. The person can describe it all they want and we can even see video, but the impact of being there in the moment is irreplaceable. I felt that way in my pilgrimage to see St. John Paul II in Denver. The hardships, the moments of joy, and the humor were all part of this exciting trip. To see the Pope at Holy Mass in Cherry Creek Park is a scene etched in my mind even though the year was 1993. My sacrifices were small compared to the great sacrifice of Christ.

The death and resurrection is not an event I witnessed. I doubt even the author to the Hebrews was an eyewitness. The Word of God was carried on to him and he chose to believe this wonderful event. It is hard to describe, so the author takes an event that his Jewish audience would have been familiar. The High Priest is making his sacrifice in the Holy of Holies. Even though this was not an event they viewed, but they would have been very familiar with the Tradition. The High Priest offers a sacrifice year after year not using his own blood. Jesus offered the sacrifice of his own blood, once and for all.

Because of this sacrifice, we can enter the new Kingdom; Heaven is accessible for all. The image of the great high priest is not one that is common for us. Modern day Jews do not believe in animal sacrifice. We lose this image, although the vestments of the Priest and Deacon are somewhat reflective of the clothing of the high priest. At mass we are not doing a reenactment of the sacrifice of Jesus, but we make memorial of the time he gave us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink. Hebrews has a great deal to teach us about our past. It also has wise words to illuminate our future.