
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Animal Sacrifice Ritual as an Entry Point to Theology in the Cultural Context of Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara

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| ABSTRACT

Doing contextual Theology is the intersection between faith and culture and how the faith transforms culture. For this reason, a cultural ceremony can be an entry point for spreading the faith in a culture. In Sumba, various traditions in the indigenous religion (Marapu) involve an animal sacrifice ritual. This ritual helps the *Marapu* followers to maintain a good relationship with the Creator. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the meaning of animal sacrifice ritual from the viewpoint of the Sumba community as an entry point in efforts to do contextual theology. Qualitative methods were used to compare this ritual with the biblical concept of sacrifice, particularly the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is actualized in the Eucharist celebration. The results showed parallel and incompatible themes between the meaning of sacrifice ritual in Sumba culture and in the Christian perspective. Therefore, there can be a convergence between Christian teachings and Sumba cultural practices by addressing parallels while overcoming incompatible themes.

| KEYWORDS

Marapu ceremony, Animal sacrifice, Christ's sacrifice, Eucharist, Inculturation

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1. Introduction

In the civilization of humankind, there exists an ongoing and gradual process of becoming. This fact challenges individuals living within every culture to continuously align themselves with the progress of the times. Cutting-edge technology demands fundamental changes in various aspects of human life, including interpersonal relationships, as well as the connection between humans and the Transcendent. In this context, tensions often arise between efforts to preserve cultural identity and the demands of adapting to advancement. Thus, a study of cultural transformation is needed to uphold the essence while also making improvements. Dhogo argues that there are different and modifiable expressions of culture, as well as intrinsic cultural values, that must be preserved (Benediktus, 2005). The process of transformation also occurs within the Church. The theme of the encounter between faith and local beliefs, a topic in recent theological discourse, serves as an example of the changing perspective of the Church towards culture. History notes that the Church once rejected local culture, viewing it as pagan beliefs. The adage "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" formed the basis of the Church's response to local culture. While this adage once held sway, missionaries aimed to proclaim the Gospel with the anticipated outcome of replacing the local culture, often deemed pagan, with a new Christian culture. This approach has been left behind in the present time, particularly in the context of the Catholic Church after Vatican II. Through the spirit of renewal (aggiornamento), the Church restructured spiritual life in the light of the Gospel. This decision had an impact on the Catholic Church, leading it to no longer regard non-European cultures with disdain (Bera, 2016).

The Church's appreciation for local culture has given rise to a movement of evangelizing culture. The goal of evangelization is no longer to completely replace local culture but to enhance and integrate positive cultural values into Christianity. Local beliefs are

no longer seen solely as paganism but can also serve as a bridge to reach the sole Savior, Christ, and can even foster the growth of faith in Christ. Various movements within the Church, such as cultural evangelization, contextualization, and inculturation, represent new forms of missionary activities. These new approaches aim to make local culture a bridge for the proclamation of faith.

The theological aspect within this context is often referred to as inculturation. Etymologically, inculturation derives from the Latin words "in" (into) and "cultura" (culture). In this case, the Christian faith enters a specific culture, resulting in an encounter between faith and culture (Dhogo, 2016). In the documents of Vatican II, inculturation is understood as a one-way movement, the entry of the Christian faith into culture with the purpose of proclaiming faith within culture while refining and purifying it. In the post-Vatican II development, particularly in the documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), this encounter becomes a two-way movement, enriching, giving, and receiving between local culture and the Christian faith. As a result, the Christian faith becomes deeply rooted in culture, while the authentic values of culture are fully integrated into the Christian faith (Doyle, 2012).

The practice of inculturating faith into cultural practices has become a significant theme in the Church's ministry. Various religious ministries are conducted to inspire the religious sense of the people. Woga states that "the cultural-religious richness of various ethnic groups is a spiritual treasure and resource that is beneficial for the expression of Christian faith, allowing these spiritual assets to be used properly and appropriately." (Gunawan, 2013). Local beliefs serve as a means to develop cultural authenticity when confronted with new teachings. Teaching and deepening of faith are necessary to convey theological concepts through the cultural framework.

Numerous studies have explored the theme of the encounter between the Christian faith and local culture. Kleden conducted an ethnographic study on the Kedde culture as one of the local wisdom in the Wewewa tribe of Southwest Sumba. According to his findings, the reciprocity tradition in death ceremonies serves as a means of self-recognition within the community, functioning to strengthen kinship and social relations, with eschatological significance as "the path of the deceased towards their final resting place, the great village (wanno kalada)." (Hadiwardoyo, 2020). Meanwhile, Panda examined the concept of death according to the Marapu belief system and identified elements aligned with Catholic teachings (Harahap, 2020). Furthermore, Panda discussed the encounter of faith and Sumba culture by addressing the phenomenon of dual faith (Christianity and Marapu) (Keraf, 2021).

Another study explores various aspects of animal sacrifice within Sumba's culture. Gunawan researched the buffalo as a sacrificial animal in death ceremonies and concluded that through sacrificial animals like buffaloes, social values are integrated into religious values (Kleden, 2019). Derung et al., while investigating death ceremonies in the Marapu religion, also argued that sacrificial animals are seen as provisions for the grave, as well as essential elements for honoring and seeking blessings for the safety of the deceased spirits (Kleden, 2019).

Martasudjita's study on the universality of the Eucharist is also referenced in this writing. This research emphasizes the importance of pastoral efforts in bringing about inculturation within the local culture. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church offers sacrifice and praise to God through its participation in the sacrificial offering of Christ's crucifixion (Konsili, 2004). However, the researchers mentioned above have not yet delved into comparing the use of sacrificial animals in Sumba's culture and the concept of sacrifice in Christianity.

2. Research Method

The applied research method is qualitative. Through this research, the author employs a phenomenological strategy to explore, experience, and interpret the meaning of phenomena, events, and their relationships with individuals in specific situations (Konsili, 2004). Data collection involves a literature review followed by field research. The research location is Totok village, Southwest Sumba Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. The number of respondents is 28, consisting of 15 traditional leaders and 13 Church figures. The research process begins with initial observations followed by in-depth interviews. Additionally, the researcher also participates in one of the animal sacrifice ceremonies in the research location.

The analysis of research findings is elaborated upon in three main ideas in this study: Firstly, an understanding of the practice of animal sacrifice. Secondly, a comparison with the concept of sacrifice in Christianity. And thirdly, inculturation as the proposed solution within pastoral practice.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Animal Sacrifice in Sumba Culture

Marapu is the native belief of the people of Sumba Island in East Nusa Tenggara. Despite the majority of the Sumba population embracing Christianity, there are still a few adherents of the indigenous religion. At the core of Marapu belief is the recognition of

the Supreme Being known as Mawolo-Marawi (the Creator) and a number of intermediary spirits to the Creator known as Marapu. Among these spirits, the ancestral spirits are believed to be in the presence of the Supreme Being. Within Marapu belief, there are several animal sacrifice ceremonies. Sacrificial animals are offerings presented to the Ancestors. The sacrifices performed in these rituals symbolize human efforts to establish a relationship with the Ancestors. This relationship involves seeking prosperity, good harvests, a harmonious social life, protection from illnesses, and salvation for the departed souls. Thus, the connection between Marapu and the Sumbanese people who still adhere to it is mainly centered around seeking guidance and blessings (Martasudjita, 2014). The types of sacrificial animals typically include buffaloes, cows, pigs, and chickens. The choice of sacrificial animals depends on the purpose and intent of the ritual being performed. One such ritual is the death ceremony, where a buffalo is sacrificed to serve as a vehicle for the deceased's journey to wano Marapu (the Ancestors' village). According to custom, a ritual leader (rato) is responsible for presenting the heart of the sacrificial animal as an offering to Marapu. The heart offering signifies the essence of a human's higher life being dedicated (Martasudjita, 2005). Other parts of the animal are served to invited guests.

The relationship between humans and ancestral spirits has been an inseparable part of the lives of Marapu adherents. However, the authentic significance of animal sacrifice sometimes clashes with human desires to turn it into a means of seeking personal popularity. Gunawan explains that the abundance of sacrificial animals is also understood as an indicator of an individual's prestige (Neonbasu, 2016). Nevertheless, in the researcher's observation, the pursuit of social status and popularity is merely an incidental effect of the animal sacrifice ceremony. This inclination towards seeking social prestige does not diminish the sacred value and original meaning of the ritual.

3.2 Biblical Perspective on Sacrifice

The scriptures recount God's work of salvation for humanity. God, as the creator and sustainer of life, works to guide humans towards salvation. Vatican II explains, "God, who is supremely good, completely wise, and infinitely desirous of the well-being of all, established in advance and prepared in advance the salvation of all humanity. In the process, by a special arrangement, he chose for himself a nation to whom he entrusted his promises." (Oetpah, 2022). God's promises to humanity were entrusted to the people of Israel through the prophets. Through these prophets, the Israelites came to know about the divine teachings, the wisdom of God, prayers to God, and, particularly, offerings to God.

The practice of animal sacrifice is one form of offering among the people of Israel. Offering the finest among their domesticated animals signified the human commitment to God in exchange for blessings. The sacrificial ritual in the form of animals was later perfected by the self-offering of Christ as the Lamb of God, redeeming humanity's sins. Through His crucifixion, Jesus offered Himself to redeem humanity from sin. This act restored the broken relationship between humanity and God due to sin through Christ's sacrifice, which happened once and for all.

The work of salvation in the context of the Old Testament is closely intertwined with Jewish culture. The people of Israel believed that God is their Savior. This belief gave rise to religious traditions that demonstrate human faithfulness to God. An often-practiced act of faith was the ritual of animal sacrifice, which was carried out by priests (Levites). Rusae writes that one of the duties of Old Testament priests was to conduct burnt offerings in the house of God and bless in His name (e.g., Genesis 28:1, Deuteronomy 33:8, Jeremiah 18:18) (Panda, 2014).

Animal Sacrifice Practice in the Old Testament holds several significant meanings. Firstly, sacrifice in the form of offerings from human labor. The concept of offering human-made gifts can be found in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain offered produce from the land, while Abel presented the firstborn of his flock, including its fat (Genesis 4:3-4). This text illustrates that offerings demand sincerity of heart from humans. Everything humans possess comes from God, and God truly needs nothing from humans. However, the offering of sacrifices from humans is an expression of acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and gratitude towards God. Therefore, offerings should come from a genuinely willing heart. Sincerity is demonstrated through the willingness to present the best of one's work. God did not accept Cain's offering because it lacked sincerity, which manifested in Cain's jealousy towards Abel's offering. This shows that the value of sacrifice is seen as a symbol of human self-offering to God through their work.

Secondly, sacrifice as a means of atonement for sin. Sacrificial offerings are a way for humans to restore their relationship with God, as prescribed by God Himself. Human transgressions have disrupted the relationship between humans and God. The Book of Leviticus records a conversation between God and Moses, where God declares that the offering of a lamb is a sign of peace between God and humanity through the mediation of the priest (Leviticus 5:14-17). This text demonstrates that offerings from humans are teachings directly from God, as God desires reconciliation with humanity even after their sins. The ritual of offering a sacrificial lamb is aimed at the atonement of sin, but this offering must be preceded by a repentant heart turning back to God (verse 14).

Thirdly, spiritual sacrifice takes precedence. In the Old Testament, especially through the preaching of the prophets, there is an understanding that obedience to God is more valuable than ritual animal sacrifices. Samuel's rebuke of King Saul serves as an

example. Saul went against God's explicit instruction to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all their belongings. Saul spared the best of the spoils, intending to offer them to God. Samuel harshly reproached Saul, saying, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). A similar sentiment is found in the prophecies of Hosea. Hosea prophesied the downfall of Israel due to their disobedience, including their multiplication of altars and love for offerings while disregarding God's teachings (Hosea 8:11-14). Likewise, the prophet Micah sharply criticized the Israelites, who considered rituals the pinnacle of their religion. Micah affirmed that God does not delight in sacrifices but prefers just actions, love, and humility before God (Micah 6:6-8) (Panda, 2020).

Fourthly, sacrifice as a prototype of Christ's self-offering. The idea of sacrifice is not limited to animal offerings; rather, all sacrificial practices in the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ. The prophecy of Isaiah points to the sacrifice that reconciles humans with God and becomes a prototype for Christ's self-sacrifice for human salvation. The coming sacrifice is a self-offering for the redemption of sin (Isaiah 53:10). Isaiah's prophecy highlights that a servant of God will suffer to restore the relationship between humans and God, which had been damaged by sin.

The New Testament essentially continues the concept of animal sacrifice from the Old Testament. However, the New Testament surpasses and perfects the burnt offerings of the Old Testament, shifting from animal sacrifices to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Consequently, the emphasis is more on the spiritual aspect of sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is continuously reenacted in the Eucharist. Vatican II explains, "In the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection." (Rukiyanto, 2019).

Christ's self-offering on the cross is a sacrifice for reconciliation and the redemption of sins. Reconciliation is a gift from God based on His promises. Although God bestows grace upon all, including moral conscience and the ability to establish just laws, this grace is insufficient for the redemption of sins. True redemption, based on justification, is a gift from God's grace to His chosen people. In Christ, God opens a new source of grace given to humanity. Christ's sacrifice is a human-God reconciliation, and the gift of faith in Christ allows humans to experience this reconciliation (Rusae, 2021).

After experiencing reconciliation with God, humans are also obligated to reconcile with one another. Therefore, Jesus emphasizes the importance of reconciliation with others before presenting an offering to God (Matthew 5:23). In this passage, Jesus teaches that the act of offering should be accompanied by the offering of oneself for reconciliation with fellow humans. Sacrifice becomes meaningful when humans are at peace with one another.

The concept of atonement in the Old Testament is superseded by Christ's once-for-all self-offering. Christ, as the mediator, offers Himself for the purification of human conscience (Hebrews 9:12-13). This transformation from animal sacrifice to Christ's sacrifice, the unblemished Lamb of God, signifies the fullness of the value of sacrifice. Christ's crucified self signifies that an offering is not merely a physical act but a genuine desire of the heart for liberation from sin. Jesus willingly offered Himself on the cross for the redemption of humanity's sins, illustrating both God's act of freeing humans from sin and a model for human self-offering to God.

3.3 Encounter between the Theology of Sacrifice in the Eucharist and the Cultural Animal Sacrifice of Sumba

The Theology of Sacrifice speaks of Christ's self-offering to God for the salvation of humanity. Christ Himself came into the world within a concrete culture with the purpose of elevating humanity. As the proclamation of Christ was received within the culture of Sumba, the same God also chose to elevate and purify the noble values embedded in Sumbanese culture. In an effort to find common ground between the Theology of Sacrifice and the practice of sacrifice in Sumbanese culture, it is essential to discern key themes that align with the doctrine of God's salvific work. The following outlines the alignment of themes between Marapu sacrificial ceremonies and sacrifice within Christianity, along with their transformation within Christianity.

3.4 Self-Offering and Moral Action

The value of offering in the practice of animal sacrifice to Marapu aims for blessings. Through the interpretation of signs on the hearts of sacrificial animals performed by the rato (Marapu ritual leader), insights can be gained into the fortunes or misfortunes that will befall a family, as well as the reasons behind such occurrences. Fundamentally, prosperity or adversity for the Sumbanese is interconnected with moral actions in real life (Schorsch, 1997). When humans engage in virtuous and morally upright deeds, signs on the hearts of sacrificial animals indicate blessings as a reward for their good deeds. Conversely, if immoral actions are committed, signs also appear indicating that misfortune and curses will befall, serving as a consequence for those immoral deeds.

Human actions leading to blessings or curses imply an inseparable relationship between ritual sacrifice and concrete actions. This can be paralleled with human participation in the Eucharist, which goes beyond being a sacred rite to encompass transformed and renewed lives. Through participating in Christ's self-offering to the Father, humanity experiences redemption from sin. However,

the offer of salvation in Christ through the Eucharist requires a human response in real life – a self-offering through virtuous moral actions. Human self-offering is a "spiritual life." Within the fellowship of the Body of Christ (the Church), formed through the Eucharist, humans offer themselves as "living and holy sacrifices, acceptable to God" (cf. Romans 12:1) (Teresia, 2022).

In Marapu belief, the heart of a sacrificial animal in a ceremony symbolizes the offering of human life. This offering signifies a moral action by humans to attain harmony within society. Here, parallels can be drawn with Christian teachings on the Eucharistic celebration, which fundamentally directs toward the offering of the human heart, leading to acts of love for fellow humans. Such understanding can be integrated into the Christian faith, particularly in the celebration of the Eucharist.

What needs to be set aside is the use of animal sacrifice. The notion of animal sacrifice, where animals are procured for religious ceremonies, can be abandoned while retaining the intended meaning within the ritual. The symbol of separation from animal sacrifice can be enacted before the altar using a small animal like a chicken to represent all types of sacrificial animals. This animal is blessed before the altar and then released unharmed. At this stage, it can be narrated in customary language, emphasizing the act of releasing oneself from the blood sacrifice of animals, replacing it with prayer and compassion for living creatures. Additionally, the self-offering of humans in unity with the sacrifice of Christ is highlighted. This offering symbolizes human gratitude for the gift of life. In this case, the true offering is the self. Humans unite themselves with Christ's sacrifice, presenting their souls and bodies, joys and sorrows, work and service – in essence, the entire existence – to God. In the Eucharistic offering, there is a union of the divine and the human: human achievements as a symbol of self-offering (the human element) and Christ's sacrifice on the cross, presented in the Eucharist (the divine element).

3.5 The Longing of the Heart for Peace and Blessing

Offerings to Marapu in the form of animal sacrifices are directed towards blessings for life, referred to as "Maringi-Malala" (fresh and cool) – a metaphorical expression denoting the blessings bestowed by Marapu. For the people of Sumba, "worshipping, honoring, venerating, and even worshiping Marapu all have one ultimate purpose – to 'achieve or obtain' blessings (divine favor)." These blessings are associated with a peaceful disposition in the presence of the Creator (Vorster, 2018).

"Maringi-malala" represents the blessings received by Marapu worshippers, and it can be integrated into the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic celebration, a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and His real presence through His Body and Blood brings blessings to the Christian community. These blessings are expressed in the Church's belief that God always accompanies His people. Participation in the life of the faithful has a Trinitarian dimension. The blessings received are not physical but rather a blessing to "participate in the life of the Triune God, the source and goal of all human life and the universe."²⁴ In the framework of Marapu adherents' thinking, human life's purpose is to live in harmony with nature, fellow humans, ancestors, and the Creator. The harmony humanity seeks can be achieved through the intervention of the Creator through the ancestors' involvement in human life. Therefore, humans need to offer sacrifices to obtain blessings from their ancestors. The bestowal of blessings for prosperity is a special grace received by humans. The blessings Marapu grants to its worshippers serve as evidence of the connection between the Creator and creation. These same blessings are also manifested in communal life.

The concepts described above are also parallel to Church teachings, where through Christ's redemption, He is truly present in the Eucharist to bless His people. These blessings, in the form of love, are given to humans to be shared with others through words and actions. Although there is a significant difference between the blessings received by the faithful in the Eucharist and those received by Marapu adherents in rituals, both portray a deep longing for blessings in life.

What needs transformation is the meaning of blessings. In Marapu belief, blessings hold a material significance, signifying tangible well-being experienced by individuals. In contrast, the meaning of blessings obtained in the Eucharist is a communion (Communio) of love between humans and God through the reception of bread and wine, symbolizing the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus, the meaning of blessings here is spiritual rather than material. Nevertheless, the material meaning of blessings, as a concrete human need, can also be integrated into the Eucharist. The distinct Sumbanese Eucharist should emphasize prayers for well-being – the fulfillment of basic human needs for a dignified life in this world.

3.6 The Longing of the Heart for Liberation from the Curse of Sin

For Marapu adherents, sin is always linked to calamity. Calamities experienced by humans are attributed to hidden sins, which are revealed through rituals designed to uncover transgressions. Calamities occur due to violations and disobedience to Marapu's commands. On the other hand, the ethos generally upheld by the Sumbanese society centers around the concept of harmonious living. The concept of harmony for the Sumbanese is reflected in the "harmony between humans and the Supreme Being; harmony between humans and ancestors; harmony between humans and nature; harmony between humans and fellow humans; and the harmony of humans within themselves." Violation of this harmonious state leads to calamities, necessitating animal sacrifices as atonement for committed sins.

The practice of animal sacrifice for sin atonement can be paralleled with the Eucharist, which yields the redemption of sins. This parallel considers sin as a consequence of human free will. Freedom, or rather the misuse of freedom, has disrupted the original harmony present at the world's creation. Commenting on the original sin (Genesis 3:1-13), the Magisterium of the Catholic Church in the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed; the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination." The misuse of human freedom marked the beginning of sin's presence in the world. This original sin extended to all of humanity in the form of actual sins. To restore this harmony, the Old Testament people offered burnt sacrifices as a form of atonement.

In the New Testament, the Eucharist presents Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the redemption of human sins. The Gospel of John uses the term "Lamb of God" for Jesus, which is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's sacrificial practices. The Old Testament held that the offering of animal sacrifices, including lambs, was for the atonement of sins. However, Jesus definitively fulfills the Old Testament's burnt sacrifice in His crucifixion, serving as the redemption for human sins. The Eucharist is a tangible sign of Christ's presence in the form of bread and wine (His Body and Blood), which serves to liberate humanity from sin.

The usage of sacrificial animals in both Marapu ceremonies and the Christian Eucharist reveals the human heart's longing for the redemption of sins. Marapu beliefs respond to this longing through animal sacrifice rituals, while Christians find their answer in the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, symbolized in the Eucharist.

Although there is parallelism, as mentioned above, there are also significant differences. Some aspects can be integrated into Christianity, while others need to be left behind. The teaching of harmony – harmony with God, the natural environment, and fellow humans – can be integrated. However, the understanding of sin's redemption achieved through animal sacrifice needs to be abandoned, as Christianity's redemption from sin occurs through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Additionally, the Marapu belief linking sin and calamity needs to be discarded, as calamity is a natural occurrence unrelated to human sin.

The Sumbanese Eucharist should emphasize themes of harmony and sin's disruption in preaching and prayers. Both verbal and symbolic expressions, akin to Marapu's traditional rituals, can be employed but reinterpreted to highlight Christ's sacrificial redemption and the restoration of harmony and peace in this world.

4. Conclusion

The relationship between Church doctrine and Sumbanese culture can be aligned to provide new meaning in the process of deepening faith. In summary, three themes can be explained as follows: First, the practice of offering large numbers of sacrificial animals can be minimized gradually and eventually eliminated. A new understanding is to offer oneself to God. The focus shifts from the sacrificed animal to the attitude of the human heart in offering. Second, the blessings received. Marapu's bestowal of blessings is the ultimate goal of animal sacrifices. Pleasing the Divine remains important in the Sumbanese practice. This value is transformed, highlighting that God's blessings to humans are not tied to the sacrificed animal but to God's initiative to elevate humanity. Human response is one of faith and surrender. Third, sacrificial offerings as atonement for calamity. Christ's redemptive sacrifice has perfected the atonement for the consequences of mistakes, often represented as calamities in Sumbanese society. Just as Jesus fulfills the Old Testament's sacrificial concept, so does Sumbanese culture. The salvation offered by Jesus has redeemed human sin. The redemption of sins is continually renewed through the celebration of the Eucharist. Therefore, sacrificial offerings for atonement are no longer necessary due to Christ's perfect sacrifice. The human response involves an open heart to rectify behavior displeasing to both fellow humans and God.

These aligned values can be accommodated in the Church's Eucharistic liturgy, highlighting cultural elements that serve as authentic expressions of Christian faith. These expressions may include symbolic and verbal elements drawn from local culture.

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