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The Mass: Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist.

The ceremonies centered about the Holy Eucharist are of two types—those established by Christ and those established by the Church. The former were performed by Our Lord at the Last Supper, and consisted of the consecration—that is, the change of the bread and wine into His Body and Blood by the words: “This is My Body...This is My Blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins”—and the distribution of Holy Communion to His Disciples. This ceremony which took place at the Last Supper was not only the institution and administration of a sacrament but also the offering of a sacrifice. By a sacrifice is meant a religious rite designed to honor God and to atone for sin by offering to the Almighty a victim, and destroying or slaying it. That Christ offered a sacrifice at the Last Supper with His own Body and Blood as the Victim is evident from His own words. For He said of His Body, present under the species of bread, that it was being *given for you* (Luke 22:19), and of His Blood, present under the species of wine, that it was being *shed unto remission of sins* (Matt. 26:28). Such expressions clearly indicate that He was performing a sacrificial rite.

Since then Our Savior offered a sacrifice at the Last Supper, the rite in which the Holy Eucharist is consecrated—the Mass, as we call it—is also a sacrifice. For the Mass is a repetition of what He did at the Last Supper, in compliance with His command: “Do this for a commemoration of Me.” The supreme sacrifice of the Christian dispensation is indeed Our Savior’s death on the cross. By the efficacy of this sacrifice the Eternal Father received infinite honor and thanksgiving, and all men received sufficient means for the pardon of their sins and for the attainment of eternal life. The Mass does not add merit or satisfaction to the sacrifice of the cross; it merely applies to men the merits and satisfaction of this sacrifice. Nevertheless, the Mass is a



AT THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST

true sacrifice, giving honor and thanks to God, renewing the Sacrifice of the Cross, and having as its Victim and principal Priest the same Christ Who was the Victim and the Priest in the Sacrifice of the first Good Friday. The chief difference between the two is that on Calvary Christ was immolated in a bloody manner, in the Mass in an unbloody manner. Although Our Lord is present wholly and entirely under each of the two species of bread and wine, the two-fold consecration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a vivid representation of Christ's death. The important doctrines on which all Catholics agree is that at the Last Supper and on Calvary Our Lord performed a sacrificial function, and

that the Mass is a true sacrifice renewing the sacrificial death of Christ, just as the rite of the Last Supper anticipated it.

Christ is the principal priest in the offering of every Mass, inasmuch as He instituted this sacred rite and commissioned the Apostles and their successors in the ministry to continue it in His Name. He takes a direct and immediate part in the celebration of every Mass, invisibly exercising His priestly power in union with the visible priest when he says the words of consecration. Only those priests can offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, who have received the priestly power to offer this sacrifice through the sacramental rite of ordination from bishops who, in turn, have received their power in an unbroken line of succession from the Apostles.

Although only an ordained priest can celebrate Mass, the laity also participate in the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. For the act of sacrifice is a public function, performed in the name of society; the laity assisting at the Mass should realize that they should join in the sacred rite by following the prayers and ceremonies in their Missals. To receive Holy Communion during the Mass is also a praiseworthy act, since it is not only the reception of the Holy Eucharist but likewise the partaking of the Victim of the Eucharistic sacrifice. And, strictly speaking, only the priest who celebrates Mass is obliged to partake of the Holy Eucharist at Holy Communion, it is the wish of the Church that at every Mass some of the laity receive the body and blood of Our Savior "in order that more abundant fruit of this most holy sacrifice may come to them," as the Council of Trent expressed it.

(Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, n.944).

The Eucharistic ceremonies in the Catholic Church besides Mass and Holy Communion, such as Benediction and visits to Our Lord in the Tabernacle, are of ecclesiastical origin. They are of long standing use in the Church and are commended to the devotion of the faithful as a means of animating their faith and stimulating their love towards Him Who for love of us dwells ever in our midst.

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The Divine Guest of the Soul.



“When promising the Holy Eucharist our Divine Savior said: “Amen, amen I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.” (John: 6, 54). From these words it is evident that there is a grave obligation incumbent on all members of Christ’s Church to receive Holy Communion. However, it is not the same type of obligation as that which binds all men to receive Baptism, or that which binds those who have sinned grievously after Baptism to receive Penance. These

obligations are concerned with a *means* necessary to salvation, whereas the obligation to receive the Holy Eucharist denotes only a *precept* to be fulfilled. However, it is a divine precept, since it was imposed by the Son of God. Our Lord did not specify how frequently we must receive His body and blood, but left the determination of this matter to His Church. In 1215 the Fourth Council of the Lateran decreed that those who have reached the age of discretion must receive Holy Communion at least once a year during Easter time.

Christ has established the Holy Eucharist to be the spiritual food for our souls. Now, just as our bodies need material nourishment to retain their strength and to ward off disease, so our souls need the supernatural food of Our Savior’s body and blood to preserve their spiritual vigor and to overcome temptation. Pope Pius X in 1905 invited all Catholics to receive Holy Communion even daily, and pointed out that the only conditions required are the state of grace and a right intention. And in view of the appalling danger to faith and morals which modern times have witnessed, we cannot doubt but that the Holy Ghost inspired the saintly Pontiff to propose to the faithful this effective means of keeping their souls in the love and friendship of God. Just as material food will be beneficial only to a living body, so the Holy Eucharist will produce its effects only in a soul that possesses the spiritual life of sanctifying grace. In other words, the Holy Eucharist is one of the *sacraments of the living*. However, one who has committed mortal sin since his last confession is not permitted to receive Holy Communion until he has first received the sacrament of Penance.

The effects of a worthy Holy Communion are many and sublime, and may be aptly compared to the effects produced in the body by nourishing food. In this case, the first effect is that the food unites itself with the body and becomes one with it. So, too, Holy Communion produces a spiritual union between Christ and the soul, in accordance with Our Lord’s words: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:57). As long as Our Lord is present, there is so intimate a spiritual union between Himself and the devout communicant that the two can be said to be one in affection.



The effects of this spiritual union in the soul are analogous to those resulting in the body from material nourishment, and are classified by the Council of Florence under the four headings of sustenance, growth, refreshment, and joy. The Holy Eucharist sustains the strength of the soul by imparting graces to overcome temptation, especially temptations to impurity. It helps the souls to grow in sanctifying grace and in love of God. It refreshes the soul by inspiring it to acts of divine charity and contrition, whereby venial sins and the punishment due to sins already forgiven are remitted. It

also brings joy to the soul—sometimes sensible consolation, but always that more stable and more profound happiness which consists in an eagerness to do God’s will.

Holy Communion also produces a social effect, in that it unites all Catholics into one great family, irrespective of national and educational and economic distinctions. It is true, Baptism fundamentally constitutes the bond between the members of the Church, but the Holy Eucharist fosters this unity so effectively that it is sometimes called the “sacrament of unity”. For, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, Europeans and Africans and Americans and Asians gather at the same banquet to partake of the same food, the body and blood of Christ, the Savior of mankind. And greater aid toward the promotion of peace and friendliness among men is provided by this common participation in the Holy Eucharist than by man-made pacts and international laws.

The effects of Holy Communion are proportionate to the fervor of the recipients. Hence, it is most important that we prepare devoutly and attentively for each Holy Communion. It is sometimes stated that a single Holy Communion can make the recipient a saint; and the statement is no exaggeration, for as far as the power of the Blessed Sacrament is concerned, there is no limit to the grace it can bestow. The only limitations are those set by the dispositions of mind and heart found in the communicants. Besides a devout preparation, we should also make a fervent thanksgiving, for Our Lord is truly present physically within our breast for about fifteen minutes after the actual reception of Holy Communion, and this amount of time at least should be employed in acts of ardent love and of petition for the graces we need.

We have been speaking of the benefits conferred on men by the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament. As a sacrifice the Holy Eucharist is intended primarily to adore to thank God and to atone to Him for sin. However, it also obtains actual graces for those who share in its efficacy and obtains for them the remission of some of the debt of temporal punishment. The most practical way of benefitting by both the sacrificial and sacramental power of the Holy Eucharist is to assist attentively at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to receive Holy Communion devoutly. (taken from *The Seven Sacraments* by Fr. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R; *Imprimatur & Nihil Obstat* given 10/9/1939).

The Apostles Creed Pt. IV, Christ the Mediator



Much has been said in recent years about the position of the Blessed Virgin Mary in God's plan of our salvation. She has been given the apparently daring title of Co-redeemer, though not with the intention of putting her on an equal level with Christ. She has also been named the Mediatrix or dispenser of all divine graces, but here again she does not merit equality with Christ, who is the "one Mediator between God and man", as St. Paul tells us (1Tim. 2:5).

Many non-Catholics have been scandalized at the titles and honors heaped upon the Blessed Virgin Mary, but that is only because they do not understand the exact meaning of those titles. The root of the problem, however, is the fact that they do not sufficiently understand Christ's own position.

It is a divinely revealed truth that Jesus Christ is the one and only natural Mediator between God and man. Christ and Christ alone is a Mediator by His very nature, since He alone is both God and Man. Any other mediator could be such only by grace, only by a special divine privilege. Christ is the only principal Mediator between God and man.

By a mediator we mean someone who strives to reconcile two parties that are at odds with each other. We might call him a peacemaker, a go-between, an arbitrator. It is desirable that a mediator be wholly impartial and fair towards both parties, while being, at the same time, sincerely interested in the welfare of both. He should have something in common with both sides and understand both positions as well as possible.

Only Christ fulfills all the requirements of a perfect mediator between God and man. He is God; therefore, He understands God's position perfectly. He is Man; therefore, He understands man's position perfectly. As God, He demands that strict justice be done, because He had been offended by man's sins. As Man, He begs that justice be combined with mercy, because man is weak and naturally prone to evil because of his fallen nature due to the effects of Original Sin.

Such a setup fully satisfies the demands of both God and man. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the perfect Mediator, the perfect reconciler between God and man.

In this connection, it is interesting to note how the word "religion" fits in with the idea of a mediator. The word "religion" means a "reunion", a "rebinding". It indicates that there had been some kind of separation at one time. That separation did take place long ago, in the Garden of Eden. The two parties that were separated were God and man. The reunion between God and man took place on Calvary and it was brought about through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.



So you see, the word “religion” fits our Catholic Faith just perfectly, and it is only our Faith that gives the full and complete picture of the reunion between God and man through Jesus Christ. This reunion, or reuniting, is constantly being re-enacted through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacraments, which means that Christ the Mediator is always exercising His power of reconciliation between God and man.

From this, we can also see how “Christ-centered” our Catholic religion really is. It is centered around Christ, Who is the central figure, the main attraction, for us. It is because of this central position of His that He is able to draw all human beings to Himself, hanging upon the Cross.

People are always seeking the way to lasting happiness; Christ is the Way that leads to everlasting happiness. People are always seeking the truth; Christ is Truth itself. Who dispels the darkness of error. People are always seeking life, a happy satisfying life; Christ is our supernatural Life, the source of eternal life.

(Sermon given April 7, 1957 at St. Alphonsus Church, Lemont, Il.)

The Drama of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

The Catholic Religion is essentially a religion of love. To love means to esteem and revere; it means to acknowledge and to render thanks, to praise and glorify, to donate and dedicate, to believe and confide, without any fear or anxiety, with no false or ulterior purposes, with joy and eagerness, with inward peace and holy desire, ready to give though having only one’s poor self to give, rich beyond measure in the possession of Him whom we love.

What one of us can truly say that such is his case with the Lord our God? Is not our chief thought the selfish one: to have, and to have more? When we give it is with the hope that we may get more in return. When we pray our prayer is mostly petition. If our prayer is not answered we complain. We do occasionally deny ourselves; we “make sacrifices” as the phrase is; but is love our motive? How often it is fear that holds a whip above us; how often it is hope of reward that moves us, while we ignore and neglect the love impulses of our soul! We are a long way from the true spirit of Christian love.

“Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.” (Ps. 103:30).

Day by day in the holy Mass the greatest miracle of God’s love is wrought before our eyes—and we do not understand it. Do not say that we are creatures of the dust and that God’s works are too high for us; for in this work God has stooped to our lowness. The truth is that the Mass represents a supernatural concept of life and we have let it become strange and unfamiliar to us. We have lost the password that gives entry to the holy land.



The Mass is essentially a gift that we human beings offer to the Lord God, our heavenly Father. But how speak of a gift that we may make to God? We have nothing to give and He is the Lord and Owner of everything; we are nothing, He is all. And yet it is true that the Mass is a gift. We must give a gift to God, the gift of all that we are and all that we have, however much or little that may be. Must every gift make one party poorer and the other richer? Must every gift be a transfer of property and a deed of title? Are there not gifts of homage and love? A little child in a humble home who finds some simple gift to give to parents on a feast day has no thought of adding to their worldly wealth, but only wishes to express a child's reverence and love. Love always wishes to give, though it have nothing to give but itself. And it is precisely one's self that must be dedicated to God.

Do not be afraid that you will have nothing left, that you are giving your all away. For in the Mass we are made one with Christ and in Him all things are ours, our ownself and our Lord and heavenly Father and all of His creation. It is true that you will no longer belong entirely to yourself. But is it loss to lose a selfish self, a self that troubles and worries one and holds one down to earth? Is it loss to find oneself again in Christ, the sum of all truth and the source of all bounty?

But there is one condition demanded of us. We must learn to have at least the sincere desire to be utterly unselfish with God. Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Do not say: "I am pleased to make this offering to the Lord." But say: "O my Lord and Father, I wish to be Thine; deign to accept me in Thy mercy." And thus in the spirit of humility we shall begin to understand the mystery of the Mass.

In devoting yourself to participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, do not worry lest you seem to abbreviate your preparation for Holy Communion. It is a wrong kind of piety to make the Mass a work of anxious self-concern. God wants an expression of our deepest and truest self-oblation and thanksgiving. Why then are absorbed in the thought of how to get our share of merit and grace? Give glory to God; and He will take care of your soul.

The Mass, then, is a gift to God, an act of oblation. Let us put aside the phrase we use so often: "To make a sacrifice"; and let us offer an oblation, let us give a gift to God.

We know what gift-giving means among men; but what does it mean between man and God? Sacrifice in the strict sense is a visible gift hallowed by the mystical action of the priest and offered to God. The Mass is a true and actual sacrifice; for in the Mass the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the Eucharist by the holy blessing of the priest, that is, by the words of consecration, and are thus offered to God.



Hence the essence of the Mass as a sacrifice is the Consecration. For at the Consecration occurs, first, the “holy blessing” or the consecration of the Offertory gifts, and second, the oblation to God of these consecrated gifts. This oblation is made in the name of Christ, that is, at His bidding and by the priest as his representing Him. It is at the moment of Consecration that the priest most especially takes the place of Christ, when he speaks Christ’s own words.

The Mass as a sacrifice-oblation begins with the Offertory. All that precedes is an introductory prayer service with a two-fold purpose: first, to render homage and honor to God, and second, to purify and sanctify the worshippers and to prepare them for the main action of the Mass.

The Catholic religion is founded upon Christ’s sacrifice upon the Cross of Calvary. In that oblation, both inward and outward, the God-Man offered Himself, His human nature, to His heavenly Father for His Father’s honor and glory and for the redemption and salvation of mankind. In the Mass the Sacrifice of Calvary is renewed in a wonderful way by the oblation of the selfsame Gift by the hands of the priest who acts in the name of Christ and of the Church.

There is only one, there can be only one sacrificial gift intrinsically worthy of God and acceptable before God, and that one is the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ joined with His divinity. And now, behold what wonder is actually wrought in the Mass. On the one hand, our earthly gifts of bread and wine are sanctified and transubstantiated by the consecration or the “holy blessing” and become the selfsame oblation as that of Calvary, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; and these are offered anew in the Mass, not in the same bloody manner as on Calvary, but as the food-oblation foretold by the prophet Malachy. And thus the innate desire of humanity to express its homage to God in visible gifts is realized in this most holy way through Christ our Lord.

On the other hand, we who offer these visible gifts, and with them dedicate ourselves to God, are exalted and gathered up into that mysterious union with Christ in grace which St. Paul describes as the mystical body of Christ. We are united with Christ and so do become an acceptable oblation to the Father.

Thus is the work of redemption made permanent. Thus does Christ restore the relationship between God as our Lord and Father and us as His loyal subjects and loving children. Thus does He re-establish the realm of grace into which we are baptized as children, in which we are confirmed as citizens and housemates, in which we grow to Christian maturity, until at last we shall meet Him in His divine splendor in the realm of glory, ourselves glorified and blessed in Him.



The Apostles' Creed

The realm of grace is something supernatural and invisible, seen only by God in the depths of our souls. Yet we in our human nature possess intellect and free will. And our constant aim must be to supernaturalize the nature, to steep our intellect in those supernatural truths which Christ has revealed to us, to conform our free will to the supreme will of God and to make His will prevail throughout our whole being and all our life, and thus to make the invisible life of grace pervade our conscious life. In this way only can the kingdom of God among men realize its whole potency and purpose.

Moreover, our human nature is essentially social. We are moved by a natural impulse to visibly associate and co-operate in the carrying out of a project. Christ had this social character of mankind in view when He founded His Church, a visible society, partly divine and partly human, an organization made up of all those who are redeemed and united with Him in faith and grace. Those who live in Christ, live the Catholic life in common, as they will enjoy in common the realm of eternal glory.

It would be a mistake to regard the Church or her ministers as in the strict sense a mediating agency between God and man. For “there is one Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ.” (1Tim. 2:5). The priest in Christ’s Church is not a priest in the same sense as was the priest in the pagan religions of old. For with us Christ is the Mediator, not the priest. And all the faithful are in union with Christ. The priests of the Church are distinguished from the rest of the faithful in that they are empowered by God, through the Sacrament of Ordination, to do certain outward acts which Christ has connected to the giving of inward graces. And one of these outward acts which is most important for the life of Catholic society is the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which binds all people in the mystical body of Christ.

All these fundamental truths of the Catholic religion are brought out and given expression in the liturgy of the Mass.

The introductory prayer-service which precedes the Mass proper, is sometimes called the “Mass of the Catechumens”, because in early day the catechumens, or those who were not yet baptized, were only allowed to assist during this part of the liturgy. Some parts of it are invariable and other parts change from day to day through the course of the year. Throughout the invariable portion, and therefore in every Mass, runs the dominant note of homage to the royal Lord. The varying parts present throughout the course of the year, in a sort of vivid and impressive pageantry, a two-fold and parallel theme; first, the foundation and formation of the kingdom of God on earth in the lifetime of Jesus Christ. And second, the formation throughout all the succeeding centuries of the kingdom of His grace in human souls and the development of that kingdom in the conscious life of the faithful.



In this way the Catholic soul is made to live from day to day under the vital influence of those past events which continue evermore to form and fashion the life of the soul, bringing it ever to resemble more closely the model of which St. Paul speaks (Gal.4:19), the model life of Christ, bidding it look forward in holy expectation to that day when the unseen will be revealed and when faith will give place to sight.

We begin with sorrowful confession of our faults; we spurn the promptings of self-love and the ways of sin; we arise and lift our voices in the Gloria to sing the praises of the Most High. *“Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, art most high together with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.”*

By prayers and readings the soul is enlivened and elevated to the high plane of those heroic deeds of salvation, which are soon to be mystically renewed upon the altar, and gives utterance to this quickened life in the language of the ancient Psalms. And thus as from a fair and fertile spiritual soil our self-oblation will rise as a sweet-smelling flower, a perfume pleasing to our Lord.

The Mass proper begins with the Offertory. The priest and with him all the assembly, offers bread and wine as a food-oblation to the honor and glory of God. They are simple gifts, yet deeply significant both intrinsically and symbolically. The Mass is a food-oblation and hence we offer bread and wine, the nourishment which is wholesome and satisfying, and common throughout the earth. We offer bread and wine at the bidding of our Lord. His own use of these foods as symbols shows us another reason for the choice of them. He once said: “I am the Bread of Life” (John 6:35), and again: “I am the Vine” (John 15:5). And this bread and wine upon the altar are to be changed into the very Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore we bring these gifts and pray that God may bless them: *“Come, O Thou who makest holy, almighty, and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice prepared for Thy holy name.”*

This bread and wine are to be consecrated and transubstantiated into the real Body and Blood of Christ. And we also, ourselves, in a certain way, are to be united with Christ and gathered up in the mystical body of Christ. These visible and earthly gifts, before their consecration, represent our human nature with its faults and frailty. Earthbound creatures that we are, we give ourselves to God and dedicate ourselves to Him over and over by varied phrases so that by repeated acts of self-oblation our soul may rise toward Him in His regions of perpetual light. It is this desire that brings to our lips the prayer which accompanies the preparation of the chalice: *“O God, who in a marvelous manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more marvelously hast renewed it; grant that by the mystical union of this water and wine we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord.”*



Throughout all the prayers from the Offertory to the Preface run two main ideas—the offering of oblation and the petition for blessing, both in reference to the gifts of bread and wine and to the gift of our own person. The petition for blessing upon the gifts is repeated again and again by many turns of phrase in order to express the urgent need and deep desire for this divine blessing, the desire to be ourselves consecrated and ennobled, and in order to arouse in every soul the earnest will strive for and to attain this divine blessing which will make us worthy and acceptable in the sight of God.

The Offertory thus emphasizes the idea that we are seeking union with God. And if so, then we are expected to be in the state of grace. The Council of Trent expressed the wish that all who assist at Mass receive Holy Communion, which presupposes that they are in the state of grace. The liturgical prayers which follow the Communion also imply that all the faithful present have received the Body of our Lord. And the Roman Ritual gives us to understand that these prayers are still intended by the Church in that same sense and are not to be regarded merely as records of ancient custom.

The Preface introduces the Canon of the Mass, the solemn Eucharistic prayer which is the core of the whole sacrifice. Why is this prayer in Eucharistic or thanksgiving form? Because the sacrifice we are offering is not an entirely new one, independent of that of Calvary. It is the renewal of that very Sacrifice of the Cross which wrought the redemption of mankind and which rendered supreme homage to God. Hence we thank God; we offer our oblation in the words of thanksgiving. In its content our sacrifice is one of infinite homage and praise and thanksgiving and reparation, for it is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary. But in its liturgical form it is essentially eucharistic, it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The Preface introduces the idea of thanksgiving by a statement of reasons for thanksgiving, which reasons are made to vary somewhat according to the seasons and feasts of the year. The actual expression of thanks comes in the prayers of the Canon which follow, and especially in the central words and acts of oblation or sacrifice. We have heard the chanted words of the Preface over and over again but they never fail to move up by their deep solemnity.

“The Lord be with you.”

“And with your spirit.”

“Lift up your hearts.”

“We have lifted them up to the Lord.”

“Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.”

“It is meet and just.”

“It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord.”



Yes, through Christ our Lord, who has redeemed us and restored us to supernatural life, who has raised us up from our lowliness, from the slavery of sin, who has made us once more children of God, who is our one and all, yesterday, today, and forever and through whom alone we are worthy to render this thanksgiving. This thought sweeps the soul forward at once into a new hymn in praise of the glory of the Lord God and of His anointed One.

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”

He who comes in the name of the Lord, Him we await. For as we stand this moment before the Lord God with our earthly gifts and our earthly self, we know that we are not worthy to be received and born aloft. Christ is our Mediator. He comes in the name of the Lord His Father and He will go back to Him in our name, bearing our gifts and ourselves. Let us prepare for His coming.

The liturgical text constantly uses the plural number, for the liturgy is the prayer of the whole Catholic family. Here in its supreme moments we are aware that we offer our sacrifice in the Catholic community as the servants and family of God. And the family of God is not limited to those who are visibly present about the altar, though they, indeed, are nearest to the sacrifice. It includes the whole Church on earth, and also in a very true sense the saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory. For while they do not actually take part in the offering of the Mass, they have their share in it in their own way and are united with us in its sentiments and share in its fruits.

We who are visibly gathered about the altar are conscious of this brotherhood of countless number. Hence in the prayer *Te igitur* we embrace them all in a far-reaching memento. We offer the Mass in union with the whole Church throughout the world. All the members of the Church are members of the mystical body of Christ. We are to be united with Him in the Mass and we must not approach Him singly for He comes to one and all; He comes as the king of His people, as the Head of His mystical body. And we offer the Mass in communion with the saints in heaven, trusting that by union with their sanctity we may be more acceptable in the sight of God. He will not refuse the offering of His united family, of those who live in Christ, His well-beloved Son, of those redeemed by Christ’s great Sacrifice of Calvary.

We are ready now to present our gift. *“We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, mercifully to accept this oblation of our servitude as also of Thy whole family.”* We have assembled the whole multitude of God’s children on earth and in heaven and have approached the eternal throne-room. But the doors are not yet open for we still lack the chief thing of all, the presence and leadership of Christ, our Mediator and the High Priest of our Sacrifice. And hence we pray; *“Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to bless, approve, ratify, and make worthy and acceptable; that it may become for us the Body and Blood of Thy most*



beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.” And straightway comes the wonderful answer. Jesus Christ comes and opens the doors and brings us to His Father.

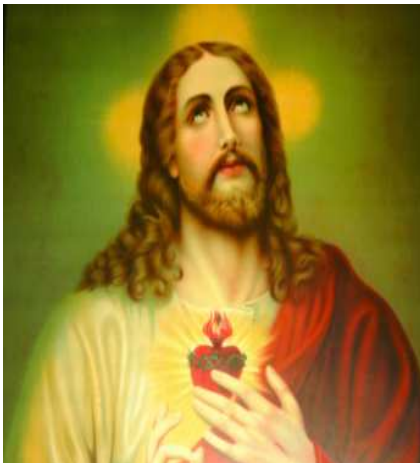
The solemn moment has arrived in which He keeps the pledge of the Last Supper. He comes, and in the person of the duly ordained priest, in this renewal of the Last Supper. He changes the gifts of bread and wine into His own person, the self-same oblation of His great Sacrifice of Calvary, the one and only and perpetual sacrifice of man’s redemption.

Mark well the full meaning of the Consecration—our offering is merged with that of Jesus Christ! Our visible gift is changed into the eucharistic Body of Christ and we ourselves are gathered up in a peculiar way in the mystical body of Christ, both inwardly and outwardly our offering is added and combined with His.

In the Consecration we reach the climax of our drama of sacrifice. We achieve union with Christ. *“Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”* In Him we may enter the gates of the heavenly city; in Him we may offer to the Father our gift which is now the gift of Christ; in Him we may offer ourselves wholly confident that we shall be accepted. This thought is sustained throughout the following prayer in which we offer to God in joy and gratitude “the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation,” and beg Him to receive this Gift and us ourselves.

The words refer directly to the sacred Gift upon the altar, but the Church has always understood them also in a symbolic sense, as correct theology must. The Body of the Lord hidden under the appearances of bread and wine is also a symbol of His mystical body of which we are the members. With Christ and in Christ we ascend from this altar on earth to the altar on high in the sight of the divine majesty of the Father.

Thus the first purpose of our sacrificial drama is attained. We have offered ourselves to God in this holy symbol and He has received us and union with Him is made. Thus is the Sacrifice of Calvary renewed upon our altars. On the Cross Christ offered Himself as mediator between fallen man and the eternal Father. By His triumphant death and resurrection He created His Church, He won His bride. Upon our altars the same Jesus Christ, represented by His duly ordained priest, again offers Himself to His Father, but now in union with the Church, His bride who day by day is robed in richer and more precious vesture; more precious as souls advance in Catholic perfection and richer as their number grows; and all blessed beyond measure in this union with God through the renewal of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.



Union with God by grace and love has its final goal in the union of everlasting glory which awaits both the individual soul and the entire Catholic community. This is the thought contained to the two prayers that follow. We commemorate the souls of the faithful departed who are secure in the union of grace but who have not yet attained to the final union of glory, and for them we beg, in virtue of this Holy Sacrifice; *“a place of refreshment, light and peace.”* And for them as for ourselves we pray, *“some part and fellowship with all the saints”* in the realm of everlasting glory. In this way the tide of our sacrifice reaches the shores of eternity.

“Through Christ our Lord.” This is the regular ending of the prayers which the Church prays officially as the bride of Christ. It recurs again and again throughout the Mass. And we know the reason now, for the Consecration has taught us that only by Christ’s love can we attain our goal. To emphasize this once more before the end, the Church makes us exclaim in the last part of the Canon: *“Through Christ our Lord, through whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us these things.”*

Through Christ the eternal Father gave being to our earthly gifts in the first creation. Through Christ He sanctified and quickened and blessed them so that they were changed unto His Body and Blood. Through Christ he gave them to us that we might offer them as our worthy and acceptable oblation. Therefore: *“By Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.”*

Thus ends the oblation act of this divine drama. How wonderful are the lines of this beautiful composition, how profound the thought and sentiment, how harmonious the blending, how exquisite the perfection of form. But we do not merely look upon it with admiration. We live the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and as we continue to live it day by day, may we more and more draw spirit from the Spirit of Christ and grow in union with Him, in union of invisible grace, and in union of our conscious life with His.

The sacrificial banquet is an integral part of the sacrifice of the Mass. That is how our Lord intended Holy Communion and that is the wish of the Church. Holy Communion is essentially a gift which God make to us in return for the gift we have offered to Him in the Mass. According to the liturgy it is a sacrificial banquet. As our Lord intended it, and as its name signifies, it is the gathering of brethren at the altar. God rewards the homage which we render Him in the Mass. And the recompense is worthy of Himself—the most precious thing in heaven and on earth, His only-begotten Son, who first put Himself at our disposal to be our gift to God, and again puts Himself at disposal of His Father to be His gift to us and the food of our souls.

Holy Communion should be an integral part of the Mass for all the faithful. It is plain from the words of the prayer following the Consecration: *“That as many of us, by*



participation at this altar, shall receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace.” Not that the Mass cannot be conceived without Communion, or that it loses anything of its intrinsic value; but without Communion the intrinsic idea of the Mass is not completely expressed.

Catholics should understand the relation between oblation and communion. This relation must be reasserted among us Catholics and be made plain. Mass without Communion of all the faithful lacks a most endearing feature, the gathering of the Catholic family at the eucharistic table. The Church wishes all of us to receive Holy Communion at every Mass we attend. This is no innovation or excess of devotion; it is a return to the practice of the first Christian centuries.

The “*Pater noster*” is the prayer which begins this portion of the Mass. It is placed here perhaps on account of its fourth petition: “Give us this day our daily bread” (though St. Augustine points to the fifth petition; “Forgive us our trespasses,” as an act of contrition for daily sins made in preparation for Holy Communion).

Throughout the prayers that follow runs one main thought, petition for that peace which God alone can give. Peace is the dearest gift of the Catholic religion, peace within and without, peace with self and with fellowmen, and most of all with God. Two of the prayers beg the blessing of worthy and fruitful Communion.

Holy Communion unites us with Christ by His eucharistic presence and by His abiding grace. Thus the general idea of union with the Godhead which is, as we have seen, the dominant motive of the entire Sacrifice of the Mass, here appears in the intimate form of personal union with Christ which is the characteristic note of the sacrifice-banquet.

A brief prayer in thanksgiving for the eucharistic-banquet and with petition for abiding grace and eventually for heavenly glory brings the whole drama to an end. It is brief; first, because the entire Communion portion of the Mass is the concluding act of the Mass drama, and second, because distribution of Communion to many leaves ample time for private prayer of thanksgiving.

Then, after the greeting: “*The Lord be with you,*” and its answer: “*And with your spirit,*” the assembly is dismissed with the words: “*Ite, Missa est,*” “*Go, the Mass is ended*”; and before the people leave the priest invokes God’s blessing upon them so that the day thus begun in the Lord may be well spent in His honor.

(portions taken from *Live the Mass* by Fr. Joseph Kramp S.J.; Published by the *Catechetical Guild Educational Society*, St. Paul. Minn., *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* given on April 5, 1926.)



The Following of Christ; Bk. IV. Ch. 9
*“That we must offer ourselves and all that is
ours, to God, and pray for all.”*

The Voice of the Disciple

Lord, all things are Thine that are in heaven and upon earth. I desire to offer up myself to Thee as a voluntary oblation, and to remain forever Thine. Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I offer myself to Thee this day, as Thy servant forevermore, for Thy homage, and for a sacrifice of perpetual praise. Receive me with this sacred oblation of Thy Precious Body, which I offer to Thee this day in the invisible presence of assisting Angels that it may be for salvation unto me and all Thy people.

Lord, I offer to Thee all my sins and offences, which I have committed in Thy sight and that of Thy holy Angels from the day in which I was first capable of sin until this hour, upon Thine altar of propitiation: that Thou may at the same time burn and consume them all with the fire of Thy charity, and may blot out all the stains of my sins, and cleanse my conscience from every fault, and restore unto me Thy grace, which by sin I have lost, fully pardoning me all and mercifully receiving me to the kiss of peace.

What can I do for my sins but humbly confess and lament them, and incessantly implore Thy propitiation? All of my sins are exceedingly displeasing to me; I will never commit them anymore; but I am sorry for them, and I will be sorry for them as long as I live; and am prepared to do penance, and to make satisfaction to the utmost of my power. Forgive, O my God, forgive me my sins, for the sake of Thy holy Name. Save my soul, which Thou has redeemed with Thy Precious Blood. Behold, I commit myself to Thy mercy: I resign myself into Thy hands. Deal with me according to Thy goodness, not according to my impiety and wickedness.

I offer also to Thee all my good works, though very few and imperfect; that Thou may amend and sanctify them; that Thou may have a pleasurable regard to them, and make them acceptable to Thee, and always make them tend to better; and may not the less conduct me, a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a blissful and glorious end.

I offer to Thee also all the pious desires of devout persons; the necessities of my parents, friends, brothers, sisters, and all those that are dear to me; and of all such as, for the love of Thee, have been benefactors to me or others; and who have desired and besought me to offer up prayers and Masses for themselves and all theirs, whether they are still living in the flesh or are already dead to this world; that they may all experience the assistance of Thy grace, the help of Thy consolation, protection



from dangers, and the deliverance from the punishment to come; and that, they may joyfully pay to Thee a noble sacrifice of praise.

I offer up also to Thee prayers, and this sacrifice of propitiation, for them in particular who have in any way injured me, grieved me, or abused me, or have inflicted upon me any hurt or injury. And for those likewise whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, oppressed, or scandalized, by words or deeds, knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee to forgive us all our sins and mutual offences. Take, O Lord, from our hearts all suspicion, indignation, anger, and contention, and whatever else may wound charity and lessen brotherly love. Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave Thy mercy; give grace to the needy; and grant us so to live that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy grace, and that we may attain unto life everlasting. Amen.

Practical Reflections

Weary of the servitude of our passions, and fatigued with the inefficacy of our desires, by which we promise God what we never perform, and pretend to be His, without ceasing to be our own or weaning ourselves from the world and vanity, let us now, at least, after having received Him, make a firm resolution of giving ourselves really to Him, and of dedicating and consecrating ourselves to His love. It is time, O my Savior, that this heart, which was made for Thy love, and redeemed by Thy Precious Blood, should forever cease to be devoted to itself, and become wholly and irrevocably Thine; and I protest at Thy sacred feet, that such is my ardent desire. This heart has received Thee, my Jesus, and Thou desire to consummate within it that new life which Thou hast assumed on the altar, to make it a victim of Thy love. Sacrifice then to Thy Father Thy holy life together with my life of sin; and never suffer me to recall that heart which on this day I wholly give to Thee.

Prayer

I adore Thee, O Jesus, with reverence, as my God, with confidence as my Savior, with love as my Father, and with humble fear as my Judge. When Thou shalt come to judge me, Thou Who has now come to enter into my soul to sanctify and to save it, condemn me not. I offer Thee the holy Mass which I have heard, and the Communion which I have received, to obtain the pardon of all my sins, for the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of all the just. Enlighten my understanding, change my heart, regulate my life, suppress my passions, and, as an absolute master, reign Thou entirely over me. Would that I could make Thee known and loved by the entire world! I would willingly give my life to procure for Thee the glory and delight of beholding all mankind subjected to Thine Empire. Grant, O Jesus, I make seek only to please Thee in all things, and that, detached from all things, may unite myself to Thy love, and thus commence in time what I hope in Thy great mercy to continue throughout eternity. Amen.

The Explanation of Our Mission and of Our Logo

Since we have named this newsletter the “Mystical Rose” it would seem only prudent that we explain why we call it, “Mystical Rose”, and why we have designed this Logo at the top of the first page.

The title, “Mystical Rose”, is taken from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Logo of the crown of thorns, with the roses attached, symbolizes Our Lady’s suffering during Our Lord’s Passion and Death. It also symbolizes Her suffering for us, Her spiritual children. The seven roses affixed to the crown of thorns represents the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.

We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Mother and we ask Her to help and guide us, so that we may be able to serve God’s people by printing material that will be spiritually edifying; bringing those who read it to a better understanding of what God requires of them in order to achieve salvation; and a more sincere desire to serve the Living God to the best of their ability.

Information about Catholicism is so very necessary in order to live a good life. The world in which we live today is in dire need of that information, in order to save mankind from its own self-imposed ignorance. We hope, by the grace of God, that our newsletter will help to inform.

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