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(Continued on inside back cover)

*Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri*

Your Mass and YOU

“That in all things



God may be glorified.”

Holy Rule of St. Benedict

Nihil Obstat: **Gulielmus J. Blacet, J.C.L.**
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Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri

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"I have greatly desired to eat this Pasch with you, before I suffer" (Luke 22:15).

As this picture reminds us, the Mass is the mystical renewal of the Last Supper and the unbloody renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary.

Your Mass and Y O U

A MONG the many means of sanctification which our Savior left to us in His Church, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass holds a most prominent and important place. This is so because of the rich treasures of grace which flow from it to the souls of those who devoutly participate in its celebration. "The sanctification of our soul," says Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., "is found in a daily increasing *intimate union with God*—a union of faith, confidence and love. Hence, *the most exalted act of religion and of Christian worship, namely, the participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, is one of the greatest means of sanctification.* To each interior soul the Mass must be every morning the *eminent source*, as it were, from which flow the graces needed in the course of the day,—the source of light and warmth, resembling in the spiritual order the rising of the sun in the natural order" (*The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Vol. 1).

Though the Mass Is Infinite, Its Effects in Us Depend on Our Co-operation

But, although the Mass itself is a most perfect and unfailing source of sanctity, *the measure of our participation in it depends on the degree of perfection with which we assist at its celebration and thus draw from this fountain of grace and salvation.* "Its fruits are inexhaustible," says the saintly Abbot Marmion, "but they are in great part measured by our inward dispositions. In every Mass there are infinite possibilities for us of perfection and holiness; but the measure of graces we receive is the measure of our faith and of our love" (*Christ, the Life of the Soul*, p. 252).

We must be careful to distinguish, therefore, between the effects which the Eucharistic Sacrifice is *capable* of producing and those which it *really produces*, lest we expect too much from the Mass considered *in itself* (*ex opere operato*, as theologians express it), and overlook its effects *ex opere operantis*—those produced by our co-operation.

A food may be ever so rich in minerals and vitamins; but unless a person eats

that food, and does so in a proper manner, he cannot benefit by its health-giving substances. A spring may give forth in abundance water that is rich in medicinal properties; but unless a person drinks deeply from that spring, he will derive no benefit from it. A medicine may be ever so excellent, but it will not effect a cure unless properly received into the system of the sick person. So, too, in the spiritual life. The means of spiritual health—that is, of sanctification—which Our Lord has provided, are numerous and most perfectly adapted to impart His Divine life to our souls. But unless we make proper use of them, they must fail of their effects in our regard or fall far short of the effects they might have produced. If, then, we wish to partake in fullest measure of the sanctifying fruits of the Mass, we must endeavor, with the help of grace, to participate in it in as perfect a manner as possible.

Why the Mass Is So Wonderful and Powerful

The excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, considered *in itself*, and, consequently, its *intrinsic power* of producing the

effects it is intended for, derives, according to the Council of Trent, from the fact that it is substantially the same sacrifice as the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is offered by the *same Priest*, who actually continues to offer Himself through the ministry of men ordained for this purpose. There is the *same Victim*, truly present on the altar. The only difference consists in the *manner* of the offering. Whilst on the Cross there was a *bloody* immolation, in the Mass there is a *sacramental* oblation, through the separation—not physical but only sacramental—of the Savior's Body and Blood, by virtue of the double consecration. The Savior's Blood, without being shed physically, is nevertheless shed *sacramentally*.

Some authors, instead of saying "sacramentally" prefer to say "mystically," which means "mysteriously." Both expressions are correct. The first, however, seems to have this advantage: It recalls the fact that Jesus instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice, not only in order to continue or represent, throughout the centuries, the *substantial reality* of His Bloody Sacrifice, but also in order that it might be to us a perpetual MEMORIAL, a perpetual *reminder* of *what*

He did for our Redemption, and of the *permanence in His Heart of the INTERIOR DISPOSITIONS* that prompted Him to do what He did in the course of His whole earthly existence, but particularly on Calvary. These interior dispositions were *a burning love for the Father and for men*. This twofold love—which in reality is only *one*, the love of God—was the root and source of His *obedience to the will of His Father*. The Father had laid out for Him, even in its minutest details, a program of life most terrifying to the human nature of Christ. On the perfect execution of this program depended mankind's redemption. Jesus fulfilled that program in such perfect entirety that not even one iota was overlooked. And He did so with the perfect interior disposition of the most burning love, from the moment of His incarnation until His last breath on Calvary.

Now, in the Holy Eucharist Jesus still has the same interior dispositions: He has *the same love for the Father*, the same willingness to do always the will of the Father, no matter what sacrifices it may demand of Him. And He has *the same love for men*, the same readiness to shed His Pre-

cious Blood, in the same excruciating physical reality as He did on Calvary, if this were necessary for the salvation of even one single soul, if it were convenient, and *if the Father demanded or at least allowed it*. On the altar He, so to say, goes as far in the real re-enactment of the Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary *as the Father allows Him to*, and stops only when the Father stops Him as He stopped Abraham on the holy mount.

The Mass, therefore, in one aspect, is a memorial, or a reminder: (1) of the historical fact of Christ's Passion and Death on the Cross; (2) of the interior dispositions of love, zeal and obedience which prompted His self-oblation to the Father, for His glory and for the salvation of the world, from the first to the last moment of His earthly life, and which He renews and continues in the Mass; and (3) of His readiness to drain once more all His Heart's Blood for our salvation. This readiness to die again for our redemption is signified by the sacramental separation of His Body and Blood in Holy Mass.

Thus we see why the expression "*sacramental oblation*" is so well chosen. "Sac-

ramental” is derived from “sacrament.” Every sacrament is an outward *sign* that in some manner *signifies* what the reception of the sacrament produces in the soul. That ever *permanent and living interior oblation* which Christ makes of Himself is *signified* and recalled to our memories in the Mass by the separation of the two kinds of sacramental species. And we may add, in truth, that this separation, precisely because it reminds us of the interior dispositions of Christ in our regard, reminds us also of the fact that in heaven He does not cease pleading for us. (Heb. 7:25.)

St. Paul’s words could be paraphrased in the following manner: Ready to die again and again for us, Christ continuously renews the interior offering of Himself to the Father to this purpose; but, being prevented by the eternal decrees of the Father from putting into effect His willingness, He continuously presents His Precious Blood and His five Holy Wounds to the Father as a memorial of what He did for us in obedience to His Father’s will, and asks His Father to apply to us the fruits of His Passion and Death. In Holy Mass, He speaks to us through the mystical language

of the memorial He has left to us, thereby enkindling love in our hearts and inviting us to offer ourselves in union with Him, to the same purposes for which He died on the Cross.

Here it is well to call to mind that when Christ offered Himself on the Cross, He did so as *our Substitute*, as our divinely appointed and accepted *Representative*, and that, therefore, in reality *He offered US with Himself*. And one of the reasons why He instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice was to give to each one of us an opportunity to *ratify by ourselves* what He did on Calvary *in our name*, so that, being *priest and victim* with Him, in Him and through Him, we might in this manner receive the fruits of the shedding of His Blood.

Our Sharing Is Measured by Our Interior Dispositions

This leads us to the consideration of the distinction pointed out in a previous paragraph between the effects of the Mass *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis*.

The *interior oblation* which Christ makes of Himself, and which is, as it were,

the SOUL of the Sacrifice of the Mass, receives an *infinite value* from the Divine Person of the Word-made-Flesh, who is the principal Priest and Victim, continuing His immolation under a sacramental form. It has the same *ends* as the Sacrifice of the Cross, namely, adoration, thanksgiving, expiation or propitiation, and petition. It has also the same *effects*. But, whilst these effects, considered *in their immediate relation to God*, are always produced *infallibly and in their fulness* (particularly adoration and thanksgiving) those effects (particularly satisfaction and petition) are realized *in each one of us* only in a *limited measure*. This limitation comes primarily from the *eternal decrees of God* regarding the application of the Mass to us, and secondarily (to an extent that would frighten us if we knew it and thus realized our responsibility) *from our FREE WILL*, namely, *from our interior dispositions*. The fruits of the Mass are applied to us in the measure of our interior dispositions—that is, of those dispositions our souls possess when we come to Mass, and of those with which we assist at Mass. And this is just what we should well understand if we wish

to know why Holy Mass is one of the greatest means of sanctification, and how we should assist at its celebration if we wish to make an effective use of it as such.

Interior and Exterior Preparation

Since the proper *interior dispositions* of faith and devotion are so vital for a fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice, the first concern of one who wishes to draw rich treasures of grace from the Mass must be the preparation of his mind and heart for this sacred function. Whoever wishes to draw water from a fountain must bring with him an empty vessel in which to carry away the water; and he who wishes to draw *much* water must bring a *large* vessel. Now, the vessel with which we draw from the spiritual fountain of Holy Mass is a fervent and recollected heart. And the more fervent and recollected our heart, the greater will be the measure of grace we will draw from this heavenly fountain.

Is it not worth while, then, to use every endeavor, to make every effort, so to dispose ourselves that we may assist at this sublime act of sacrifice with the greatest devotion, giving ourselves up to it with our

whole mind and heart and body, as Christ, the Victim and High Priest, gives Himself up to it wholly?

In the decrees of the Council of Trent (Sess. 22), the Church impresses on us the dispositions with which we should assist at Holy Mass in these words: "If we must needs confess that no other work can be performed by the faithful so holy and Divine as this tremendous mystery itself, wherein that life-giving Victim is daily immolated upon the altar by priests, it is also sufficiently clear that all industry and diligence is to be applied to this end, that it be performed with the greatest possible inward cleanness and purity of heart and outward show of devotion and piety."

We ought, then, to begin our preparation for Mass as soon as we arise in the morning, by trying to keep our minds free from worldly, disturbing and distracting thoughts as much as possible, and making frequent use of ejaculatory prayers to keep our hearts turned to God. This, of course, we cannot do if we engage in frivolous or worldly conversation, laugh boisterously, listen to worldly music, or indulge in other noisy and distracting amusements. We

must try to preserve this recollection of heart even when doing our necessary duties, and also on our way to church, bearing in mind the dignity and grandeur of the sacred function in which we are about to take part.

Doubtless it is to a want of such preparation that one may attribute the lack of devotion and the indifference and carelessness with which so many assist at Holy Mass; likewise, the reprehensible behavior of those who let their gaze wander curiously around the church and even go so far as to talk and laugh in this sacred place. Modesty and simplicity in dress also becomes those who would assist at the Divine Sacrifice with proper dispositions and not hinder others from doing so.

Having thus prepared the way, one may hope that God will give him the grace of a very fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice.

Essential Disposition, Union with Christ, Priest and Victim

Since the Mass is not merely a form of prayers and ceremonies, but substantially the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross, the

essential and indispensable part of a fruitful assistance at Mass consists *in uniting oneself as closely as possible with our Lord Jesus Christ*, who in the Mass as on the Cross is the true Priest and the true Victim, offering Himself to His Heavenly Father in both sacrifices for the same ends. This union may be attained in various ways.

The saintly Benedictine Abbot, Dom Columba Marmion, a most enlightened director of souls, says on this subject: "It is, then, a most excellent manner of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, to follow with the eyes, the mind and the heart what is passing at the altar, and to associate ourselves with the prayers the Church places at this sacred moment on the lips of her ministers. When, with deep *reverence*, lively *faith*, ardent *love* and true *contrition* for our sins, we thus unite ourselves to Christ—Priest and Victim—in His Sacrifice, Christ, who dwells in us, takes all our intentions into His Heart and offers perfect adoration and full satisfaction for us to His Father, and renders Him worthy thanksgiving, and His prayer is all-powerful. All these acts of the Eternal High Priest, by

which He renews upon the altar His immolation of Calvary, become ours.

“At the same time that we give to God, through Christ, all honor and glory, abundant graces of light and life are poured down upon us and on all the Church. Each Mass truly contains all the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross. But, *if we wish to avail ourselves of them*, we must enter into the dispositions and sentiments of the Heart of Jesus when He went to offer Himself on Calvary. Then the Eternal High Priest takes us with Him into the Holy of Holies, unto the throne of the Divine Majesty, to the very source of all grace, of all life and all beatitude.” (*Christ, the Life of the Soul*, Ch. 7.)

The eminent Dominican theologian, Father Garrigou-Lagrange, in *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, writes: “In order to assist well at Mass, with *faith, confidence, true piety and love*, one may follow it in various manners. One may be attentive to the liturgical prayers, generally so beautiful and full of unction, elevation and simplicity. One may also remember the Passion and Death of the Savior, of which the Mass is the Memorial, and con-

sider oneself as being at the foot of the Cross with Mary, John and the holy women. Or one may apply oneself to rendering to God, in union with Jesus, the four duties which are the ends of sacrifice: adoration, reparation, petition and thanksgiving. Provided one PRAYS, even piously reciting the Rosary, one assists in a fruitful manner at the Mass. . .

“But whatever the method one follows, it is important to insist on one cogent thing: *We must above all else unite ourselves profoundly to the oblation of the Savior, the principal Priest.* With Him we must offer Him to His Father, remembering that this oblation pleases God more than all sins displease Him. We must also offer *ourselves* each day more and more intimately; we must offer particularly the pains and contrarities which we are already bearing and those which will present themselves during the day. Thus understood, the Mass is a fruitful source of sanctification, of graces ever new.”

No Set Rules for the Faithful

Although the Church has prescribed for her priests, as her official representatives in offering the adorable Sacrifice, a

set of "rubrics" which they must follow strictly in celebrating Holy Mass, and has ordained that they adhere to the formula of prayers in the missal without any personal additions, she *has never prescribed any set rules for the faithful in assisting at Mass*. She makes no hard and fast rule, because, with the wisdom of her Divine Founder, she knows that there are great diversities of gifts and diversities of characters among her children. She therefore leaves entirely unfettered their free will, in order that each may apply himself in the manner best suited to his spiritual, mental and physical endowments.

But she does give evidence in the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass, of her desire that *the faithful co-operate actively with the priest in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice*. Repeatedly during the course of the Mass the priest turns to the people, and extending his arms, says: "*Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you," and the people answer, through their representative, the server, "*Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with thy spirit." What else does this signify but a close union between the priest at the altar and the people of the

congregation? In the prayer following the *Sanctus* the priest says: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants N. and N., and of all here present. . . for whom we offer, or *who offer up to Thee* this Sacrifice. . ." The meaning of these words is too obvious to be mistaken.

Again, during the Offertory the priest turns to the people, and extending and then bringing together his hands, invites them to help him in offering the Holy Sacrifice: "*Orate, Fratres* — Pray, brethren, that *my sacrifice and yours* may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty." After the elevation of the Chalice he prays: "Wherefore, O Lord, we, Thy servants, as also Thy holy people. . . offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty. . ." Here the priest says in so many words that not he alone, but *all the holy people of God with him*, offer this pure holocaust.

The Use of the Missal

Following this implied wish of the Church, pastors and spiritual directors of souls encourage *the use of the missal* as an excellent means for the faithful to follow with mind and heart the ceremonies and liturgical prayers with the priest at the al-

tar, and thus enter into an active participation in the celebration of the Mass. This method of assisting at Holy Mass is advocated especially by proponents of the so-called "liturgical movement," which seeks to awaken the faithful to a realization of their mystical priesthood and their duty of taking an active part in the Mass and in the prayer life of the Church.

For those who are capable of employing it properly, this method seems indeed one of the best calculated to achieve an intimate union of the soul with the sacramental oblation of Christ. Care must be taken, however, that there be not a mere *mechanical* repetition of prayers and formulas, bereft of the vivifying soul of devout *intention* and sustained *attention*.

This method is especially to be recommended because of the fact that the Mass is not merely a form of prayer, but an act of *worship* and a *sacrifice*; and therefore those who assist at Holy Mass ought properly to offer the Divine oblation together with the priest, as is indicated by many of the prayers of the missal. For, the privilege of offering to the Divine Majesty the sacred and sublime Sacrifice of the Mass is

not the prerogative of priests alone, but belongs to the faithful also—to *men, women and children*—not, indeed, of themselves, but through the instrumentality of the priest ordained for that purpose. Thus we may truly say there are *three celebrants* of the Mass: First of all, there is the great High Priest, the chief Sacrificer, *Christ*, who Himself offers every Holy Mass to His Heavenly Father. Then there is the *officiating priest*, who immolates the Divine Victim; and lastly there are *the faithful* present at the Holy Sacrifice, who have the power of offering it conjointly with the priest. Certainly this is one of the greatest graces granted to the children of the Church.

St. Peter lays stress on this prerogative of the Christian when he says: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. . .” And again: “Be you yourselves as living stones. . . a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:9,5). This mystical priesthood is conferred on the faithful at baptism, when they become members of Christ and of His Mystical Body, the Church.

This sharing of the faithful in the celebration of the Mass is popularly designated as "concelebration." In using this term, however, we must do so relatively, because the co-operation of the faithful assisting at Mass may by no means be placed on the same plane as the action of the celebrating priest, who has been ordained to this purpose and officially represents Christ and His Church, and acts in their name.*

However, from the fact that the Church earnestly desires that those assisting at Mass take an *active* part in the oblation, it does not necessarily follow that she desires the people to use the *same official prayer formulas* as the priest for that purpose. If she desired this, she would not oblige the priest to say certain of those formulas in silence, when there are among the faithful (for example, among converts from paganism) many who, not being able to read,

*It goes without saying also that the concelebration of the people is something far inferior to the concelebration of several priests saying Mass together, as in the Eastern rite, or the concelebration of newly ordained priests at the Ordination Mass in the Latin rite.

and not hearing what the priest says, would find it impossible to say the prayer said by the priest. Obviously, the thing she desires most is that the faithful enter into the *spirit* of the prayers of the liturgy, whether they use the actual prayer formulas employed by the priest, or others of their own choosing or making.

Let us consider, for example, the *Confiteor*, which is recited at the foot of the altar at the beginning of Mass as an act of contrition to obtain purity of heart for the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. If, instead of repeating the words of the Confiteor, a person makes a sincere and humble act of contrition from his heart *in his own words*, he assuredly does something just as pleasing and meritorious in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the Church as one who devoutly repeats the actual words of the Confiteor; and certainly he acquires more merit than one who repeats the words of the Confiteor in a thoughtless and mechanical manner. So it is with all the other prayers which form a part of the Holy Sacrifice.

However, using the missal seems to be the most *logical* and we might say the most

common-sense method of assisting at Holy Mass. The prayers of the missal are unsurpassed in richness of content and depth of meaning, and we should not lightly set them aside to use other prayers which may appeal more to our sentimentality.

There is also another great advantage in the use of the missal in that it brings to us the distinctive spirit of the Sunday or feast day or the mystery which the Mass commemorates. The prayer service of the Mass, we know, consists of two parts: the so-called *common* of the Mass, which remains always the same, and the *proper*, which varies for each Sunday or feast day or for each day of the week in certain ecclesiastical seasons. This is a great help in our spiritual life because it enables us to live in closer union with the Church and the mysteries of our holy Faith.

Those Catholics who are sufficiently well instructed in the use of the missal to do so intelligently and with spiritual profit should then, by all means, adopt this method of participating in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Yet even when the missal method has been adopted, some prudent directors of souls advise that from time to time one

put aside the missal and formulate one's own prayer—for instance, at the Offertory—or contemplate Our Lord's interior oblation from the moment of His incarnation to His last breath on the Cross, or just His interior oblation on Calvary and in the Mass. The purpose of such a recommendation is to break the *monotony*—if one may so speak—of using one method exclusively and thus preventing it from becoming routine or mechanical.

Use the Method that Best Suits YOU

However, let us repeat that while the use of the missal is certainly one of the most excellent means of uniting with the priest at the altar and with Christ, the Divine High Priest, it is not *essential* to a perfect participation in the Holy Sacrifice. Because of undue stress sometimes placed on the use of the missal, some people have come to believe that they *must* use a missal, or at least a prayer book, in order to satisfy the obligation of hearing Mass. This is by no means true. If it were, the Church would certainly have made a formal declaration to that effect. But she has not, and could not reasonably do so, because in

many instances it would be impossible of fulfilment. Be at peace, then, if for some reason you do not find the missal method the best suited to your particular needs, and use that method which best accords with your spiritual taste.

If you are unable to use a missal, you may be able to use, with great profit, a prayer book containing the ordinary Mass prayers together with other suitable prayers, in the spirit of the Mass. The practice of *private devotions*, however, such as novenas to the saints, or litanies, etc., is not to be encouraged, because there is danger, in reciting such prayers during the Mass, that the union with the oblation of Christ on the altar will be broken—a union so essential for a fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice. It is because of this danger that many spiritual directors and shepherds of souls discourage the recitation of the Rosary during the Mass and of private prayers which by their nature might easily divert a person's attention from what is being done at the altar.

Although the practice of saying the Rosary during the Mass is quite common,

and this form of prayer does lend itself more readily to union with the Holy Sacrifice than many other devotions, it is, nevertheless, not the *ideal* way of assisting at Mass, generally speaking. For *some persons* it may indeed be a very good and even the best way. By meditating, for example, on the Sorrowful Mysteries and associating those mysteries with the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is a remembrance and a renewal of Christ's sufferings and death, a person may be closely united with the oblation of the Divine Victim on the altar. But even then he certainly ought to interrupt his prayer at least at the principal parts of the Mass—the Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion—and devoutly unite with the priest in appropriate acts of adoration and oblation.

Co-Victims with Christ

As our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the High Priest *offering* the Mass, but also the Victim *offered*, so those who assist at the Holy Sacrifice should be not only "priests" but also "victims." If, therefore, we wish to partake in fullest measure of the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,

we should not only offer the sacrifice of *Christ* in union with Our Lord Himself and the officiating priest, but also offer OURSELVES in union with Him. The closer we are united as victims to Christ, the Divine Victim, the more perfectly shall we celebrate Holy Mass and the more fully shall we partake of its fruits.

In his Encyclical "Mediator Dei," issued in 1947, Pope Pius XII stressed this truth in the following words: "In order that the oblation by which the faithful offer the Divine Victim in this Sacrifice to the Heavenly Father may have its full effect, it is necessary that the people add something else, namely, the offering of themselves as a victim.

"This offering, in fact, is not confined merely to the liturgical Sacrifice. For the Prince of the Apostles wishes us, as living stones built upon Christ, the cornerstone, to be able, as 'a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 2:5). St. Paul the Apostle addressed the following words of exhortation to Christians, without distinction of time: 'I beseech you therefore... that you present your bodies, a living sac-

rifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your spiritual service' (Rom. 12:1). But at that time especially when the faithful take part in the liturgical service with such piety and recollection that it can truly be said of them: 'whose faith and devotion is known to Thee' (*Canon of the Mass*), it is when, with the High Priest and through Him, they offer themselves as a spiritual sacrifice, that each one's faith ought to become more ready to work through charity, his piety more real and fervent, and each should consecrate himself to the furthering of the Divine glory, desiring to become as like as possible to Christ in His most grievous sufferings."

The Mass Must Also Be OUR Sacrifice

As already mentioned, on the Cross our Savior offered Himself alone; but as Head of His Mystical Body He associated with His oblation that of all the future members of that Mystical Body, which is the Church. We could not make this oblation with Him then because we were not yet born; but He gives us the opportunity *now*, and desires that we do so in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is the means He provides

for each one of us and for all generations to the end of time, to unite ourselves with Him in that great act of love and self-surrender which He offered on the Cross.

The Mass, then, is OUR Sacrifice in a twofold sense; first, because we offer it together with the priest and through his hands, and secondly, because in it we make (or should make) the offering of *ourselves* in union with the offering of Christ and the Church. Thus we become "Co-victims" with the Divine Victim and are offered by Him and with Him to the Heavenly Father. In us are then fulfilled the words of St. Paul: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—your spiritual service" (Rom. 12:1).

"Living" the Mass

As members of the Church, we shall enter into the Sacrifice of the Mystical Body and give glory to God, not simply by being *observers* nor even by a most precise *recitation* of the liturgical prayers, but only in proportion as we *offer ourselves* as co-victims with Christ, the Head of the

Church; that is, in so far as we prefer God to ourselves and the world by a whole-hearted love, expressing this preference by gifts of renunciation when opportunities present themselves.

The following words of Abbot Marmion will help us to understand better what is to be the character of our self-oblation: "We must be united to Christ in His immolation and offer ourselves with Him; then He takes us with Him, He immolates us with Him, He bears us before His Father, *in odorem suavitatis* (as a sweet odor). It is *ourselves* we must offer with Jesus Christ. If the faithful share, through baptism, in the priesthood of Christ, it is, says St. Peter, that they may 'offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 2:5)... But in order that we may be accepted by God, the offering of ourselves must be united to the offering Christ made of Himself upon the Cross and renews upon the altar. Our Lord substituted Himself for us in His immolation; He took the place of us all, and that is why, when He died, we, in principle, died with Him... For this mystical death to take place effectually in each one of us, we

must unite ourselves to His Sacrifice on the altar. And how are we to unite ourselves to Christ Jesus in this character of victim? By yielding ourselves, like Him, to the entire accomplishment of the Divine good pleasure. It is for God to dispose fully of the victim offered to Him; we must be in this essential attitude of giving *all* to God, of making our acts of self-renunciation and mortification, of accepting the sufferings and trials of each day for love of Him. . . . That is to offer ourselves with Jesus. Let us offer the Divine Son to His Eternal Father and offer *ourselves* with the 'holy Host' in the same dispositions that animated the Sacred Heart of Christ on the Cross: intense love of His Father and of our neighbor, ardent desire for the salvation of souls, and full abandonment to all that is willed from on high, above all, if it contains what is painful and vexatious to our nature. When we do this, we offer God the most acceptable homage He can receive from us." (*Christ, the Life of the Soul.*)

Another spiritual writer expresses it thus: "If the Mass is to be MY SACRIFICE together with Christ's, then I must bring

MY offering. What is it to be? The obligation of making a total offering of my *will* to God is beyond question. The motive of my sacrifice, therefore, requires a permanent disposition of complete love or preference for God by the unrestricted surrender of my will to His... I must strive for the total elimination of merely selfish motives of conduct in order to conform to and be assimilated by the Divine Victim of the altar... The gradual accomplishment of this preference for God will depend on the purification and supernatural direction of my intention in the everyday round of doings and endureings... I must learn the habit of performing my daily activities *to please God*, so that my everyday round of duties and enjoyments unfolds in the atmosphere of the supernatural life.

“The only way to acquire any habit is by practice. Unless I understand this, I shall fail to see the significance of the Mass as MY SACRIFICE and as a way of life, and I shall assist at it rather as a witness than as a participant and co-victim. Unless I realize that the test of victimhood is not enthusiasm for liturgical forms, but an *unreserved personal love for God expressed*

in my conduct; not an external formality, but an *inner vitality*, that will make contact with the meaning and life of the liturgy, the Mass and the activity of my daily life will be two distinct and unrelated events.” (Rev. D. Mooney, O.F.M.)

Symbols of Our Union with Christ

The union of our self-oblation with that of Christ is beautifully symbolized by the mingling of water and wine at the Offertory—the wine representing Christ and the water ourselves. It is also expressed by the prayer accompanying this action, which asks that “through the mingling of this water and wine we may become partakers of His Divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity.”

The offering of bread and wine signifies not only the oblation of Christ, into whose Body and Blood these gifts are presently to be transformed, but also the offering of *ourselves*. A gift symbolizes the person who offers it, and in offering a gift, we offer ourselves. We cannot actually place *ourselves* on the altar, so we offer bread and wine as *substitutes*, to represent the offering of ourselves, with all

that we are and have, to God, in recognition of His supreme dominion over our persons and our possessions.

When the priest takes the host into his hands and offers it up to God, we should make the offering with him, and at the same time lay upon the paten *our own host*—the host that is ourself: our body with all its organs and members, our soul with all its powers, our mind with all its thoughts, our will with all its movements, our heart with all its affections; our daily life, with our labors, our sufferings, our struggles, our efforts, our prayers, our good works, our talents, our health. This oblation we should place also in the chalice; and as there is a special symbolism attached to the wine, namely that of charity or Divine love, the wine may be regarded as symbolizing all efforts and actions inspired by Divine love, and all the pains and sufferings accepted in that same love. The will being the seat of love, the offering of the wine may symbolize the offering of our will to the will of God. (*See prayer, page 63.*)

When we thus offer ourselves with all that we are and have in union with the

Sacrifice of Christ, He blends our sacrifice, poor and worthless though it be in itself, with His own infinitely holy, valuable and pleasing Sacrifice, and offers it to the Heavenly Father, and thereby bestows on our sacrifice a dignity and a value of infinite worth. By the infinite perfection of His Sacrifice He supplies for all that is wanting to ours. He thus endows it with sublime merit and makes it supremely worthy of being offered to the Heavenly Father and of being repaid by Him with untold blessings.

Then, as the bread and wine are transformed into something wholly different from what they were before, so too our lives must be consecrated and transformed. We must be as persons offered to God, consecrated, raised above the status of mere natural human beings, and brought close to God; our whole moral sense and life must be turned toward God in union with Christ and the Sacrifice He offers. We must have the earnest intention of correcting our faults, of overcoming our evil inclinations and of replacing them with good, virtuous habits. Then when we leave the church at the end of Holy Mass we will re-

joice in the thought that we have been offered together with Christ and that all that befalls us during the day has already been sanctified and presented to God as an oblation at our morning Mass. In the strength of this offering we will face our daily tasks with new joy and courage, and our Mass will be not just a matter of a half hour's or an hour's worship in the morning, but a true *way of life*, prolonged and continued throughout our daily activity.

Often throughout the busy day, we will raise our heart heavenward for a few moments to renew the oblation made at the Offertory of the Mass, in union with all the members of Christ's Mystical Body and with all the Masses being said throughout the world. Our every heartbeat, every breath, will be offered for the glory of God, "through Jesus, with Jesus and by Jesus" in the Mass. All day long we will place upon the paten or drop into the chalice our labors, our prayers, our sufferings, our trials, our acts of self-denial, of charity, of zeal and patience; all our human acts will be lifted up and mingled with the Blood of Christ in His holy oblation. Thus our trials and crosses, offered in union

with the Divine Victim, will become means of purifying our soul and expiating our sins; our joys and consolations, united with the oblation of Christ on the altar, will be sanctified and ennobled and made meritorious for heaven. Then the Mass will become for us truly a fountain of all heavenly blessings and graces and an un-failing source of sanctification.

What Being a "Victim" Means

The word "victim" is for many a fear-some word, because in their mind it implies suffering, sacrifice, the endurance of painful trials and afflictions. To offer themselves as victims, they fear, means to invite sorrows and sufferings of all kinds. This, however, is a mistaken idea, unless, of course, one offers oneself expressly as a *victim of expiation*, which would naturally involve suffering and sacrifice. But to be a victim to God in the ordinary sense simply means to *make an entire offering of oneself to His Divine Majesty*—to dedicate all that one is and all that one has and does to His honor and glory. It means the *gift of oneself to God* in a loving surrender to His Divine Providence, with a ready ac-

ceptance from His hands of whatever it may please Him to send, whether pleasant or unpleasant to nature. It is in the sacrifice or the giving of oneself that the essence of victimhood lies. Thus one can be just as truly a "victim" in health, in joy and in consolation as in sickness, in sorrow and in suffering, although the sacrifice is doubtless more meritorious when it involves suffering, provided the suffering be borne in the right disposition.

The angels in heaven are victims of Divine love in that they offer themselves to God unceasingly in a loving sacrifice of adoration, praise and thanksgiving. Adam, in the Garden of Eden, before his fall, was in a state of perpetual sacrifice. He offered himself to God, whom he acknowledged as his supreme Lord, and gave thanks for all the blessings bestowed upon him, at the same time entreating God, no doubt, to continue to bestow His benefits. And after his fall, Adam continued to be a victim, but thereafter a fresh obligation was laid upon him and upon all his posterity, namely, that of *expiation*.

But the unique and infinitely perfect Victim is our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only

was He a Victim from the first to the last moment of His mortal life, but He continues to be so in the Holy Eucharist, and also in heaven, where He reigns in glory. For all eternity He will remain in a sacrificial state before His Heavenly Father, because He will continue always to be a "creature" in so far as He is man, and therefore cannot cease from offering His Father adoration, praise and thanksgiving, which are the essential acts of every creature's worship. He will not be eternally a victim of expiation, since there will be nothing left to expiate after the general judgment; nor a victim of supplication, since there will remain no blessings to pray for, when the elect are in possession of every good; but He will always be a victim of adoration and thanksgiving, and we shall all, including Mary and also the angels, be united with His eternal sacrifice as victims of adoration and thanksgiving.

In offering ourselves as victims in union with the Sacrifice of Christ, we are not called upon to give up our lives or to change their exterior course (unless that course be evil), but to dedicate them to God and to change them *interiorly* so that

they may be worthy to be united with the Sacrifice of Christ. Just as the wheat and grapes are ground in the mill and the press to become fit material for the Sacrifice, so too our lives must be "ground" in the mill of self-discipline and made conformable to the Christian ideal in order that we may worthily be offered with Christ.

There is a special significance for us in the fact that the host used by the priest at Holy Mass is made of the finest flour, and is of unleavened bread. To be offered as hosts with Christ, we must, as St. Paul says, purify our lives by "purging out the old leaven." The leaven stands for all that is not good and true, all that is not according to the Christian spirit. We must seek in our mind, in our will, in our heart, in our intentions, all that is selfish, base, sensual, uncharitable, worldly, all that is not absolutely worthy of a good and true Christian, and then endeavor to root it out and to supplant it with Christlike virtues. Each day we must strive to become more like our Divine Model, so that our "victim," our "host," may bear an ever greater resemblance to the pure host offered by the priest. Being thus gradually transformed

into the likeness of Jesus, we shall become in truth "other Christs," as every Christian should be.

It stands to reason that our first concern, if we wish to participate as fully as possible in the treasures of the Mass, must certainly be to be united to Christ by sanctifying grace; for how can anyone presume to join the oblation of himself with that of the spotless Lamb of God if his soul is defiled with sin, and therefore at enmity with God? We should therefore purify our soul frequently in the sacrament of penance and by fervent acts of love and contrition, and thus dispose ourselves for the reception of the graces flowing from the Mass.

Holy Communion, the Fruit of the Sacrifice

The fullest and most complete participation in the Holy Sacrifice is achieved in the reception of Holy Communion, which is the fruit of the Sacrifice. At the Offertory and the Consecration we give Christ to God; at the Communion, God gives Christ to us. And with Christ, the Divine Victim and High Priest, we receive the fulness of Divine grace. This is expressed

in the third prayer following the Consecration, in which the priest says: "Grant, we beseech Thee, O Almighty God, that as many of us as shall partake of the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son at this altar may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace." It is the wish of the Church that the faithful receive Holy Communion each time they assist at Holy Mass (unless, of course, they assist at more than one Holy Mass in a day). If for some good reason they cannot receive Communion sacramentally, they should at least do so *spiritually*, with the ardent desire of being united most intimately with Christ, the Victim on the altar.

Holy Communion is the crowning and completion of the Sacrifice. It is the Sacrifice-Banquet, at which our Lord Jesus Christ becomes the Food of souls, the heavenly Bread which maintains and increases the Divine life of sanctifying grace in them. In this sacrificial Banquet, Our Lord bestows on us the fruit and blessing of the Sacrifice-Oblation. Therefore, everyone who wishes to participate in fullest measure in the fruits of the Mass and to be united to Christ in it as perfectly and completely

as possible, should approach the Holy Table at the Communion of the Mass. All too many of the faithful seem to forget the intimate relationship that exists between the Mass and Holy Communion. Many communicate outside the time of Mass; others again assist at Holy Mass without any thought of receiving Holy Communion; while for many, the Mass is merely the setting of their devotions for Communion.

We shall not dwell here on the wonderful effects of Holy Communion, for that would be beyond the scope of our subject. Suffice it to say, that the ideal way of participating in the Holy Sacrifice is to partake of the Sacrifice-Banquet, and thus, by a personal and most intimate union with the Divine High Priest and Victim, to be made partaker in fullest measure of the fruits of the adorable Sacrifice.*

*Many excellent books and pamphlets are available for those who wish further instruction and inspiration on the wonderful effects of Holy Communion and other aspects of this holy Sacrament. Our two booklets — "A Novena of Communions" and "Communicate Frequently and Devoutly" are both very helpful. Price, 15¢ each. Order from:

**Benedictine Convent of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri**

Our sharing in the riches of the Mass increases with each new Mass at which we assist with fervor and devotion. As often as we offer the Holy Sacrifice in the right dispositions, so often we receive its fruits and increase our spiritual wealth. That is one of the reasons why many of the saints had such an ardent love for the Mass. Perhaps, too, it is one of the reasons why they became saints!

What is more, our share in the merits of Christ can increase with each Mass because by each Mass we become more receptive. We come each time, as it were, with a larger container (to use a rather crude example) to carry away its blessings; for the Mass not only fills our souls with the gifts of God, but it *enlarges* their spiritual capacity. Assistance at the Holy Sacrifice increases charity in us, strengthens our virtue, roots out sins, and thus develops our supernatural inclinations. In this way it creates within us a greater capacity to receive God. Surely, then, we ought to assist at Holy Mass as often as we can. We must not forget, however, that it is not *how often* we attend, so much as *how well* we attend, that increases our spiritual store.

Sharing in the Mass is not like sharing in worldly riches. Our share in the Mass is not lessened by the fact that many others share it with us. Whether we are one of a few or one of many does not matter. Our share is always measured by our spiritual capacity for receiving.

However, our attitude in assisting at Mass should not be "What do I gain?" but rather, "What can I give?" for our first interest should be the honor and glory we can give to God. But God in His goodness has so closely bound up our welfare with His glory that in seeking His glory we also insure our own welfare.

At Mass with Mary

The Blessed Virgin Mary is our best and truest guide for a worthy and fruitful assistance at Holy Mass. Although she is the model of every virtue, she is in a special way the model of a true Eucharistic life. Since the Mass is the renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, in the name of Christ, by the Church, we may say that Mary stands at the altar during the Holy Sacrifice as she stood at the foot of the Cross, and offers her Divine Son to the

Heavenly Father with the same perfect dispositions with which she offered Him on Calvary.

What Mary's dispositions were when she assisted at Holy Mass may be gathered from the teaching of the Church on the Mass and its function with regard to the Christian life. Mary, whose knowledge of the things of God and of the Christian truths was so perfect, thoroughly understood the Sacrifice which was re-enacted in her presence. And certainly Our Lord owed it to Himself and to His Blessed Mother to give to her, the holiest member and the most richly endowed of all His creatures, a realization of the conditions required to perform as perfectly as possible this supreme act of religion.

We may be sure, then, that through her Immaculate Heart, the Holy Sacrifice was offered in the most perfect manner possible for the four ends of Sacrifice: adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and petition. How different our attention at Mass would be if we placed ourselves in the company of Mary and tried to imitate her deep faith and her ardent love. Let us ask this best and holiest of Mothers to teach us how

to assist at Mass in the most perfect manner and to derive from it the richest and most lasting fruits.

The Bond of Union with Others

In offering the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are offering it, not merely as individuals, but as members of a community, of a "family" — the family of God, which is the Church. We join in the combined oblation of "all faithful Christians," and our offering is intimately bound up with the offerings of our fellow-Catholics, especially those who are offering the Sacrifice with us. Though each person offers his own gift, all are united in the one gift—the bread and wine, which represent the gifts of all. And just as we are made one with Christ, the Divine High Priest and Victim, in offering the Mass, so too we are united and made one with all the members of His Mystical Body, of the entire Church.

This is clearly shown by the use of the plural pronouns *we* and *our* which occur so often in the prayers of the Mass: "*we* offer," "*we* beseech Thee," "receive *our* oblation," etc. Our union with the other

members of the Church and of the congregation is symbolized by the union of many grains of wheat and many grapes to form the bread and wine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The wheat grew in many different places, and so did the grapes; but they were brought together and ground into flour and baked into bread, and pressed into wine; and all became united in furnishing the matter for the Holy Sacrifice.

In the same way, all the members of a congregation, and of the whole Church, are joined in a unity far superior to the unity of the grains of wheat and the grapes in the bread and wine of the Sacrifice. This is not brought about by the Offertory alone, but by the whole Sacrifice of the Mass, and is climaxed at the Communion in those who partake of the Sacrifice-Banquet and are unified by the "one bread" which is the Body of Christ.

The natural conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that we must also be united in mind and heart with our fellow-Catholics, especially with those offering the Holy Sacrifice with us; and not only with our fellow-Catholics, but with all our fellow-men, for all are God's children, all were re-

deemed by Christ, and all are destined for heaven, though not all will win the grace of salvation. If, then, we wish to please God and to honor Him in the best manner possible, and to draw the highest degree of benefit from the Mass, we must put into practice not only the first of His great commandments—to love Him with our whole mind and heart and strength—but also the second, to love our neighbor as ourselves. We must practice this precept in our daily lives and dispel from our heart and mind all enmities, all aversions, all dissension—everything that could be an obstacle to our union with our neighbor (and this means also the members of our own family), and so also to our union with God. We must be solicitous for our neighbor's temporal welfare and eternal happiness as well as for our own, and be mindful of this especially when we assist at Holy Mass; for it is there that we have access to God's treasure-house of grace in a very singular way, and can win countless graces for ourselves and for others.

Necessity of Proper Instruction

From all that has been said, we may

see how important it is to be *properly instructed* in order to assist at Holy Mass with the greatest possible benefit to our souls. We should know what the Mass is, which are its most important parts, and what part we are supposed to take in its celebration. It is from a lack of spiritual insight that so many people derive but little benefit from the Mass. To many, the time of Mass is a time of weariness, and the hearing of it a tiresome obligation to be suffered and endured with listless boredom rather than used and enjoyed with the utmost devotion and spiritual profit. Because they do not appreciate the true meaning and value of the Mass, nor understand what part they are to take in this Divine function, they assist in a very imperfect manner; they "day-dream" away the sacred time of Mass, and thus this richest source of grace and blessing remains for them a "sealed-up fountain." They leave the Holy Sacrifice, one might almost say, empty-handed, and it produces little or no effect in their lives. And, sad to say, all too often a mere nothing, a trifling pretext, a worthless excuse, keeps them away altogether.

How different it would be if they knew how to profit by this stupendous Sacrifice, how to appreciate the treasures of the Mass, how to make the Mass the sun and center of their lives! Then might they confidently expect to obtain abundant strength to bear their daily trials and to overcome their evil inclinations and sinful habits; then would they experience a marked increase in virtue and a rapid progress toward Christian perfection, together with many other blessings.

Holy Mass holds out for us the great gift of personal union with Christ, not only through Holy Communion, but through the Sacrifice itself. If we well understood the intimate relation between our Divine Lord and those devoutly assisting at Holy Mass, and the consequent blessings to souls, we would make every effort to acquire the knowledge and the dispositions requisite for a proper participation in its celebration. We would no longer speak of "hearing Mass," or "attending Mass," realizing that we have a much more important and intimate part to play when we assist at the Holy Sacrifice.

For the Catholic who understands well

what his relation to the Mass should be, preparation for the Mass becomes, one might say, his chief concern in life. He knows, in the first place, that he has been created to know, to love, to serve and adore God, and that such a homage is offered in its fulness at the altar in the oblation of Christ in the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. He knows that as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. (the Church) he must bend every effort toward co-operating in the acts of worship which the Church performs in union with Christ, her Head, especially the offering of the Mass. Rising above self-interest, he seeks in the first place God's honor and glory, and it is to this end that he tries to make his participation in the Mass more and more perfect, so that he may render an ever more perfect service to the Divine Majesty.

Dear lovers of the Sacred Heart! make use of the time of Mass as the most precious time of your whole life. Make use of Jesus Crucified, who at Mass is all yours. Through Him and with Him and in Him offer your prayers and make the sacrifice of your passions and evil habits. Give Him your life's service, your interests and

needs, your work and all your cares and troubles of daily life. Pray for sinners, for the Church, for the Pope, for the troubled world, for the poor souls in purgatory. As your devotion for Holy Mass increases, so will your life, with its daily round of labors, troubles and trials, become easier to bear; for in each Mass Jesus Himself is given to you, and with Him are given all things else.

The Greatest Thing in the World

WHAT answer would you, as a Catholic, give to the question: "*What is the greatest thing in the world?*" If you cannot give the correct answer, you are missing something powerful, beautiful, utterly priceless. There is a "treasure hidden in a field," and you are walking by it. There is a "pearl of great price," and you refuse to take it. There is a "fountain of life," and you do not drink of its living waters. If you cannot give the right answer to this question, you have missed the great heart and center of Catholicity—you have missed the meaning of the *Mass!*

For Catholics, *the greatest thing in all their lives* and in all the world should be *the Sacrifice of the Mass*. The Mass is too little known, too little loved, too little leaned upon. The tremendous *Thing* that happens morning after morning on the altars of Catholic churches throughout the cities and countries of the world ought to be better appreciated by Catholics than it is. No Catholic should miss seeing, knowing and fully understanding, insofar as it lies within his power, what this momentous Thing is, this Thing that is so familiar and yet so unknown among many Catholics.

Only by thought and reflection can we come to know the Mass. Have you who read these lines ever really thought about it, or have you come to anything like a realization and understanding of this sacred Mystery? *The Sacrifice of Christ, the Sacrifice of the Altar, is the Sacrifice of Calvary, the Sacrifice of the Cross*. Calvary is the Mountain of Redemption, the peak whereon the gates of heaven were thrown open to mankind. Yes, *on Calvary, and in Calvary*, we discover the towering importance of the Mass. *The Mass*

is Calvary. It is Calvary perpetuated in an unbloody Sacrifice. It is Calvary carried down the centuries and re-enacted in every land of the earth. There, precisely, the greatness of the Mass lies revealed—in its closeness to, in its *oneness* with Calvary. When the priest bows low over bread and wine and whispers the words of Consecration, there, present beneath the appearances, is the Crucified in the act of offering Himself to God the Father as our Victim. In the midst of men is the living Christ, offering His sacred Body and Precious Blood to the Father as the most perfect Sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and supplication.

We share in this offering of Christ when we assist at and participate in the Mass. Through the Mass we give *infinite* adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and supplication to God, because in union with our Divine Savior we offer to God the sacrifice of an infinite Victim. When we participate in Holy Mass it is as if we were with the Blessed Virgin, St. John and Magdalen at the foot of the Cross, at the very fountainhead of all salvation and redemption.

Everything comes to us from our Heavenly Father through His Divine Son, Jesus, in whom He has placed all the treasures that men can desire. This Jesus is present upon the altar with His treasures, offering Himself for us to the glory of His Father, rendering Him the most perfect homage, and applying to us the supreme efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Oh, if we but knew the Gift of God! *If we but realized from what a treasury we might draw for ourselves and all those dear to us by participating daily in Holy Mass!*

We all have many needs—needs of body and soul—yet how little we think of drawing upon the great treasure-house of the Mass! We call upon our favorite saints, we storm them with novenas, we visit their shrines and present to them our urgent petitions. We ask the priest to pray for us because of his office as mediator with God in our behalf. But we forget that on the altar is our *Divine Mediator*—“always living to make intercession for us,” supporting our supplications by His infinite merits, lending to our feeble petitions the power of His almighty prayer in Holy Mass. When, with deep reverence,

lively faith, ardent love and true contrition, we unite ourselves to Christ Jesus, the Eternal Priest and Victim, in His Eucharistic Sacrifice, He takes all our intentions into His Heart and offers perfect adoration and full satisfaction for us to His Father. He presents to Him all our needs, and His prayer is all-powerful.

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass was instituted by Our Lord Himself as the supreme act of worship. To participate in it is the Catholic's most exalted privilege. Love of it is the test of his religion. It is the chief of all his helps, the principal source of all his graces. God Himself could not devise anything more sacred, anything more powerful than the Mass. And it goes on through all time in order that *each one of us* may, individually and most effectually, partake of and profit by the blessings of the Redemption on the Cross.

One Out of 168 — or 24?

There are 168 hours in every week, and each hour is God's gift to us. He generously gives us these 168 hours and then He begs for *just one hour* to be returned to Him by attendance at Sunday Mass. How

sad that it should be necessary for the Church to make attendance compulsory under pain of sin! If all Catholics had a proper understanding of the priceless worth of the Mass, our churches would be thronged not only on Sundays, but on every day of the year. No sacrifice would be considered too great to make daily attendance possible, and instead of giving—perhaps even grudgingly—one hour out of 168, they would deem it their greatest gain to give at least one hour out of every 24.

Happily, there are fervent Catholics who do appreciate the priceless treasure which is theirs in the Mass. Each morning finds them at the foot of the altar, uniting with the Divine Victim in His all-holy Sacrifice. They are the *multimillionaires* who have learned the secret of amassing riches which no thief of time can take from them. They are free men and women who are not enslaved by passing worldly interests, human considerations, insignificant sacrifices. They are the earth's great ones who are blessed because they see the things that the world cannot see. They are souls who know and appreciate the *Greatest Thing in the world*. Are you one of them?

Offerings to Make at Holy Mass

At the Beginning of Mass

ETERNAL FATHER, I offer Thee the Sacrifice wherein Thy dear Son Jesus offered Himself upon the Cross, and which He now renews upon this altar, to adore Thee and to render to Thee that honor which is Thy due, acknowledging Thy supreme dominion over all things and their absolute dependence on Thee, for Thou art our first Beginning and our last End; to give Thee thanks for countless benefits received; to appease Thy justice provoked to anger by so many sins, and to offer Thee worthy satisfaction for the same; and finally, to implore Thy grace and mercy for myself, for all those who are in tribulation and distress, for all poor sinners, for the whole world, and for the blessed souls in purgatory.

Indulgence of 3 years for devoutly making this act at the beginning of the Mass. A plenary indulgence once a month, under the usual conditions, if this act has been recited on all Sundays and holydays of obligation for a month. ("Raccolta," 68.)

Offering of the Mass for Various Intentions

1. Atonement

O MY GOD, I offer Thee this Holy Mass and all the Masses being celebrated today throughout the world, in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, my Guardian Angel and my Patron Saint, to the Divine Justice of God, in atonement for all sins of thought, word, action and omission by which I myself and all others have ever offended Thee.

2. Thanksgiving

O MY GOD, I offer Thee this Holy Mass and all the Masses being celebrated today throughout the world, in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, my Guardian Angel and my Patron Saint, in thanksgiving for the numberless blessings received from Thy infinite Goodness: my creation, my Catholic Faith, my baptism, my confirmation, the forgiveness of my sins so often in confession, and my many Holy Masses and Communions; for my good parents, my many years of life thus far, my Christian up-

bringing, my good health and happiness, and the many other blessings showered on me by my good and loving Father in heaven. And I wish in a similar way to thank Thee for Thy infinite goodness to all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, especially of those who are near and dear to me.

3. Petition

O MY GOD, I offer Thee this Holy Mass and all the Masses being celebrated today throughout the world, in honor of the Holy Spirit, and of Mary, His immaculate Spouse, of St. Joseph, my Guardian Angel and my Patron Saint, to obtain the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the virtues of patience and resignation to God's holy will in all things. I also ask, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, for myself, for all who are dear to me, and for all Christians, the graces we need and all that is required for our temporal welfare and happiness today and every day of our lives. Especially I pray Thee to grant to the just the grace of perseverance; to sinners, that of a perfect conversion; and to all the faithful (including myself, my relatives and friends), the grace of receiving

the last sacraments, with the proper dispositions, and of dying a death precious in Thy sight.

The Gift of ONESELF at the Offertory

O MY GOD, upon the paten with the Host which the priest is now offering, I place the host that is myself: my body with all its organs and members; my soul with all its powers; my mind with all its thoughts; my will with all its acts; my heart with all its affections; my daily life with its labors, sufferings, and struggles; my efforts to practice virtue, my prayers and good works; my successes and failures; my joys and sorrows; my talents and my health. In union with all who are offering this Holy Mass, I give all to Thee without reserve, through Jesus, with Jesus and in Jesus, for Thy honor and glory. Amen.

My God, in union with the priest and all who are here present, I offer Thee the Chalice and place in it this same complete oblation of all that I am and have. Transform me by Thy Divine Power and make me no longer live for myself but for Thee and Thy glory, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Books and Booklets on the Mass

The following literature will prove helpful to anyone wishing to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the Mass:

The Treasures of the Mass — A devotional explanation of all the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass, in simple, glowing language. Designed to make assistance at Mass a source of joy and great spiritual profit. 128 pages (large size) only 50¢.

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The Meaning of the Mass — by Rev. Paul Bussard and Felix Kirsch, O.F.M., Cap. A very fine explanation of the Mass and all its prayers and parts, together with questions for classroom or study group use. Published by: **P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 12 Barclay Street, N. Y. City.** Price \$1.00.

My Mass — by Rev. Joseph Putz, S.J., 150 pages, \$1.50. — A book intended to help Catholics follow the Mass intelligently, by active participation. An excellent guide toward making the Mass the center of a vigorous and fruitful spiritual life. Published by **The Newman Press, Westminster, Md.**

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