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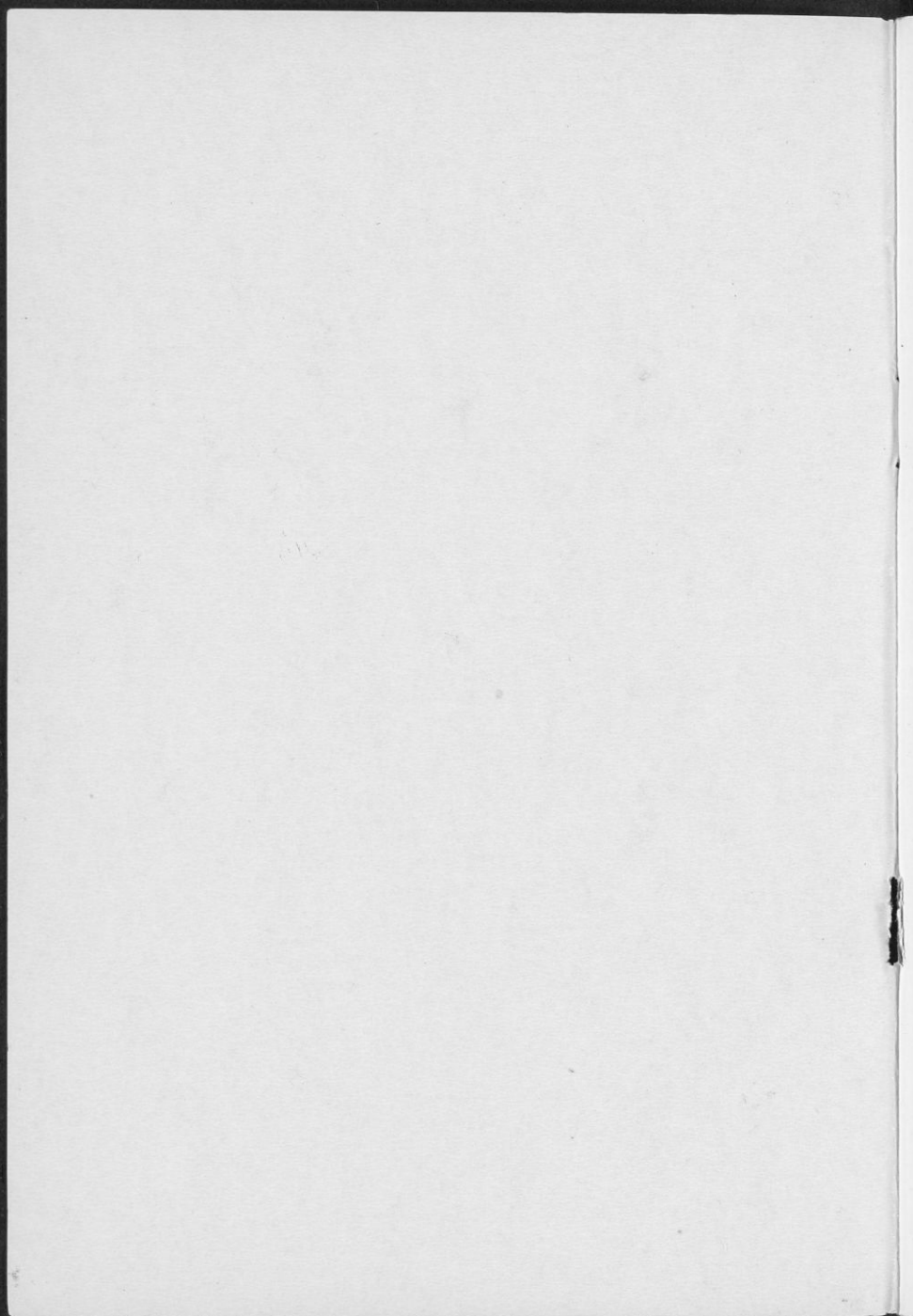
Betowski, Edward M.

# WHY ALL SHOULD GO TO MASS

*A Discussion Club Text with Outline*

by

REV. EDWARD M. BETOWSKI



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GO TO MASS

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## FOREWORD

It is unfortunate that in our spiritual life familiarity with the practices of our Faith makes us forget their sanctity and their excellence. This is too often the case with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the central act of worship in Catholic life. While millions attend Holy Mass, few really love it for what it is. In the following pages, Father Betowski of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, has ably and masterfully explained what the Mass really is, how Christ comes down on the altar and why. While written especially for Discussion Club members, anyone who will study this pamphlet with the right intention will absorb something of the rich spiritual treasures at our disposal in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and will become an intelligent and worthy co-offerer in the Greatest of Sacrifices.

✠ JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D.,

Bishop of Rochester.



FOREWORD

It is important that in our political life we should not  
forget the fact that we are a people of the East and  
not of the West. This is not only the case with regard to  
our political life but also with regard to our economic life.  
The West has a long history of industrial development and  
it is a mistake to think that we can follow the same path.  
We must find our own way of development which is suited  
to our own conditions. This means that we must have  
our own industrial policy and our own economic policy.  
The economic system which we adopt must be suited to the  
needs of our people and to the conditions of our country.  
We must not blindly follow the West or the East. We must  
find our own way of development which is suited to our  
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## INTRODUCTION

THE greatest thing which we Catholics possess is the Holy Mass. But alas! Some of us will probably not appreciate this priceless treasure, or realize the superb opportunity it affords until the Day of Judgment. Were we to reflect, we would all agree with one mind and heart that the Mass surpasses in beauty and grandeur and efficacy anything that we have, because the Mass is the God-Man offered in Sacrifice to the Eternal Father. *The Imitation of Christ* reminds us that "when the priest celebrates (Mass), he honors God, he rejoices the angels, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the dead, and makes himself partaker of all good things." What an array of divine blessings!

This pamphlet has been written to bring out in strong relief the glories, the value and fruits of the Holy Sacrifice, that those who learn, may grow in the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Throughout the pages information and devotion have been admirably blended. The four ends of sacrifice have been treated simply. The pamphlet contains a neat amount of factual information on the Mass. But the dominant note found in every page, is love and devotion. The author has not pulled the Mass apart, and dissected and analyzed minutely every prayer and action. Such procedure gives little edification to the average lay person. While giving ample light to the mind, the author has endeavored especially to enkindle the fire of divine love in the heart so that knowledge will be transformed into action.

Frequent reference is made to the various parts of the Mass. Therefore, those who read with the purpose of study should have a copy of the Missal at hand. Young and old will peruse these pages with pleasure and great spiritual profit. Their meaning will be clear to high school students as well as to older minds. The pamphlet may be studied by an individual, though it was prepared particularly for group discussion.

Here and there reference is made to countries where religion is persecuted, and where the Mass is forbidden. What a blessing that we live in a land where we may assist at the adorable Sacrifice whenever we choose! If, after reading and studying this pamphlet, the Mass does not appear more precious and lovable than ever before, then something has been missed.

JOHN M. DUFFY,

Director

Diocesan Discussion Clubs.

## Why All Should GO TO MASS

1. **Because**  
the Mass brings God to the people.
2. **Because**  
the Mass brings the people to God.
3. **Because**  
the Mass is the most exalted act of adoration.
4. **Because**  
the Mass is able to inspire acts of perfect contrition.
5. **Because**  
the Mass is the best way of saying, "Thanks be to God."
6. **Because**  
the Mass is a most powerful Sacrifice of supplication.
7. **Because**  
the Mass gives to mankind the Sacrament of Love.
8. **Because**  
the Mass leads to eternal glory.



# Why All Should GO TO MASS

## CHAPTER I

**Because** the Mass brings God to the people

### **Christ Still With Us**

**H**AD we lived long ago when the Saviour walked among men, teaching them, doing wonderful works of mercy, and even raising the dead to life, we too might have been eager to follow Him. We too might have wished to be in His sacred Presence, and to ask favors for our friends and for ourselves. Recall one scene from the New Testament. An alert Roman army officer asked Christ to cure his sick servant. When Jesus made ready to go to the man's house, the Centurion said:

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed" (St. Matt. viii. 8).

At times we may find ourselves saying, "What a pity that we did not live in those blessed days!" As a matter of fact Jesus is still among us, all over the world, wherever the Blessed Sacrament is to be found. And millions place themselves in His Presence in order that

they may adore Him,  
and express sorrow for their sins,  
and thank Him for constant favors,  
and seek further blessings.

The Mass brings God to the people because the Mass gives the people the Eucharist, and in the Eucharist we have Jesus. During the sacred Sacrifice the people should join with the priest and appeal to the Saviour as did the army officer. If you read your Missal you will find that there is a sacred



moment when the priest looks at the consecrated Host, and changes just one word of the Centurion's appeal by saying:

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my *soul* shall be healed."

### God Speaks to Men

By faith we accept the Real Presence of the Redeemer in the Eucharist. Divine faith is not guesswork, not a sentimental fancy. By an act of divine faith we accept a truth on the authority of God Who cannot make a mistake, and Who would not deceive us. We cannot make an act of divine faith without God's help. That help is called grace. And we cannot make such an act unless we have good will. Children have human faith in a good father. When a father is trustworthy he deserves all the faith which his obedient children place in him. God is our Eternal Father. We are His children. He adopts us through Baptism. When He tells us something, we should believe without wavering, because He would not lead us astray.

Recall the Gospel which tells of the time when Jesus went with Peter and James and John into a mountain. While there our Lord's garments began to shine like snow, and His face glowed like the sun! A most exalted moment! The voice of the Heavenly Father was heard saying that He was pleased in His Beloved Son, and telling the disciples to accept whatever the Son said. Reflect upon these lines from the Bible:

"And lo a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.

"And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid.

"And Jesus came and touched them: and said to them, Arise, and fear not" (St. Matt. xvii. 5-7).

When St. Peter saw our Lord so strikingly transfigured on Mount Thabor, he uttered an exclamation that all ought to

remember. If we think about its meaning, it should prompt us to go to Mass often, and should serve as a constant invitation to pay a visit to a church where Christ is to be found in the Blessed Sacrament. What did St. Peter say? Here are his words:

“Lord, it is good for us to be here.”

### The Real Presence

If we are to study the Mass and the Real Presence in a fruitful manner, it is necessary to learn the dignity of the commonplace. In a secluded upper-room in Jerusalem Jesus decided to take supper with His disciples. Read with prayerful attention the divinely inspired narrative as set down by St. Luke.

“And taking bread, He gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is My Body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me.

“In like manner the chalice also, after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you” (St. Luke xxii. 19, 20).

Jesus meant just what He said. He changed the simple elements, bread and wine, into His Body and Blood. An astounding mystery! We believe what He said. He is most trustworthy because He is the God-Man. He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, eternally united to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it was to His first priests and their successors that He addressed the words:

“Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

And so whenever and wherever Holy Mass is truly offered this command is obeyed, and Jesus is present, body, blood, soul and divinity. Were we gifted with the great thinking power of St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron of learning, and were we to live and to learn for a thousand years, we could not get to

the bottom, nor reach the top of this sublime act of God's love for human beings. But deep and exalted as this great truth is, it is simple enough in its elements to be grasped by children when they have reached the age of reason. It is gratifying to know that millions flock to the sacred Sacrifice of the Mass even on week days, and it is reasonable to say that millions more would follow if people would only develop the spirit of trustful, unspoiled children, and look to our Lord as sincere friends, filled with the spirit of faith.

### Lamps and Hearts

Restfully review what we have been thinking about by considering a few lines that were written by a boy who went into a church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. He wanted to be united closely to God, so he thought about the mystery of Divine Love, went home, and in the light of faith wrote this little poem:

#### THE SANCTUARY LAMP

O little red lamp burning  
 At the altar night and day,  
 Flick'ring when my mind is weary,  
 Gleaming when my thoughts are gay,  
 In sweet silence thou art saying  
 With thy tiny tongue of fire,  
 "Christ is dwelling on the altar  
 Harkening to each desire."

O little red heart burning  
 In my body day and night,  
 Stay thou filled with oil of virtue  
 And let strong faith be thy light,  
 Keep thou burnished as a beacon  
 To the great, eternal goal,  
 Thus to mark that God is dwelling—  
 Dwelling safely in the soul.

You will note that the first part of this poem refers to the Presence of God in the Blessed Sacrament, where we have,

along with the most Blessed Trinity, the Sacred Humanity of Christ. The second part refers to the special Presence of God Who, through sanctifying grace, dwells in a good person as in a temple.

### **God Comes Directly to Man**

The wholesome effects which follow from being present at Mass, or from entering a church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, should become clearer as we continue the discussion on why all should go to Mass. Bringing God to man through the Holy Sacrifice comes to a supernal climax in receiving Holy Communion. St. Thomas Aquinas said something that we all ought to reflect upon as often and as deeply as possible. He said that when we eat ordinary bread the food which we consume is assimilated by our bodies and becomes part of our bones, muscle and organs. But when we partake of the Bread of Life the process is reversed, and is divinely wonderful because the person who receives the Eucharist fruitfully is little by little assimilated into the Lord, and becomes more and more Christlike. How ardent should be our desire to receive Holy Communion fruitfully!

Meditate now upon the inspired words of one who did not always love Christ, and even persecuted the Church of Christ. After a miraculous conversion he used every ounce of his energy to spread the kingdom of God on earth. He wanted to make amends for his one-time violent opposition to truth and true holiness. What a blessing it would be if all of us became so completely converted to Jesus dwelling in the Sacrament of Love, and offering Himself to the Eternal Father during Mass, that at length, after receiving the Eucharist with burning hearts we could publicly, yet humbly, exclaim with St. Paul:

"I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Epistle to Galatians ii. 20).

**Questions**

1. Describe the curing of the sick servant of the Centurion.
2. What prayer at Mass recalls this scene?
3. Is Christ to be found on earth today? Where?
4. Wherein does an act of human faith differ from an act of divine faith?
5. Did God the Father tell human beings to accept the teachings of Jesus? When?
6. What did our Lord do and what did He teach at the Last Supper?
7. What great act brings God to man? Explain.
8. Why are people so frequently found going into Catholic churches on days other than Sunday?
9. What part of the Mass brings God directly to human beings?
10. Tell the effect of the fruitful coming of God to man as explained by St. Thomas Aquinas.

## CHAPTER II

**Because** the Mass brings the people to God

### **The Church Unifies Mankind**

**I**F you watch the Church in its doctrine and practice, you will see that it aims to unify the human race in God. Observe two things:

1. The Church brings God to man through the Mass and the Sacraments.
2. The Church leads man to God by teaching and preaching.

As already explained, the Holy Sacrifice brings the Saviour into the world, and the Saviour is truly God as well as truly man. Even after Mass has been offered, Jesus remains among the people wherever the Eucharist is reserved. The Church brings God to man in a marvelously direct manner when the Eucharist is given to the faithful who come to the altar-rail to receive Holy Communion, or when Holy Viaticum is brought to the dying.

In the early days of Christianity nearly all who gathered around the priest partook of the Bread of Life, and the Mass at that time was called the "Breaking of the Bread" (*fractio panis*). In the modern, worrisome world this sublime union or communion of finite man, with the infinite God, is often ignored. Those who have lowly hearts are in a better position to appreciate this divine marvel than those whose proud minds are burdened with a great cargo of unrelated facts.

Pause for a moment to dwell upon a remark made by a venerable colored lady, 106 years old. After having been instructed, she was received into the Church. On the day when she made her First Holy Communion, her children and her children's children were circled around her, not in a cabin in



the South, but in her lowly apartment in a crowded New York tenement. After receiving the Sacrament she made a short speech. Follow her words and consider how clearly she saw that the Church brings God to the people. She said:

"My children, for years and years I have prayed that I might die and go to heaven, but today when God has come to me for the first time in Holy Communion I would say that this is heaven enough for me!"

### **Bringing the People to God**

Although through the Church God is willing to come to the people, the Church must call the people to God. This she does by teaching and preaching, as divinely commanded. Imagine that you hear our Lord saying:

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19).

"Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (St. Mark xvi. 15).

Her schools, her catechetical activity, her missionary work in lands afar, her printed and spoken word—all these efforts show that the Church is trying to bring the people to Him from Whom all blessings flow.

### **Teaching Through the Senses**

At the heart of all the activities that tend to bring men to God is the Mass, the most exalted act on the face of the earth! The Redeemer is the sun and center of the solar system of our souls. Light and warmth radiate from Christ crucified and gloriously risen from the dead. Through the senses we first come in contact with the outside world. Whatever we learn must normally, in some way, come through hearing, sight, taste, smell, or feeling. Our Lord, Who knows all things, is aware of this. By reading the New Testament



we discover that He taught the most sublime truths in a most picturesque manner. He explained the care which the Father has over men by pointing to the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field. He called His disciples "the salt of the earth," but warned them against loss of zeal by speaking of the uselessness of salt that loses its savor. He pointed to the fish that silvered the net, and made the duty of the Apostles unmistakable by saying, "I will make you to be fishers of men" (St. Matt. iv. 19).

Mark how the Church uses material things in order to lead the mind to truth, and to bring the soul to God. See the altar. Sometimes it is as simple as a table. It was at a supper table that Christ said: "This is My Body. This is My Blood." Above the place where the priest stands when repeating the words of Consecration is a crucifix. Does it not remind you of the divine Sacrifice of Calvary? On the altar are at least two candles that lead thoughtful minds through a corridor of nearly 2,000 years to remind them of the early Christians attending Mass in the dark catacombs of Rome. The candle is now commonly taken to be a symbol of the light of faith, and may even make you think of Christ, the "Light of the world." On the altar is a book called the Missal, a printed treasury of the holy words pronounced by the priest when saying Mass.

### **The Language of Color**

As time went on, the Church made use of color as having a language of its own. Whenever you attend Mass allow the vestments worn by the priest to speak to you:

**Black** suggests mourning. It is used on Good Friday to tell us of the Sacrifice of Calvary. On other days it appeals to us to join with the priest in seeking eternal rest for the dead.

**Violet** preaches humility, penance and contrition. It expresses the spirit which should attend Advent, Lent, the Vigils of Feasts, and Ember Days. It is used on the

Feast of the Holy Innocents, unless the Feast falls on Sunday, when red is worn.

**Green** awakens hope. It is used on all days which have no special festive character, and which do not express sorrow. As you may recall, the vestments on certain Sundays are green.

**Red** speaks of martyrs. It tells us of our Lord's Passion, and of His Precious Blood. Not of blood alone does it speak, but of fire also, as when worn on the Feast of Pentecost and during its octave.

**White** announces joy and glory. It is used to honor our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the holy Angels, the confessors, virgins, and all saints who are not martyrs. Masses in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, Nuptial Masses, and those said at the burial of innocent children, are in white.

### **The Voice of the Sanctus Bell**

While the deaf may feel themselves drawn toward God by the teaching which comes through color, the blind may study, through sound, the great facts of the Redemption while attending Mass. If instructed in the catechism, they know of Bethlehem, and may have been deeply impressed by God's goodness in sending an Angel to call the lowly shepherds to adore the new-born King. And so when they hear the Sanctus bell during that part of the Mass known as the Consecration, it may seem like the voice of a heavenly messenger saying: "This shall be a sign unto you, you shall find the Saviour wrapped in the white and purple swaddling clothes of what appear to be but bread and wine, and laid on the altar." With humble hearts they fall to their knees to adore the same Christ Who was born in Bethlehem. The voice of the priest is a further consolation to the blind, and if it be a solemn Mass the clouds of incense enable them to sense the fragrance of holiness.

### The Epistles Aim to Teach

If you follow the priest by reading a Missal you will discern that the Church is trying to bring you close to God by the instructions which are found in the Epistles. In the Latin rite, the Epistle varies. It may be taken from the Old Testament, such as the writings of the prophets, or it may be a portion of a letter written by an Apostle. The word "Epistle" means "letter." Observe directly what a wealth of instruction is found in this letter of St. Paul which is read on the Feast of Corpus Christi:

"Brethren: I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat: this is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in My Blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until He come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 23-29).

### The Glad Tidings

The word "Gospel" means "good news" or "glad tidings," the reference being to the coming of the Saviour. At Mass the Gospel tells us something about Christ: His mercy, His patience, or His love. Frequently the words of the Redeemer are quoted directly. Out of special reverence for the Gospel the priest who is about to read it first stands with bowed head before the center of the altar and prays that his heart and his lips be made clean. Just before the priest reads the Gospel he makes the Sign of the Cross on the Missal, and then on his

forehead, lips and breast. The people sign themselves in the same way. These little crosses should imply that we want the Gospel to be:

- (1) in our mind, that we may know what the Lord taught;
- (2) on our lips, that we may bravely tell others the truths of our holy religion;
- (3) in our heart, that we may lovingly live according to the doctrines of the Gospel.

May your understanding of the Mass take on courage and love by reading prayerfully this Gospel of the Mass of Corpus Christi:

“At that time: Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: My Flesh is meat indeed: and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this Bread shall live forever” (St. John vi. 56-59).

On Sundays the priest often delivers a sermon after reading the holy Gospel. By an explanation of the glad tidings, or a development of some doctrine, he aims to turn the minds and hearts of his hearers toward eternity.

Thus the language of color, the sound of the bell, the voice of the priest, the use of printed words, the sight of the crucifix, and the solemn moments which attend the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion of Holy Mass—all tend to draw the children of Adam to God. Attend the sacred Sacrifice with fruitful devotion. The inspirations of grace will be like echoes of the voice of Christ saying:

“Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you” (St. Matt. xi. 28).

**Questions**

1. How does the Church try to unify the human race?
2. Describe two ways in which the Church aims to bring the people to God.
3. How did Christ lead the minds of His hearers to eternal truths?
4. Does the Church imitate Christ in teaching Christian doctrine?
5. What is meant by the language of color?
6. Name the various colors of the Mass vestments.
7. Tell what these colors symbolize.
8. Explain the importance of the Sanctus bell, especially to the blind.
9. How does the Epistle serve to bring people to God?
10. Why is the Gospel regarded with very special reverence?

## CHAPTER III

**Because** the Mass is the most exalted act of Adoration

### **The Meaning of Adoration**

**A** PATIENT who spent many days convalescing on a hospital porch said that he could not keep from hearing much of the conversation of people who came to visit their sick friends and relatives. Visitors, especially women, seemed quite aware of the theory that there is a therapeutic value to smiling and talking about pleasantries. Many things were spoken of as "adorable." Children were "adorable." Sunny days were "adorable." Even funny little hats received the compliment of being called "adorable!" Strange to say, nearly everything was spoken of as "adorable" except God! This may not mean that they purposely excluded God, but it may mean that in modern life words tend to lose their spiritual significance.

If we are to argue that everybody should go to Mass because the Mass is the most exalted act of adoration, we should consider the meanings that are attached to the word, adoration.

(1) In its widest sense adoration is now used to express the reverence shown to any person or object possessing inherently, or by association, a high degree of excellence. Hence the expression, "adorable child."

(2) When the reverence turns toward the sacred character of an object, the word takes on a religious meaning. For example, on Good Friday we speak of the "adoration of the Cross." We see Catholics bend the knee before the crucifix. This form of adoration is not absolute, but relative. It relates to Christ Who died on the Cross for the salvation of all.

Adoration in a wide sense may also refer to the homage



paid to the good Angels and to the Saints, on account of their supernatural excellence and union with God. In English we have no word to express this special form of homage. In Latin it is called "dulia." We venerate the Saints and Angels during Mass, some of whose names are mentioned in the Canon, which is the central or fundamental part of the sacred Sacrifice.

Furthermore, in English there is no word to express the very special homage due to the Blessed Virgin. The Latin term is "hyperdulia." This word refers to the deep reverence paid to Mary because of her exalted position in heaven as Queen of Saints and Angels, and implies a loving respect for God's Mother and ours, and a confidence in her powerful intercession and benevolence. When you go to Mass, follow the words of the priest with your Missal, and you will notice that when he turns his mind to the Church Triumphant he begins his prayer by communing with, and honoring the memory, "first of the glorious, ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ."

(3) We now come to a form of adoration that differs from the other forms, not in degree, but in kind. In a strict sense, adoration refers to those acts of *divine worship* which are directed properly to God alone, in acknowledgment of His supreme perfection and dominion, and of the creature's dependence upon Him. The Latinized Greek word for this kind of adoration is "latria."

### **Sacrifice Expresses Adoration**

As soon as man recognizes God as the Supreme Being, and understands his dependence upon God, he wants to express outwardly his inward spirit of adoration. This is best done by sacrifice. Adam and Eve taught their children how to offer sacrifice. They built altars and adored the Almighty by giving back to Him what the Lord had given to them. Cain offered the fruits of the earth by burning them on his altar. Abel, who was a shepherd, sacrificed a lamb from his flock.



### **The Divine Sacrifice**

When our First Parents sinned, heaven was closed. It was to be opened again by the Redeemer Who would suffer and die to atone for the sins of mankind. The Redeemer is the Lamb of God. This adorable Lamb of God is offered in sacrifice on the Cross. The Sacrifice of the Cross is the highest act of adoration. On the Cross the God-Man is the Victim offered to the Eternal Father. Holy Mass is the same sacrifice, only in an unbloody manner, and is therefore the noblest way of telling God that we look to Him as the absolutely Supreme Being, and express our complete dependence upon Him. Everybody should go to Mass because to know what the Mass is helps us to understand who we are, where we are going, and Who is the Supreme Being in an absolute sense. It warns us against putting something in place of God. When we put something in place of God we become idolaters.

### **The Almighty Dollar**

Civilized people of today often think that they are quite free from idolatry and superstition. Observation indicates that many still put something in place of God. Have you not heard people talk of the "Almighty Dollar"? They may seem to speak in jest, but it is possible to find men who regard money as the supreme thing, and they express their dependence upon it in such a way as to imply that they adore it. Have not some rich men become so attached to gold that when it was taken from them they killed themselves by jumping from tall buildings? In our charity let us trust that they were deranged and not wholly responsible for this form of human sacrifice. But if they really considered money to be the supreme thing, they were modern idolaters. The root of this form of worshipping material things is a capital sin known as greed or covetousness. It brings a lot of trouble into the hearts and homes of men. Consider the words of the late Pope Pius XI, in his letter on the depression:

"Is it not that lust of earthly goods, that the pagan poet called with righteous scorn 'the accursed hunger for gold'; is it not that sordid egoism which too often regulates the mutual relations of individuals and society; is it not, in fine, *greed*, whatever be its species and form, that has brought the world to a pass we all see and deplore?"

St. Paul in a divinely inspired letter (1 Tim. vi. 10) warns against this form of false worship by writing:

"For the desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows."

### The First Commandment

Putting something in place of the true God is an old tendency. Long ago, while Moses was on Mount Sinai the people grew restless and made a graven image for themselves. It was the figure of a calf, formed out of gold that was melted from the earrings and adornments of the women. They began to venerate it, and to offer sacrifice to it, as if it were something supreme. When Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments he saw the people worshipping this golden calf. Filled with holy anger he destroyed the object of their idolatry, and dashed the tablets of stone to pieces by hurling them to the ground! Then God told Moses to make two more tablets like the first. These Moses took up into the mountain and God wrote upon them. The very First Commandment reads:

"I am the Lord thy God . . . thou shalt not have strange gods before Me" (Exodus xxxii).

Devout attendance at Mass, not only keeps us from worshipping false gods, but enables us to adore the true and living God. Pride is one of the very worst sins because through pride we put ourselves in place of the Supreme Being. By going to Mass we associate with the Saviour. Christ, the God-Man, was born in a cave and died on a Cross. His

lowliness and poverty are expressed all over again in the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and as a sacrament. Think of Divinity and Sacred Humanity truly present under the humble appearances of bread and wine! Hearken to the words of Jesus preaching on the mountain:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (St. Matt. v. 3).

### **The False God of Worldly Pleasure**

In our own day we suffer from what may be called the idolatry of a good time. Some people make worldly pleasure the supreme thing. Their lives are regulated by a philosophy of self-indulgence. A most conspicuous form of false adoration of this kind concerns the sense of taste. It leads quickly to the vice of gluttony, one of whose scandalous children is drunkenness. It is an old disorder, and St. Paul gives terrible warning by saying that drunkards shall not enter into the kingdom of God. In a letter which he wrote to the Philippians (Epistle of 23rd Sunday after Pentecost) we read:

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ.

“Whose end is destruction: whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things.”

At Mass we mind heavenly things, and adore the Triune God Who alone can give us the eternal pleasure of the Beatific Vision.

### **State Idolatry**

A constant menace to modern society is that view of life which regards the State as something absolutely supreme. When the State claims to have rightful control of the whole of existence, and aims to press down on the totality of human activities, it is called *totalitarian*, an ugly word for an ugly error. It may be termed *social idolatry*, and quickly leads, either to an attempt to destroy all religion, as in Russia, or to introduce some form of religion that will be totally under the

control of the State, as in Germany. Of old the idolatrous Israelites sacrificed thousands of their children to the false god, Moloch. Today may we not say that through persecution and unjust wars millions are being sacrificed to the modern totalitarian State? In some mysterious way, however, the flame of faith keeps burning, in spite of the whirlwind of oppression. In the youthful days of the Church it was kept from being extinguished by adoring God during the Sacrifice of the Mass offered on the tombs of the martyrs in the dark catacombs, or underground cemeteries in Rome.

All should go to Mass, rulers and subjects alike, in order that they may humbly adore God Who alone is adorable in a complete and absolute sense, because He alone is the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. The Mass is the oblation or offering to the Eternal Father of the Divine Teacher Who taught obedience to all lawfully established authority by saying:

“Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s” (St. Matt. xxii. 21).

### **Perpetual Persecution**

In a certain sense, Christians are always under persecution. Christ foretold it. Society organized apart from God tries to destroy the Mass. The devil whispers that the Mass is superstition. Fallen human nature tells us to stay in bed on Sunday morning and rest. But lively faith says, “Go to Mass. Go frequently to Mass. Try to get everybody to go to Mass. In the Cross is salvation.”

And when you go to Mass, adore God in spirit and in truth, and openly profess your faith by worshiping devoutly the Blessed Eucharist. When the Bread of Life is lifted above the head of the priest at the time of the Consecration do not bow your head at once. Look first to the Sacred Host, and from the depths of your soul utter the little ejaculation which has an indulgence attached to it:

“My Lord, and my God.”

**Questions**

1. What does adoration mean in a wide sense?
2. Explain adoration in a strict sense.
3. How should we venerate the Saints, and the Blessed Virgin?
4. Tell what sacrifice expresses.
5. What is the noblest act of adoration?
6. What did St. Paul say about money?
7. How did Pius XI explain the root of economic unhappiness?
8. How does the Mass offset the worship of worldly pleasure?
9. What is meant by a totalitarian State?
10. What should you do when the priest lifts the Sacred Host above his head at the Consecration of the Mass?

## CHAPTER IV

**Because** the Mass inspires acts of perfect contrition

### **The Confiteor**

**T**HE word, *Confiteor*, is a Latin term, and means, "I confess." When used in relation to the Mass, it refers to a dramatic prayer. Watch the priest and the server at the beginning of the Holy Sacrifice and you will see that the celebrant stands at the foot of the altar and says certain prayers to which the altar boy responds. At first the priest stands erect, but all at once he changes his position, bows low, with his face to the ground, and begins a prayer by saying, "I confess to Almighty God" ("*Confiteor Deo omnipotenti*"). In this prayer while acknowledging that he has sinned, he strikes his breast three times and says, "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" ("*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*"). Then he assumes a normal position again while the server (representing the people) bows profoundly and repeats the same solemn prayer. The *Confiteor* is a public expression of sorrow for sin. Priest and people openly tell the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints and Angels, and all present, that they have offended the all holy God by sin, and that before the Mass goes farther they seek grace and pardon and purity of heart.

### **A Literal Meaning of Contrition**

Since the *Confiteor* is a prayer of sorrow for sin, it may help us to understand the dispositions we should have in attending Mass if we consider the nature of contrition, and its kinds. Go to the dictionary and you will find that the literal



meaning of contrition is the act of grinding or pounding something to powder. For example, a chemist may put into a mortar some lumps of talc (a mineral) and then pound them with a short rod or pestle, and thereby reduce the talc to talc powder. In the language of the chemist he is said to reduce the mineral to powder form by *contrition*. During the saying of the *Confiteor* the priest bends low and strikes his breast. This outward movement is meant to be a sign of an inward disposition. He is pounding his heart, as it were, trying to reduce it to the powder of repentance. In the language of Christian doctrine, this too is *contrition*. It is a stirring way of proclaiming publicly that he is a sinner, and that he wishes God to pardon him. If we follow the priest at Mass, and join with him in offering the Mass, as we should, we too shall try to break up any hardness of heart into the powder of repentance by contrition.

### **Contrition in a Wide Sense**

The widest meaning of contrition, as a disposition of heart, is compunction or sorrow for having done something wrong. In its lowest form, contrition of this kind is not supernatural. We may think of a woman who says that she is sorry that she missed Mass on Sunday. She does not hesitate to say that she is sorry merely because she had a new dress which she failed to display to the other members of the congregation. If that is her only motive of sorrow, her contrition is not supernatural, and is rooted in the sin of vanity. A boy may be sorry that he stole and ate green apples because he got a pain in the stomach. Such contrition is purely natural. A wealthy manufacturer may be sorry that he did not pay the workmen a living wage because it led to a strike, and the strike led to the suspension of his business. Such contrition is also natural, and not supernatural. A man commits murder. He is sorry because he now finds himself in prison facing the electric chair. Such contrition also is of the earthly sort.



### Contrition in a Moral Sense

Contrition in a moral sense must be sorrow for sin as an offense against God. Turning to the Catholic Catechism<sup>1</sup> we read:

"Contrition for sin is heartfelt sorrow for sins we have committed, with hatred for them, and firm purpose of amendment."

It is important to reflect upon the elements of such an act of contrition. The sorrow must be: inward, supernatural, profound, and universal. Consider these in turn:

(1) *Inward contrition* is that which comes right from the heart and is not merely on the lips. If I go to Mass and strike my breast and say, "O God, I am sorry for my sins," and don't mean it at all, I give way to hypocrisy, even though I am repeating the words out loud and in sorrowful tones.

(2) *Supernatural contrition* is due to the influence of grace. It springs from a motive that is above the natural. During Mass the mere sight of the crucifix above the priest may prompt me to say, "You suffered and died, dear Lord, that heaven might be opened to me. My sins will keep me out of heaven if I do not repent. I am sorry for my sins because I have offended You. I fear hell, and the thought of the loss of heaven fills me with dismay." Such a prayer, if earnest, involves motives which are supernatural.

(3) *Profound contrition* means that we look upon sin as the greatest evil in the world, and hate it accordingly. Sin it is that brought suffering and death to mankind. The *Confiteor* should remind us of this greatest of evils, and should prompt us to be rid of it. Christ took upon Himself the wrongdoing of the whole world. He wanted to atone for sin with His most Precious Blood. During Mass we lay our iniquities upon the Lamb of God about to be immolated or sacrificed on the altar, that He may atone for them. The priest during the *Confiteor* bows low, and humbly presents himself as if weighed down by his sins and ours, in order that he may present them to the Eternal Father and ask for mercy.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Catholic Catechism*, by Peter Card. Gasparri, p. 177.

The priest striking his breast should remind us of Christ in the lonely garden of olive trees, bowed down by the sins of the whole world. The Sacred Heart is so bruised by the weight of woe that Jesus sweats blood! The priest at Mass stands in place of the Redeemer. During the *Confiteor* the Church wants him to express *profound sorrow* for his own sins, and for the sins of all. Long ago the price of Redemption was paid once and for all on the Cross of Calvary, but now, in an unbloody manner, it is offered anew to bring about the forgiveness of sins.

Contrition that is truly profound does not necessarily demand an intense outward display of emotions, such as would be expressed in tears. It is sufficient to have a calm detestation of sin as the worst of evils.

(4) *Universal contrition* must include all mortal sins that have been committed since Baptism, and not directly pardoned in the sacrament of Penance. The spirit of the *Confiteor* at Mass is to confess that we have "sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed" and to be sorry for all our offenses, sparing not even one.

### **Imperfect Contrition**

We now approach an extremely important doctrine. Contrition, or sorrow for sin, may be imperfect or perfect. When I bruise my heart with sorrow that arises from fear, such as the fear of hell, or the fear of losing heaven, then the contrition is imperfect. Such contrition is sometimes called *attrition*. Imperfect contrition is sufficient when we go to Confession and are absolved by a validly ordained priest, though we should strive to have perfect contrition.

### **Perfect Contrition**

Now the question arises, "What is perfect contrition?" In the Catechism we read:

"Perfect contrition is a sorrow or hatred for sin, springing from charity inasmuch as sin is an offense against God Who is supremely good and worthy to be loved above all things."

Perfect contrition, then, is the turning of the soul to God out of pure love of God Who is infinitely good. It is consoling to know that although spoken words may help to awaken the proper dispositions, the lips need not move in making this holy act. It is essentially a matter of charity, the greatest of the virtues. Keep this in mind when you are trying to assist the dying to make an act of perfect contrition at a time when they are no longer able to speak, or even whisper. Theologians say that persons of good will can easily awaken such acts of perfect sorrow. There is a book called *Heaven Open to Souls*, written by the late Father Henry Semple, S.J. The subtitle reads: "Love for God above all things and Perfect Contrition easy and common in souls resolved to avoid mortal sin."

### Effects of Perfect Contrition

All should go to Mass because the Mass inspires acts of true sorrow for sin, and many of these movements of the mind and heart are acts of perfect contrition. The importance of making this widely known will be found in reflecting upon the effects of perfect contrition.

(1) Study the words of the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv. c. 4):

"Perfect contrition, contrition for love of God, justifies man and reconciles him with God even before the reception of the sacrament of Penance."

Keep in mind that at least the implied intention of going to Confession is necessarily included in an act of sorrow that deserves to be called perfect.

(2) When a person who is already in the state of grace makes an act of perfect contrition, grace is increased, the soul is strengthened, and venial sins of which the person repents in making the act, are remitted.

(3) If the act of perfect contrition is made by one who

has never been baptized by water, this prayer of consuming sorrow is the baptism of desire. An act of love for God, and martyrdom can take the place of Baptism. But in such an act of love perfect contrition for sin is necessarily implied, and also the desire to be baptized.

### **The Mass Inspires Perfect Contrition**

Holy Mass is a sacrifice of propitiation. By this is meant a sacrifice that appeases the justice of God. All sin goes against the justice of God. The teaching Church speaks through her councils. Examine these words taken from the Council of Trent (Sess. xxii. c. 2).

“By the offering of this Sacrifice, God is appeased and bestows grace and the gift of repentance.”

Since it is granted that acts of perfect contrition are easily and frequently made by those who are well-disposed, the Mass must be a most prolific source of inspiration for such prayers as serve to unlock the very gates of heaven. Father Maurice de la Taille, S.J., a distinguished teacher of Christian doctrine (*The Mystery of Faith*, p. 402), maintains that it is morally certain that if a person in serious sin goes to Mass with his heart awakened to imperfect contrition and shares devoutly in the divine Sacrifice, that person will break into acts of perfect contrition, and will thereby be rendered just<sup>2</sup> in God's sight.

We are all sinners, and sin is the greatest evil. In order that we may share in the apostolate of the Church we should try to do something to get all to go to Mass. Here and now we can utter a little prayer that at some time or other all human beings may go to Mass and fall under the inspiration of such grace as prompts the children of Adam to say that they are sorry for their sins out of love for God Who is infinitely good.

<sup>2</sup> One who is rendered just obtains sanctifying grace.

**Questions**

1. What is the *Confiteor*?
2. Explain the widest meaning of contrition.
3. Is all sorrow for sin supernatural?
4. What elements should be found in supernatural sorrow for sin?
5. Must we weep over our sins to have sorrow that is profound?
6. Explain the motive of imperfect contrition.
7. What is perfect contrition?
8. What is the greatest effect of perfect contrition?
9. What is meant by saying that the Mass is a sacrifice of propitiation?
10. What important prayer is inspired easily and frequently by going to Mass?

## CHAPTER V

**Because** the Mass is the best way of saying, "Thanks be to God"

### Thanks Be to God

**I**F everyone throughout the world were each day to exclaim, "Thanks be to God," and really mean it, many difficulties would disappear. Yes, some difficulties would remain, because earth is not heaven, but the spirit of gratitude could be made to encircle even sorrow. The person who is filled with faith and charity learns how to join pain and misery to the sacred sufferings of Christ Who died on a Cross for our salvation, and Who offers Himself anew, in an unbloody manner, to the Eternal Father, wherever Mass is said. Originally Holy Mass was called the *Eucharistic* sacrifice, which means the *sacrifice of thanksgiving*. From this it follows that all human beings who have the use of reason should go to Mass willingly and humbly, because devout attendance at Mass is the very best way of saying, "Thanks be to God."

### Factual Knowledge Not Enough

It is not enough to know that we should be grateful to God, nor even to count over life's blessings and to speak about them eloquently. One may readily admit that the Mass is a supreme and divine blessing. *But facts are not enough.* Strange as it may seem, it is advisable for even members of a Catholic Discussion Club to pause at this point.

Socrates of ancient Greece, although a great thinker, made a very serious mistake when he held that "knowledge was the only virtue, and ignorance the only vice." Listening to the quiz programs of the radio, or endorsing certain modern school tendencies, might incline a person to think that Socrates was right. It is possible that some may surmise that the sole purpose of a Catholic Discussion Club is to gather informa-



tion. This gives rise to a grave danger. If, for example, the Club is studying the virtue of humility, an apt student may be tempted unsuspectingly to become proud of his knowledge of humility!

You may recall our Lord denouncing this sort of thing in the Gospel which is read on the tenth Sunday after Pentecost. He tells of the Pharisee and the publican who went into the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood erect, held his head high, and said, "O God, I give thanks that I am not as the rest of men." He then told of the sins of the publican, and counted over what he thought were his own virtues. The publican bowed low in repentance, and struck his breast saying, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." He evidently made an act of perfect contrition because our Lord said that this publican went home justified, but that the Pharisee was displeasing in the sight of the Almighty. While discussing gratitude we must guard against all spurious forms of thanksgiving. We should constantly strive to be, not mere students of the word, but doers also.

### **Principle Plus Practice**

Study that does not unfold into action is fruitless. On the other hand, so-called practical people should remember that action which is not directed by principle leads to confusion. Practice without principle is like a blind man along the road; he is in danger of falling into a pit. Contrariwise, principle without practice is like a paralyzed man with a good pair of eyes; he is unable to walk toward the goal which he clearly sees. If a man has developed the practice of going to Mass merely out of routine without knowing the nature of the sacred Sacrifice, during persecution, or even under the pressure of some small inconvenience, he is in danger of hiding his faith. Moreover, if a student knows many things about the Mass and the liturgy and does not practice going to Mass, such a person, out of greed for information, may be found reading the Catholic Encyclopedia on Sunday morn-



ing at the very time when he should be in church raising his heart in gratitude to God during the Sacrifice of thanksgiving. The proper spirit of a Discussion Club is regulated by principle *plus* practice.

### **The Nature of Thanksgiving**

Our wills need to be trained as well as our intellects. Moral virtues are those which perfect the appetitive faculties of the soul, namely, the will and the sensuous appetite. These faculties are the powers of the soul whereby we want or desire something. There are four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Temperance and fortitude tend to moderate our lower wants. Temperance, for example, should control the sense of taste, the appetite for food and drink, and should guard against gluttony and drunkenness. Fortitude prompts us to be strong in doing our duty. For instance, it gives us courage to brave the sneers of unbelievers and to go gladly to Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation. Justice tends to make perfect the rational appetite or will. There are several virtues which are joined to justice. Among them is the virtue of gratitude or thanksgiving. Gratitude inclines a person to recognize benefits received, and to render thanks to the donor accordingly. A well-ordered knowledge of the Sacrifice of thanksgiving prompts us to exclaim, "Thanks be to God for God!"

### **God the Source of All Blessings**

Reason and revelation reveal that our first and greatest benefactor is God. From the Supreme Being all blessings flow. Yes, all the favors of nature and grace come ultimately from on high. The sun by day, and on a clear night the velvet sky studded with golden stars, the surging sea, the fields ripe unto the harvest, the heart that beats within my body, the mind whereby I read this printed page, the faith I treasure, and the life of grace which I trust is in my soul, whereby

man becomes the temple of the Triune God, the dwelling place of his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Sanctifier—how is it possible for any finite creature to thank adequately Infinite Goodness for favors so numerous that mortal life is not long enough to make the list complete! St. Lawrence Justinian writes: "Anyone trying to count all the favors given by the Almighty is like a man who would try to put the mighty ocean in a small jar; this would be easier than to tell in the most eloquent language the countless gifts of God."

### **The Mass Adequately Thanks God**

When we contrast our own littleness with the limitless greatness of God, when we see the size of the debt of gratitude owed to our Maker, the question arises, "Is there no possibility of man thanking God fully for all the favors of life?" The answer is, "What is impossible to man, God has made possible through Christ." Our Lord has both a human nature and a divine nature. Consequently the gratitude which inflamed His Sacred Heart at the Last Supper, and on Calvary, was of infinite value. These boundless and perfect sentiments are renewed when Jesus offers Himself during Holy Mass. And what gift of gratitude does the Redeemer offer? The gift of thanksgiving which Christ offers to the Eternal Father is the same as the divine oblation on the Cross—His most adorable Body, and His most Precious Blood! Consequently the Mass is an infinitely meritorious and acceptable sacrifice of thanksgiving, and serves as a perfect balance for all the blessings that are showered upon man by God. Our Saviour knows that of ourselves we cannot fully or properly give thanks to the "Father of mercies and the God of all consolation," and so He offers Himself for us in the Eucharistic Sacrifice in order that He may lift up His Sacred Heart and say for us, "Thanks be to God." What a divine favor it is which enables us to join our hearts to the adorable Heart of Christ in this profound Sacrifice of thanksgiving!

### Expressions of Thanks in the Mass

Holy Mass is, by its very nature, qualified to arouse in us the impulse to say, "Thanks be to God." Study the pages of your Missal and see how frequently the prayers of the Eucharistic Sacrifice burst into transports of gratitude.

In the *Gloria* attend devoutly to the words:

"We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

The *Preface* of the Mass is a sublime hymn of praise and gratitude. At the beginning of the *Preface* there is a dialogue between the priest and the server, representing the people. Note the dramatic expressions of thanksgiving:

"Lift up your hearts."

"We have them lifted up unto the Lord."

"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

"It is meet and just."

Read with awesome reverence the holy words of *Consecration*:

"Who the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to heaven, unto Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this, for THIS IS MY BODY."

"In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent Chalice into His holy and venerable hands, also giving thanks to Thee, He blessed and gave it to His disciples saying: TAKE AND DRINK YE ALL OF THIS: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD of the new and eternal testament; the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins."

At Communion time the priest says:

"What shall I render to the Lord for all He hath rendered unto me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord, and I shall be saved from mine enemies."

### A Great Fear

Although the Mass is a Sacrifice of thanksgiving, and constantly invites us to be grateful to God for His innumerable favors, it is possible that some may say, "It is easy to be thankful for the sunshine, but I find it almost impossible to be grateful when sorrow knocks at my door." Strong faith, lowliness of heart, and a clear understanding of the Cross of Christ, should serve to make all thankful to God, even in time of trial. An experience may help to point out that it *can* be done.

In 71 Jackson Street, New York, is a little hospital known as St. Rose's Home.<sup>3</sup> It is solely for the poor who are afflicted with incurable forms of cancer. Accepting its hospitality was an old lady whose chief joys were saying the Rosary and attending Holy Mass. To a priest who visited the patients she always directed one little request, "Father, please pray for me." One day when the priest called, the old lady was in bed, and the Sister whispered that the end was not far. On seeing the priest she beckoned him to her bedside and said, "Father, I have a great fear!" (Keep in mind her condition: penniless, her body alive with pain, and, as some might surmise, nothing to be thankful for.) The priest consolingly said, "My good woman, what is your great fear?" Her answer deserves a place of dignity:

"I fear—I fear that I don't love God half enough. He is so good!"

How anxious we should be to go to Mass in order that we may exercise our souls in reparation, the simple act of joining our heartaches to the sacred sufferings of Him Who offered Himself to the Eternal Father in the great Sacrifice of the Cross. Deep should be our gratitude for knowing that it is possible for poor, weak creatures like ourselves to have

<sup>3</sup> This is one of several hospitals founded by the late Mother Alphonsa, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Her institutions are highly exclusive in the salutary sense that patients are not accepted unless they belong to the aristocracy of both poverty and pain.

a share in the atonement for sin wrought by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

### **The Last Word at Mass**

At the end of Mass there is something for us to remember all during the day and far into the night. As you may recall, in the Latin rite it is not the priest but the altar boy who has the last word. What does he say? A simple conclusion:

“Deo gratias.”—“Thanks be to God.”

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### **Questions**

1. What does Eucharistic Sacrifice mean?
2. Should a Discussion Club seek merely factual knowledge?
3. Explain the relationship between principle and practice.
4. Describe gratitude as a moral virtue.
5. Trace the source of all good things.
6. How can finite man adequately thank God Who is infinite?
7. What expression of thanks is contained in the Gloria?
8. What effect should the Preface of the Mass have upon our hearts?
9. Did our Lord give thanks at the Last Supper? Explain.
10. How can we thank God for the sufferings of mortal life?

## CHAPTER VI

**Because** the Mass is a most powerful Sacrifice of Supplication

### **Priests Under Persecution**

**W**HEN the unbelieving Bolsheviks began to crush religion in Russia, they tried to destroy the sacred Sacrifice. Hundreds of priests were sent into exile, and thousands were murdered. Had you visited a certain prison at the outset of the appalling upheaval you would have been deeply impressed with the Mass as man's most powerful means of supplication. Five hundred miles north of Leningrad on Solovetsky Island, in the White Sea, is a grim forbidding penitentiary into which men are thrown to do penance for having professed allegiance to God in a country that has the unholy ambition of becoming godless! Into a small room are crowded Bishop Matulionis and from thirty-five to forty priests. One of the Fathers reveals an unsuspected genius for making patens and chalices out of tin cans. When the guards are not looking, flour is turned into altar breads, and a small amount of wine is made of raisins. In the prison is an attic for storing baggage. One priest stands watch while others, five at a time, climb to the top of the building. Old boxes and bags are hastily transformed into altars, small candles shatter the darkness, and night after night little tin chalices containing the Blood of Christ are lifted up toward the stars to adore the Creator, to express sorrow for sin, to raise hearts in gratitude to the Almighty, and to utter such supplication as is in keeping with the Will of God in time of trial.

### **A Sacrifice of Petition**

All should go to Mass because it may be offered for whatsoever we need in the order of nature and of grace. In the liturgies of the different rites it is clear that the Mass has



always been regarded as the most powerful means of obtaining assistance in all the anxieties of this life. As a sacrifice which seeks favors the Mass produces its effects by way of impetration or petition. It is offered to avert harm, to restore health, to obtain work, to bless the bonds of matrimony, to inflame with charity the hearts of men ordained to the priesthood, to bring solace to the living, and eternal rest to the dead. So long as the world, the flesh and the devil have us under persecution we are all in need of joining with the priest as he offers the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass.

### **St. Augustine on Petition**

Danger continues so long as we are pilgrims on our way to the heavenly Jerusalem. Man's needs are many, his poverty great. Do we not stand before God as beggars? The Mass is an overflowing treasury of spiritual riches. No one should go away with empty hands. What a privilege at Holy Mass to join our prayers to the prayers of the celebrant who stands in place of Christ! Mark well what St. Augustine writes about our Lord:

"He prays *for us* as our High Priest.  
He prays *in us* as our Head.  
We pray *to Him* as our God."

### **The Mass Is One With Calvary**

The power of supplication or petition, as exercised in the sacred Sacrifice must be tremendous. Keep in mind that each Mass is one with Calvary. St. Peter Canisius writes:

"The Mass is both a representation, at once holy and living, and an offering, bloodless yet actual, of the Passion of the Lord and of the blood-stained Sacrifice which was offered for us on Calvary."

Father M. de la Taille, S.J., has this to say:

"The Mass, while picturing, also offers to God the Sacrifice of the Cross. That is offered which is represented: Christ's death is represented. Hence the Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as



the Sacrifice of the Cross: the same Victim, the same Priest: only the manner of offering is different: blood-stained on the Cross, bloodless on our altars."

### **The Supplication of Christ**

The blood of Abel, slain by Cain, cried to heaven for vengeance; but the Precious Blood of Christ, shed for the salvation of all, calls to heaven for mercy upon them for whom Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." There is one God in three Divine Persons. During Mass contemplate the most Blessed Trinity. The well-beloved Son prays, the Eternal Father hears, the Holy Spirit sanctifies. The prayers of our Lord are not in vain. Attend to His words:

"Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me.

"And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (St. John xi. 41, 42).

Pause for a moment while we briefly consider the God-man in relation to prayer. The Sacred Heart is both divine and human.

In Christ dwells the fullness of divinity, and yet the Heart of Jesus adores the Most High.

In Christ is the divine source of forgiveness, and yet the Heart of Jesus was crushed for our iniquities.

In Christ is infinite Majesty, and yet the Heart of Jesus is raised in gratitude to the most Blessed Trinity.

In Christ is the divine treasury of all blessings, and yet the Heart of Jesus pleads for our salvation.

### **The Nature of Prayer**

Prayer is the lifting of the mind and heart to God. It is conversation with the Supreme Being. One little word, ACTS, will help us to remember the different kinds of prayer:

**A = Adoration**

**C = Contrition**

**T = Thanksgiving**

**S = Supplication**

### Praying for Enemies

In praying for others a difficulty arises. You may have heard someone say, "I find it easy to pray for my relatives and friends, living and dead, and for pagans in far-off lands that they may be converted, but how am I honestly to pray for my enemies, especially my personal enemies?" It is clear that Christian doctrine teaches that we are not to exclude our enemies from our prayers.

"Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (St. Matt. v. 44).

Now think calmly and devoutly. When you go to Mass look to the Crucifix and recall the words of the suffering Saviour as He prayed for those who had nailed Him to the Cross:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (St. Luke xxiii. 34).

If you are tempted to think that mere human beings cannot be so heroic in their petitions, remember that by grace given to us by the Almighty we can do things that are above our natural strength. Heaven's help is being constantly offered to us. Consider St. Stephen who was stoned to death by those who nurtured a violent hatred for Christianity. So responsive was this young martyr to the grace of Christ crucified that his last breath was spent in saying a prayer of petition, seeking pardon for his enemies:

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 59).

### A Difficulty Concerning Petitions

Another difficulty arises. Perhaps you have heard yourself saying, "For a long time I have prayed for a certain favor. I have made Novenas, and have had Masses offered for my intention, and yet my favor has not been granted." The

statement may be made in a tone of discouragement since our Lord said:

"Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you" (St. Luke xi. 9).

At the outset, a prayer of petition which is all that it ought to be, presupposes certain elements: (1) We should not ask for anything that may hinder salvation. (2) If a person is in mortal sin he should first seek the grace of repentance, and ask for other favors after that. (3) The prayer should be said with the right dispositions. Humility, confidence, and perseverance mark those who are properly disposed. Moreover, in prayers of petition we must consider an important matter, namely, ordinary *politeness* when seeking a favor. If, for example, a small boy at table were abruptly to say to his father, "Pass the bread," and made no qualification, merely presenting the absolute petition somewhat in the form of a command, he would be considered rude, and would deserve being ignored. If he realizes that his father knows what is good for his children, the boy will say, "Pass the bread, *if you please.*" If, for any reason whatsoever the father did not pass the bread, it would not be logical to say that the boy's request was not granted. Should the boy *really* mean what is implied in the words, "If you please," his mind can be expressed by saying, "Father, do *not* pass the bread if it is *not pleasing* to you to do so." Of course if we regard "If you please" as an empty and meaningless formality, then we may expect the boy to say that the favor was not granted.

### Politeness in Prayer

There should be politeness in prayer as well as in ordinary conversation. God is our Father, and we are His children. When we ask anything from the Eternal Father we should add, "If you please,"—*and mean it.* Had we lived long ago we might have been numbered among the disciples who went to our Lord and said: "Lord, teach us to pray." Whereupon Jesus composed for them that perfect prayer called, the "Our

Father." It contains petitions as well as praise. But the petitions are not set forth in an absolute and impolite way. They are qualified. In what way? By the simple words, "Thy will be done." It is the same as saying, "Eternal Father, grant my request, if *you please*." God knows best. He sees everything in the perspective of eternity. Our vision is limited. If we trust God *completely*, and if we ask for favors *only* if it be pleasing to God, even though the things upon which we have set our hearts be not forthcoming, no one shall be heard saying, "My prayer was not answered."

### **Christ Teaches by Word and Example**

Our Lord is the perfect Teacher. He instructs us, not by word alone but by example also. When Christ suffered in the lonely garden a prayer of petition arose from His terrible agony. He said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me." But the petition is qualified by these words, "Nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt." It was another way of saying, "Thy will be done." Our Lord continued to suffer. It was the will of the Father that the Son should suffer and die for our salvation. In view of this it would not be correct to say that the prayer of Christ was not answered.

### **A Petition for Peace**

During the Mass there is a petition which comes after the Lord's Prayer. It is a cry for peace. The priest asks Christ, through the intercession of our Lady and the Apostles, Peter and Paul and Andrew, to "grant mercifully peace in our days." True peace is the tranquillity of order. It involves: (1) *Peace with God*, by keeping His Commandments. (2) *Peace with ourselves*, by making our emotions subject to faith and reason. (3) *Peace with our neighbor*, by dealing with him in such a way as not to violate justice or charity. The Mass, since it is one with Calvary, serves to establish peace between earth and heaven. In the words of Pope Pius X, "*Pray the Mass.*"

**Questions**

1. Why is the Mass called a Sacrifice of supplication?
2. Quote St. Augustine on Christ and prayer.
3. What is prayer? Can we pray the Mass?
4. What are the various kinds of prayer?
5. Give two historical examples of prayer for enemies.
6. State the difficulty which sometimes attends prayers of petition.
7. How should a prayer of petition be qualified?
8. What prayer at Mass reveals the spirit of true petition?
9. How did our Lord teach the prayer of petition by example?
10. Explain the petition for peace found in the Canon of the Mass.

## CHAPTER VII

**Because** the Mass gives to mankind the Sacrament of Love

### **The Mass Gives Christ to Mankind**

**H**OLY MASS is not only the offering of the Divine Son to the Eternal Father; it is also the means of giving Christ to the children of men, to be among them, so that during Mass the faithful may receive Jesus in Holy Communion, and after Mass may adore Him in every church and chapel where the Sacrament of Love is reserved.

### **Christmas Play Outlined**

If there is one time of the year when love comes to a climax, it is on Christmas. The Eucharist, rightly known, and devoutly loved, preserves the spirit of the Nativity all during the year,—not by any lavish emphasis upon material things, but by a holy sanction of the spirit of charity, especially in the hearts of the lowly. All this may become easy to remember in the following summary of a little Christmas play:

SCENE I: Interior of home of a poor family.

The mother is rocking her child to sleep, and is finishing the story of the Birth of Christ as expressed in the Gospel. She has just told of the Wise Men who followed a mysterious star and came to Bethlehem, bringing gifts. At the close of the story she says, "If dear Jesus were to be born into the world this Christmas, I wonder what the boys and girls of to-day would give to Him?" The child answers slowly, "I wonder!"—and falls asleep. (Curtain falls.)



SCENE II: Abandoned stable in a modern city.

Tableau of the Holy Family: St. Joseph with a staff, and Mary adoring the Divine Child nestling in the straw.

Three children of our own time enter the stable. Like the shepherds of old they have been told of the coming of the Redeemer.

(The action interprets the dream of the child who has fallen asleep.)

The first child, judging by his appearance and tone of voice, is from a wealthy family. He is shocked by the poverty of the surroundings. In talking to St. Joseph he learns that the Holy Family is far from home, and that in returning Mary and the Divine Child will ride on a donkey, and the foster-father will walk by its side. Whereupon the boy says, "Oh, that would be too hard. I shall give you one of the cars belonging to my father in order that you may go back to Nazareth in comfort."

The second boy is not so well-to-do. On hearing that the Saviour was to be born into the world he begins saving his pennies, one by one, until he has ten. Then, on two glad feet, he runs to the store around the corner and buys a little tin horn, brightly colored. This he holds behind his back and when it comes time for him to speak he presents it to the Divine Child, telling Him to blow it as a sign of joy to all that a Saviour has been born.

The third child is the little one who has fallen asleep. Her dress is shabby, her face pale, her arms thin, and her hands *empty*. Nervously she has watched the two boys offering gifts, and then, bewildered on seeing that she has apparently nothing to give, she is about to run out of the stable in confusion. For a moment she pauses and looks into the face of our Blessed Lady, and discovers how beautiful Mary is, and how kind! The poor child forgets everything except that she is in the presence of God Who has become a little Babe, and so, holding out her arms, she says, "Please,

Holy Mary, may I hold the Divine Child?" And Jesus is placed in her arms, and she presses Him tenderly to her bosom.

Then Mary speaks: (slowly, thoughtfully): "The child whose hands were empty, and who had apparently nothing to give, has given most of all because she has given her whole heart to God. And God, not to be outdone, has given Himself to her. What a blessing to be present at Mass, to go to Holy Communion, and to receive Jesus in the arms of your soul" (Curtain.)

### **The Fact of the Real Presence**

The little play involves fiction, but the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is a sacred and tremendous fact! It was a matter of fancy to picture the poor little girl receiving the Divine Child in her arms, but it is a sublime fact that when we go to Holy Communion we actually receive into our lives the same Saviour Who was born in Bethlehem.

### **An Angel and a Sanctus Bell**

If we get only a feeble glimpse of the fruits of receiving devoutly the Sacrament of Divine Love, we shall be eager to tell others about this supernal mystery of God made man! we shall be happy to explain the Mass as the means of bringing the Saviour to men, and of enabling human beings to come to the Saviour. Long ago an Angel told the shepherds how to find Christ, saying, "And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger" (St. Luke ii. 12). When you go to Mass hearken to the Sanctus bell, especially when it announces that the priest is raising on high the adorable Host and the Precious Blood, just after the Consecration. Meditate upon the fact that the silver tinkle of the bell may be likened to the voice of an Angel, saying, "And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Saviour wrapped in the white and purple swaddling clothes of what appear to be but bread and wine and laid on the altar."

### **Effects of the Eucharist**

In speaking of the effects of the Sacrament of Love the Catechism of the Council of Trent says, "No language can convey an adequate idea of its utility and fruits." Consider this outline:

**(1) *The Eucharist contains Christ and is the food of the soul.***

The Eucharist is truly the fountain of all graces, containing, as it does, the Author of all the sacraments. By partaking of Holy Communion devoutly the faithful begin to resemble Christ in the exercise of charity. True children of Mary (and has not Mary given birth to us all in her heart?) look like their spiritual Mother.

**(2) *The Eucharist gives grace.***

Into the soul of the person who receives Communion with purity and holiness great graces must be poured. "For the law was given to Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (St. John i. 17). The unifying influence of Divine Love received in the Eucharist is expressed by the Saviour, saying:

"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 57).

**(3) *The grace of the Eucharist sustains life.***

When it is said that the Eucharist imparts grace, this does not mean that the state of grace is not necessary for the fruitful reception of the Sacrament of Love. Natural food can be of no use to the dead; the Bread of Life can be of no avail to a soul dead in serious sin. To receive the Eucharist while one is conscious of unpardoned serious sin is a sacrilege. The object of the Eucharist as a sacrament is, not to impart life to the soul, but to preserve the life of sanctifying grace already in the soul.

**(4) *The grace of the Eucharist invigorates and delights.***

Natural food, not only sustains, but enables the body to grow, and gives relish when food properly prepared is consumed by one who is in good health. The Eucharist is divine food, and when taken by a person who is in good spiritual health gives increasing zest for heavenly things. Grace imparted by the Eucharist has been compared to the manna mentioned in the Old Testament, "having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste" (Wisdom xvi. 20). It is well to keep in mind that receiving Holy Communion does not necessarily bring emotional consolations. These God may withhold, as the Saints testify. The Eucharist is a memorial of the Passion, and if dryness of spirit accompanies our going to Communion, we should push on with strong faith, adding our sufferings to the sacred sorrows of Christ on the Cross, thereby bringing spiritual profit to our souls by way of reparation.

**(5) *The Eucharist remits venial sin.***

Natural food repairs the body, and so the Eucharist is said to pardon lighter or venial sins, for which no actual affection is retained. St. Ambrose says, "That daily Bread is taken as a remedy for daily infirmity."

**(6) *The Eucharist strengthens the soul against temptation.***

Fruitfully received, the Sacrament of Love represses the inclinations of fallen human nature, it inflames the soul with the fire of charity, but extinguishes the ardor of evil tendencies.

**(7) *The Eucharist helps us to attain eternal life.***

The proper reception of the Bread of Life brings great peace of conscience in this valley of tears, and is most helpful in attaining salvation. Our Lord Himself said:

"He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up on the last day" (St. John vi. 55).

In view of these sublime effects Pope Pius X recommended early First Communion, and he exhorted the faithful to go to Mass, if possible, every day, and daily to receive the Eucharist.

### **Threefold Manner of Communicating**

Unfortunately, some, conscious of unpardoned mortal sin, go to Holy Communion. While they receive the Eucharist sacramentally, they not only receive no grace, but they commit a serious offense, and, as the Apostle testifies, "eat and drink judgment to themselves" (1 Cor. xi. 29).

Others are said to receive spiritual Communion. They are inflamed by faith which worketh by charity. They partake in desire of the celestial Bread and receive abundant spiritual fruits. Are you familiar with the form for Spiritual Communion recommended by St. Alphonsus Liguori?

"My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am not able now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there and unite myself wholly to Thee,—never, never permit me to be separated from Thee."

Thirdly, there are those who receive the Eucharist sacramentally and with good hearts enlivened by strong faith. Such derive from the Sacrament of Love overflowing graces.

### **Holy Viaticum**

When Holy Communion is given to one who is in danger of death, it is called Holy Viaticum. Viaticum in Latin means "provision for a journey." Yes, a most important and solemn journey, one that leads into eternity where we are to be judged by the same Lord Who lives in the Most Blessed Eucharist. May God grant us an apostolic love for the Mass which gives us the Bread of Life. May the most Adorable Trinity give to each one the surpassing favor of dying in the arms of Incarnate Love!

**Questions**

1. How can we be generous with God even though we may appear to have nothing to give?
2. What is the Sacrament of Love? Explain.
3. How were the shepherds told they could recognize the Divine Child of Bethlehem?
4. Where shall we look for Christ on earth today?
5. Why is the Eucharist called the Bread of Life?
6. What can you say about venial sin in relation to the fruitful reception of the Eucharist?
7. Should those who suffer from temptations refrain from going to Holy Communion?
8. Explain Spiritual Communion.
9. What did Pope Pius X recommend concerning the Eucharist as a Sacrifice, and as a Sacrament?
10. What is the Eucharist called when administered to those who are in danger of death?

NOTE: For further explanation of the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass, and the benefits to be derived from the devout participation in the Holy Sacrifice, read, "The Treasures of the Mass," published by the Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Mo.



## CHAPTER VIII

**Because** the Mass leads to Eternal Glory

### **The Father's House**

**A**T the Last Supper Christ spoke of great mysteries, and said many consoling things to His friends. Consider these words:

"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me.

"In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you: because I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to Myself; that where I am, you also may be.

"And whither I go you know, and the way you know" (St. John xiv. 1-4).

As followers of Christ, we want to be where the Saviour is. The truth of the Real Presence draws us to Mass, and prompts us to say our prayers before the Tabernacle. But we know that we must labor and pray and wait before we are able to see Jesus face to face in the celestial light that shines forever in His Father's house.

Philosophers say, "That which is first in the order of intention is last in the order of execution." For example, a man wants to build a beautiful house. The new house is the first thing in the order of his intention. But there is much that stands between his intention and its fulfillment: ground must be purchased, materials collected, and plans prepared. Then the work gets under way. But the very last thing in the order of execution is the beautiful house itself.

When Christ came on earth the first thing which He had in mind was our salvation. He speaks of it in terms of a dwelling place. "I go to prepare a place for you." He lived, taught, suffered and died that He might get ready a

celestial mansion for all. The opening of the celestial house to the souls of those whom He had redeemed was the last thing in the order of execution. As soon as we are able to think, our first intention should be to find, by the help of God, a place in the "Father's house." But we cannot enter it except by the little narrow door of a holy death. The Mass teaches us how to reach this holy door. The Mass helps us to fulfill our purpose in life. What is our purpose in life? Just this: to allow God to take up His abode in our souls by accepting His grace in this world; and to see God forever by the beautiful light which illuminates His heavenly home in the world to come.

If we see clearly the road that leads to the "Father's house," if we understand in how many ways our Lord is constantly helping us, if we strengthen our souls with the Bread of Life, burdens will become mysteriously light, and the dark door of death will be flooded on the other side with heaven's sunshine.

"For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1).

### **Longing for an Eternal Home**

Have you not observed that even people who say that they have no faith are groping for a road that leads to an eternal home? Travel the world over and cross-examine men who are normal, and in the midst of their strivings ask them, "What are you seeking?" You will find that they are looking for happiness. To be sure there are various ideas of happiness. Some may say that if it is to be found at all it must be found on this earth. Looking to the perfection of study and research in great laboratories, a few are bold enough to hope that finally poverty, and pain, and disease, and even death itself will be conquered! Do you not find in this an intimation of a longing for happiness that will never end? Are they not looking for the road to eternal glory? If we are

reasonable, we shall find in our hearts an unconquerable desire for a heaped-up measure of good of unending duration, a treasure whose possession will entail no fretting or worry, a fullness of life that will never be taken from us. Revelation makes clear just what man's final goal should be. It ought to be the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, everlasting joy! In heaven we shall possess the highest possible good, God Himself, and our possession shall never be poisoned for a single instant by the slightest fear that we shall lose our Divine Treasure!

Wherever Mass is offered, there we have God's home on earth. It is a house of prayer, a house of sacrifice, a house where we learn how to keep on the right road, even when darkness comes upon us and the heart grows heavy with sorrow. Is there not almost a glimpse of our eternal home when we devoutly receive the Body of the Christ triumphantly risen from the darkness of the tomb, and reigning gloriously in heaven!

"And night shall be no more: and they shall not need the light of the lamp, nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them, and they shall reign forever and ever" (Apocalypse xxii. 5).

### **A Plea for the Salvation of All**

Follow the prayers of the priest at Mass, and discover with what loving concern our holy Mother, the Church, asks that all may reign forever with God in His eternal home. At the Offertory the celebrant lifts the chalice containing wine, and says:

"We offer up to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thee that of Thy mercy, our sacrifice may ascend with an odor of sweetness in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty, to avail for our own and for the salvation of the whole world."

What a lofty spiritual work of mercy it is to explain the Mass to those who are wondering about the final purpose

of mortal existence! How Christlike it is to invite such people to accompany you to God's house on earth, that they may fall under the warming influence of the divine Sacrifice. Tell them to pray during Mass, and to learn with lowly hearts that

"We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" (St. Paul to Hebrews xiii. 14).

### A Sorrowful Road

The Mass, although it leads to eternal glory, never lets us forget that time is not eternity, and that earth is not heaven. This is a valley dampened by tears, and darkened by sin and death. Man's lower inclinations tend to pull him down. Unfortunately, we may stumble and even fall as we walk along the road that leads to the heavenly Jerusalem. But the Mass inspires acts of contrition, even acts of perfect contrition. It tells us to respond to God's grace, and to rise again. While we are still members of the Church Militant, we are in communication with the Church Triumphant. At the beginning of the solemn part of the Sacrifice there is a prayer called, the "Communicantes." In it we find this appeal:

"In communion with, and honoring the memory, first of the glorious, ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ; as also of Thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy saints; by whose merits and prayers grant that we may in all things be defended by the aid of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

Yes, all that we do should be done "*through Christ our Lord.*" He is our Mediator. He, through the work of Redemption, has opened for us the gates of heaven that had been closed by the sin of our First Parents.

Then the priest extends his hands over the chalice and prays:

"We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation of our service, as also of Thy whole family; dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be delivered from eternal damnation and to be numbered in the flock of Thine elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Observe the desire to be "numbered in the flock of Thine elect." A longing for eternal glory. And again, "Through Christ our Lord." Always that.

### Looking Beyond Sorrow

If a man forgets heaven and is beset by trials, he may exclaim, "I wish I were dead!" Let such turn to St. Paul, who was also tormented by many misfortunes, but never lost sight of the purpose of the struggle. He too wished that he were dead, but not in the sense that he wanted to be plunged into oblivion. Divinely inspired he writes to the Philippians (i. 23) that he has

"A desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."

He did not suffer from despair which tries to fasten itself upon those who abandon faith and lose heart. Otherwise he would not have written to the same Philippians (iv. 11):

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith."

Be self-contained, even when you feel the weight of great grief. The road to Calvary is not a dead-end street blocked by a Cross. On it goes to the tomb from which Christ rose gloriously from the dead, and on to Mount Olivet whence Jesus ascended into eternal glory.

"Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

"Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians iii. 1, 2).

### A Pledge of Future Glory

When you go to Holy Communion, happy to relate, many others often crowd to the Blessed Banquet to nourish their souls with the Bread of Life. The priest, carrying a golden ciborium, passes quickly from person to person and says:

"May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ guard thy soul unto life everlasting."

Life everlasting, another way of expressing heaven or eternal glory! We try to picture a place where there is all bliss and no slightest sorrow, but we feel the futility of our effort. We cannot limit the goodness of God with our loftiest hopes. St. Paul writes to his friends (1 Cor. ii. 9):

"But, as it is written: That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

### Go, the Mass Is Ended

One final consideration: at the end of the Sacrifice we hear the words, "Ite Missa est"—"Go, the Mass is ended." This does not mean that we are merely to go back to our homes and places of business. Rather let it imply: "Go, enlivened by faith, and tell others of the Mass and its consolations. Go, inspired by a strong hope that you will obtain life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ. Go back into the world with your heart on fire with love for God and neighbor. Instruct the ignorant, and spread the glad tidings that Christ is still with us in the Sacrament of Love. Go, and find Christ in the poor, in the afflicted, and in those who are burdened. Let the words of Jesus inspire you:

"Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. . . .

"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me" (St. Matt. xxv. 34, 40).



In this world there are uncounted thousands who are looking for a way out of their dark bewilderment. Pray that all may go to Mass, and find in it the road that leads to Eternal Glory where

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away” (Apocalypse xxi. 4).

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### Questions

1. What did Christ mean by “His Father’s House”?
2. Give several expressions which mean the same as heaven.
3. Is the Blessed Trinity in the Eucharist?
4. Is the glorified Body of Christ only in heaven?
5. Was St. Paul satisfied with this life?
6. At what place should we be best able to join with the Blessed Virgin and the Saints in prayer?
7. Who is the Mediator during Mass?
8. What does the priest say when he gives Holy Communion to the faithful at Mass?
9. Can heaven be fully described? Quote St. Paul.
10. What should the words, “Go, the Mass is ended,” imply to a Catholic who is a doer of the word?

NOTE: If you wish to know of a highly laudable form of Catholic Action, write to: The Antone Hospital Guild, 24-28 Erickson Street, East Elmhurst, Long Island, N. Y. The work tends to stimulate devout and frequent attendance at Holy Mass, and fruitful reception of the Eucharist. You will learn what can be done in your own community to honor Christ Who said, “I was sick and you visited Me.”

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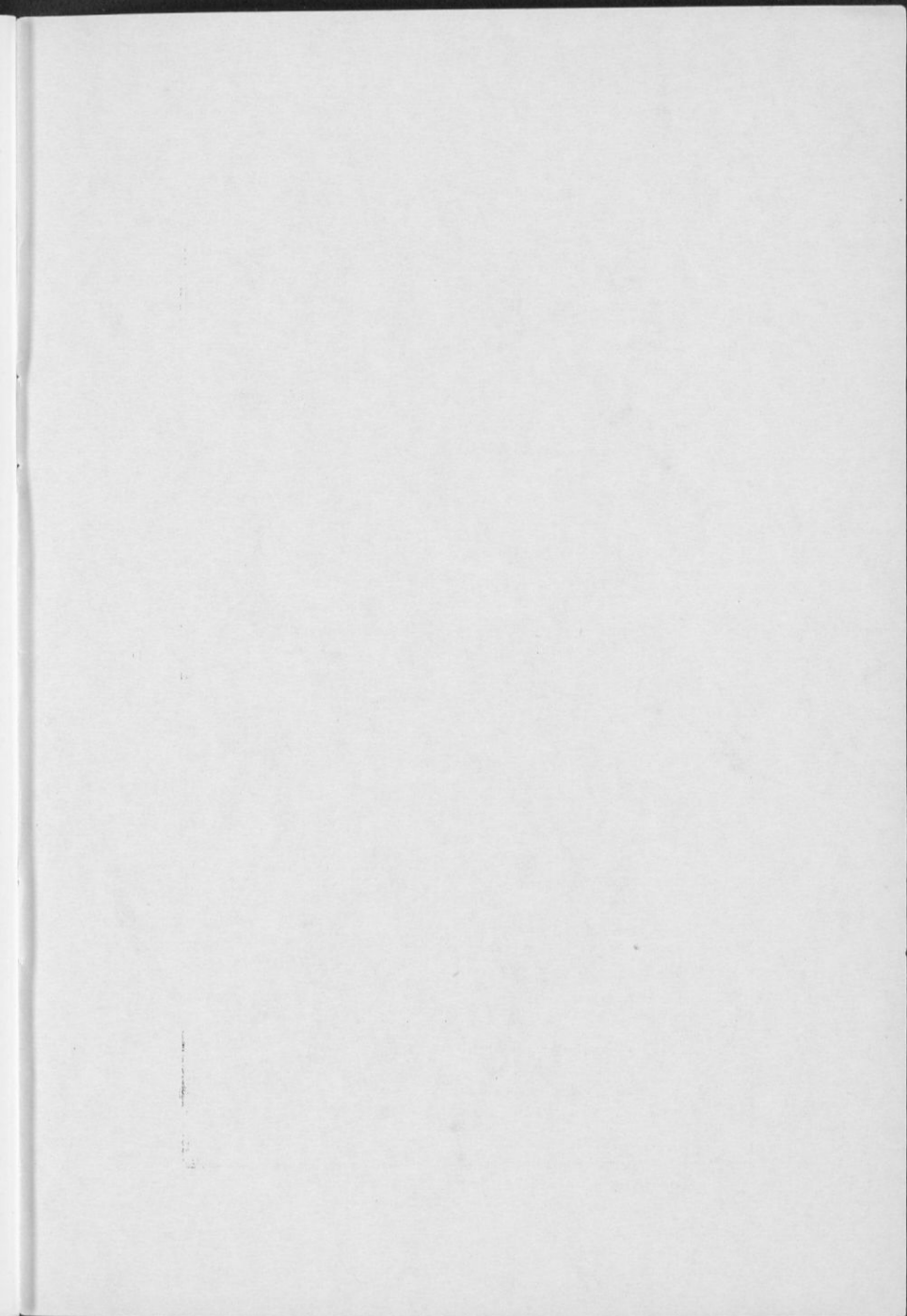
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