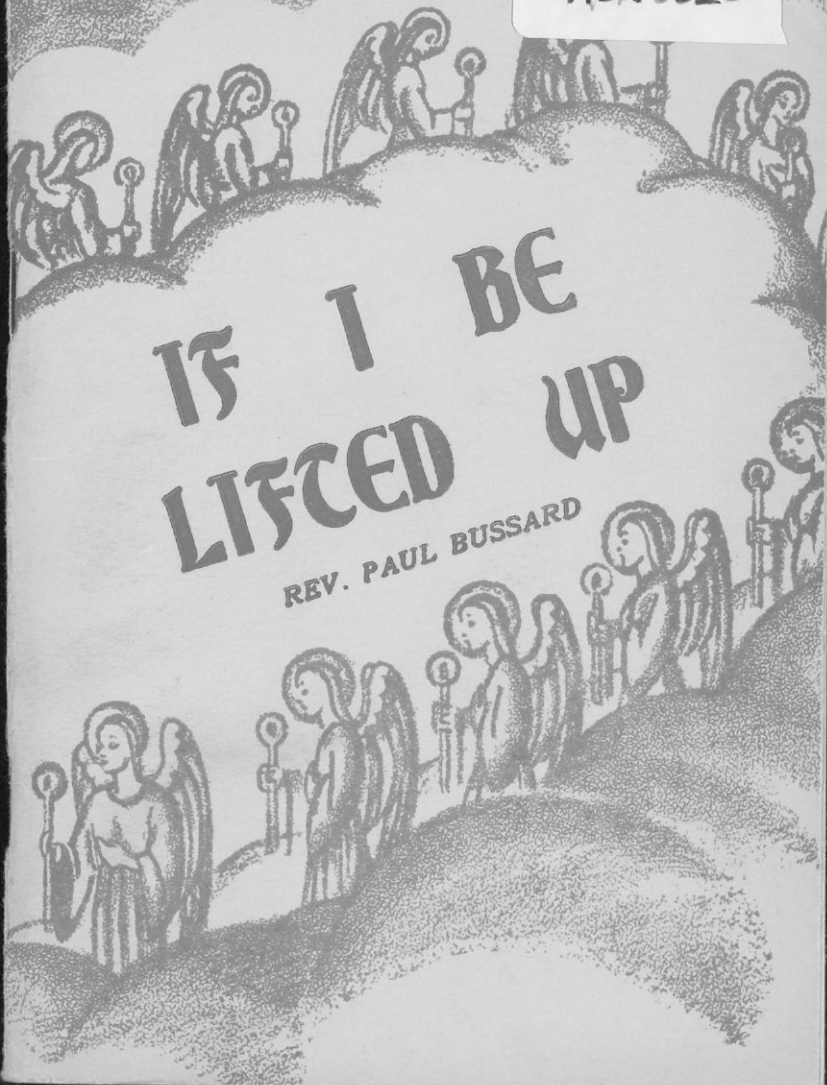


Bussard, Paul C.

— ADK 3323

# IF I BE LIFTED UP

REV. PAUL BUSSARD





The Catechetical Guild takes pleasure in sending you this REVIEW COPY of a new teaching aid.

The unit price is underlined.

5c 10c 15c 20c 25c

School Discounts:

10% in lots of 25 copies

20% in lots of 100 copies

**A copy of the issue containing a review will be greatly appreciated.**

## **CATECHETICAL GUILD**

128 East Tenth Street  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Reverend Louis A. Gales  
Director

If I Be Lifted Up

Deacidified

# If I Be Lifted Up

*Edited for Use in Schools and Discussion Groups*

*by*

REVEREND PAUL BUSSARD

Editor of The Catholic Digest  
and The Leaflet Missal



1944

CATECHETICAL GUILD

*Saint Paul*

NIHIL OBSTAT

ALEXIUS HOFFMANN, O.S.B.

*Censor Librorum*

IMPRIMI POTEST

✠ ALCUINUS DEUTSCH, O.S.B.

*Abbas S. Joannis Bapt.*

IMPRIMATUR

✠ JOSEPHUS F. BUSCH

*Episcopus S. Clodoaldi*

Copyright 1944 by  
The Leaflet Missal  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Printed in U. S. A.

## CONTENTS

	<i>CHAPTER I.</i>	
On the Book .....		7
	<i>CHAPTER II.</i>	
Of the Rhythm of Prayer .....		13
	<i>CHAPTER III.</i>	
Of Any Sacrifice .....		19
	<i>CHAPTER IV.</i>	
Of the Sacrifice .....		23
	<i>CHAPTER V.</i>	
Of the Mass of the Catechumens .....		30
	<i>CHAPTER VI.</i>	
Of the Offertory .....		38
	<i>CHAPTER VII.</i>	
Of the Canon .....		47
	<i>CHAPTER VIII.</i>	
Of Holy Communion .....		54
	<i>CHAPTER IX.</i>	
Of Everyday Life and the Sacrifice .....		58
	<i>CHAPTER X.</i>	
The Morning Offering of the Mass .....		62

“And I, if I be lifted up  
from the earth, will draw  
all things to Myself.”

*(John 12:32)*



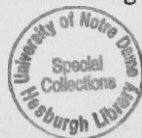
## I. ON THE BOOK



IN FORMER years, and on occasions in these later times, one may hear the story of the Bible that was chained. It is a legend with some three hundred years' tradition behind it. The Catholic Church had a Bible, so the story, but they had a chain and lock on it so no one could read it. The tale happens to be true, but not quite accurate. Everyone now knows that the chain was there, not so that people couldn't read it, but so that they could read it. The point is that it was chained open, not shut. And it was chained and locked for precisely the same reason that people lock the garage door when they put the car away. They do that so they can use the car, not to prevent its use.

Books were very expensive in those days. Printing had not been invented and the making of a book like the Bible or the Missal meant years of labor. Buying a Missal then meant investing as much money as is nowadays necessitated by the purchase of a Rolls Royce. One can hardly blame people for trying to prevent stealth. No one blames a man for locking his garage; and it has always been accounted wise to lock the barn door before the horse is stolen.

But in those days people hardly needed such a thing



as a Missal. Latin was universal in the West. One has only to go back to the time when Chaucer wrote in English and Dante wrote in Italian to see the beginning of our modern languages. And for a long time after Chaucer and Dante, the common people understood and spoke Latin. And for a much longer time educated people spoke Latin. Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth, her benevolent relation, spoke Latin with ease. And in those times when the priest at Mass said "*Sursum corda,*" every one in the church knew that he had said "Lift up your hearts"; and they could respond quite naturally: "That we have already done and are doing."

So although Missals were as expensive as Dusenburg cars, people at Mass did not need Missals because they understood what was said in Latin. Now, few people understand Latin, but Missals or other books are so inexpensive that everyone can buy them, and there is no necessity for chains. And so the use of Latin makes little difference in our understanding of the Mass because with a Missal in English you can easily learn to understand every word that is said and follow every action that is performed.

The Missal is a wonderful book. It has been in process of composition for over three thousand years. About that long ago Moses, under the inspiration of God, wrote the first parts. After him came the prophets—Isaias whose lips were cleansed with fire, Jeremias who wept over the city, Malachias who prophesied of the unending Sacrifice. Then there was Solomon with all his wisdom, and David with his gift of song, Job with his patience and philosophy. Later, Matthew and Luke,

Mark and John, wrote the Gospel, under inspiration, and the Gospel is part of the Mass. The Missal is made up for the most part of selections from Sacred Scripture.

Later there were the martyrs who did not write anything, but whose heroism was written in the minds of their contemporaries and whose birth day, which was their death day, comes to us as a festival. Then there are the Collects, Secrets and Postcommunions written by people before the sixth century, nobody knows by whom.

In those days music was composed as men lifted up their hearts in song. The composers are as unknown as their music is great; and the Catholic world is at this time endeavoring to learn to appreciate its greatness and to regain true religion by re-entering into its spirit.

As century succeeded century, each age left its mark upon the Missal. Each people who loved the Mass embellished and perfected the Book of the Mass. One age left us music and the rhythm of great Collects, another left us the memory of martyrdom, another the poetry of the Sequence and Trope. And we in this latter time, heirs to this inheritance, children of great forefathers, we now set ourselves to the task of learning to appreciate more perfectly the wealth of our heritage, the magnificence of our gift.

The Church has been thinking about the Sacrifice of the Mass for some two thousand years. The result of that meditation is the Missal. The expression of that thought is the Book of the Mass. As often as not the thought would be too deep for either tears or words. Thereupon she made music, and when the words failed

completely she made songs without words. This Book is something not made by human hands, because this Book is the written prayer of the Church. And the prayer of the Church is not human and natural, but superhuman and supernatural. The Holy Ghost, who abides with the Church until the end of time, guiding her in the way of truth and grace, has guided her in the writing of this Book, which it is our privilege to know.

The prayer of the Church has a double purpose. It is, first, to praise and, second, to teach. The Church is commissioned to teach and this she does by word of mouth and by action. Everything she does, everything she makes, has that twofold purpose, to praise and teach. To know a cathedral and to understand it is to know a great deal of the teaching of the Church. So in her prayers. She teaches her children to pray; and the prayers she teaches her children make them understand more of the depth and the height and the breadth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God. The Collects in the Missal teach one the attributes and perfection of God, the Secrets teach the purpose of the Gift, the Postcommunions are a perfect commentary on the nature and effects of holy Communion. Every year she reproduces the life of our Lord by means of Gospels and feasts. Every year she gives us the teachings of the Apostles in the Epistles. Every year she shows us some of her children who have lived the Christ-life in a perfect manner. So it is with perfect aptness that the aphorism comes to us, that the law of prayer is the law of belief. Always she draws her children to Christ. She makes their minds to come to the mind of Christ, she

draws their will to conformity with the will of Christ, she increases their stature so that they grow into the fullness of Christ who is filled all in all.

This Book, then, it is our privilege to know. And it is not difficult. Great things are always simple. So the Mass is comparatively easy to understand and the Missal is easy to learn. To a Catholic there is nothing he can be more justly proud of than the Book of the Mass.



**1. What is the Missal?**

The Missal is the book which the priest uses at the altar during holy Mass.

**2. Why is the book at the altar called a Missal?**

The book at the altar is called a Missal from the Latin word *missa*, which means Mass—and so the Missal is the Mass-Book.

**3. What is in the Missal?**

In the Missal are the prayers for holy Mass.

**4. Is the Missal better than any other prayer book?**

Yes, the Missal is the best and most beautiful prayer book in the world.

**5. In what language is the Missal on the altar written?**

The language of the Roman Missal is Latin.

**6. Has it been translated?**

Yes, many times, and into many languages.

**7. Should everyone have one of these translations?**

Yes.

**8. Why should everyone have a small English Missal?**

Every person should have an English Missal so that he can understand and follow what the priest says and does at the altar.

**9. Is it difficult to learn how to follow the Mass prayers?**

No, to learn how to follow the Mass prayers is not any harder than learning how to pray along with someone else.

## II. OF THE RHYTHM OF PRAYER



EVERYTHING that enjoys the privilege of existence in this world, or out of it, has something which the scholastics called "form." The word has a technical meaning for them. For us it has not. Form is merely shape or contour. We know the shape of rivers and snakes, of mountains and cathedrals, of shoes and ships and all such material things. We may not be so familiar with the form of prayer. Yet a prayer is a definite and recognizable contour in spite of the fact that it is more spiritual than ships and sealing wax. Its form is more like the form of a sonnet or madrigal. It varies a great deal because there are so many kinds of prayer. But the prayer composed by our blessed Lord is the mold for all others. It has two parts. The first looks to God and speaks of the things of God, the second looks to men and speaks of men's affairs.

Everything in the world which enjoys the privilege of life in addition to that of existence has another quality. To be alive is to move. So anything that has life has movement, and anything that moves intelligently has direction and rhythm. Movement without direction is unintelligent like the circles of a man lost in the woods. Movement without rhythm is ungraceful like the circles

of a man lost in the fumes of alcohol. Direction in motion is beautiful. The direction of a homing pigeon on its way through clouds and storms has always been admired. The rhythm of motion is graceful. The rhythm of a dancer, or a comet whirling on its orbit, or the earth on its axis, or a tree bowing beneath the wind—these have been admired in sundry ways by any number of people with a taste for poetry.

Now prayer has the privilege and duty of existence. So prayer has shape and contour. It is also something alive. So a prayer has direction and rhythm. For example, the prayer taught by our blessed Lord has direction and rhythm. The first part directs your attention upward to God; the second part directs God's attention downward to men. We give to God our earnest desire that His will be done and His kingdom come and ask in return that we receive bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from all manner of evil. We give something and receive something, and were one to estimate the value of the two parts one would have to say that of the two it is more important to give.

The Hail Mary is similar to the Our Father. We praise the Blessed Virgin, say she has the plentitude of grace, that with her is Christ, that she is one blessed above all women. And then in the second part we ask her to pray for us now and when we die. The prayer is a double action of praise and petition. Direction is first upwards and then downwards like the curve of an arch.

Probably the most concise example, and one which actually defines the form and rhythm of prayer, is the



one the angels sang at Christmas, "Glory to God in the highest." Like the lark that springs in perfect joy towards the sun, these words raise a man's heart and mind to God. "And on earth peace to men of good will." Like the sudden burst of the sun through a veil of clouds these words effect what they signify—peace and grace to men. This prayer of the angels has perfect rhythm and balance; and who is there who would improve on its double direction? All prayer gives glory to God and brings peace to men. In fact the purpose of life is to give glory to God and in so doing procure eternal peace for men.

Now with this idea of form and rhythm in mind, examine any prayer you like and you will find that the more perfect the prayer is, the more closely it will approximate this form. Examine the *Confiteor*, the *Memorare*, the ceremony of Benediction, and every Collect and Secret and Postcommunion in the Missal. You will be able to recognize in them all the curve of the motion of prayer.

All these single prayers are like the arches of a cathedral. You enter a cathedral and your eye follows a series of low curving arches repeated and repeated throughout the structure—between the pillars, over the windows, in the dome or along the roof. As your eye follows the progression, you come at last to the great arch which sums up and unites the multiple repetitions in one grand triumph. It is like the rainbow which spans the earth and rears its head in the heavens. These single prayers are the little arches and the Sacrifice of

the Mass is the triumphal arch. For after the manner of the arch of triumph in a building, the Mass sums up all things, draws all things to itself in one grand triumphal prayer which like the rainbow spans the earth and reaches to its Head in heaven. It unites all things, all members of the Church, all members of the Mystical Body of Christ to the Head of the body in heaven.

For the Mass itself is a prayer having the form and structure of prayer. It has direction and rhythm. It is the offering, the giving, the extension upwards, of all the Church united with Christ—a living gift offered to God; and in return men receive peace and grace and the promise and pledge of eternal life. Like the rainbow it begins on earth and reaches to heaven, giving glory to God in the highest; and then like the rainbow turns downward again bringing peace on earth to men of good will.

This form and direction then are present in the Mass in a perfect manner. For where is there a prayer greater than the Mass? In broad outline the form of the Mass is the form of the rainbow. And this curve or interchange of gifts between men and God is repeated twice in the Mass. First in the Mass of the Catechumens as an indication and a prelude. Then in the Mass of the Faithful in a perfect manner. The Sacrifice-offering (the Canon) is the direction upward; the Sacrifice-banquet (Communion) is the direction downward. The first is the gift of Christ and with Him the gift of ourselves offered to God; the second is the reception of the greatest gift even God can give to men—Himself.

The double action of praise and grace is the essential characteristic of every prayer. It is moreover the outline of the structure of the greatest prayer of all.



**1. What is prayer?**

Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God.

**2. Are all prayers the same?**

Yes, there is something the same in nearly all prayers.

**3. What is the something that is the same in nearly all prayers?**

It is this, that nearly all prayers have two parts.

**4. What is the first part of almost every prayer?**

The first part of almost every prayer is praise of God.

**5. What is the second part of nearly every prayer?**

The second part of nearly every prayer is asking God for something.

**6. What does the first part of nearly every prayer do?**

The first part *gives honor to God* by praising Him.

**7. What does the second part of nearly every prayer do?**

The second part, *brings God's help*, or grace, to men of good will on earth.

**8. What is the direction of the first part?**

The direction of the first part is from earth to heaven.

**9. What is the direction of the second part?**

The direction of the second part is from heaven to earth.

**10. Show how these two parts are also in the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and in other prayers that you know.**

### III. OF ANY SACRIFICE



BUT THE Mass is more than a prayer having the form and rhythm of prayer. It is a sacrifice.

Like all great things a sacrifice also is simple. It is simply a gift given to God which has the quality of making the one who gives it holy. It is a prayer having the form and rhythm of prayer. So it is something given to God and something received from God. A prayer may be purely mental. It may not even have words. But a sacrifice must have an external act. It must be something which every one may see. It is the external expression of an internal idea.

People have always felt the impulse to express their ideas in an external manner. One can always tell when a person is angry by observing his actions. One can tell when he is happy and when he is sad, when he is contented and when he is melancholy.

Emotional states always express themselves in a manner that all may see.

Then on occasion men conceive great ideas. There comes the dream of a great poem and blind Milton writes *Paradise Lost*. There comes the dream of a great drama and Shakespeare writes *Hamlet*. There comes the idea of a temple fit for the Sacrifice of the Mass and

men build the Cathedral of Chartres. There comes the impulse of great love and a man lays down his life for his friends.

Once upon a time in a far country there was a man who owned a piece of land which ran quite down to the seashore. The sea, to which the land ran down, was a peculiar sea because there was never either an ebb tide or a flow tide upon it. Always the water's edge remained quite in the same place. So in the spring of the year the man plowed up the land and, walking back and forth, scattered seeds of wheat upon the ground. One day it would rain and another day the sun would shine; and so after many days there was a great crop of wheat growing upon the man's land. At midday when the sun shone and the wheat was bowing beneath the wind it looked to him like a sea of gold waving under the sun. And at night when the moon was shining the man was hard put to tell which was his field of wheat and which was the sea water, so much they both looked like a sea of silver in the moonlight.

Now the man was wise. That is, he knew that God made the world and that God makes things grow in the world and makes them cease to grow. And the man was wiser than that. He knew that God had made him and that he, the creature, owed God a debt of gratitude and obedience; and he knew that he should satisfy in some way for his own disobedience. And then he wanted to thank God for the field of wheat which was golden in the sunlight and so silvery in the moonlight. He was already grateful in his mind but he was not satisfied with that. He wished to express that idea in a manner that all might see.

So it happened that one day the man took a scythe and cut down some of the stems of wheat. These he tied in a bundle. Then he took an ax and cut down a little tree. And after he had trimmed off the branches he put the first sheaf of wheat on one end of the tree and placed the other end firmly in the ground. Then the birds came and ate the wheat.

That was a sacrifice—the sacrifice of first fruits. It was a gift given to God in the best way the man could think of giving it. It expressed his gratitude and obedience and made some reparation for his past disobedience; and without doubt God was pleased with His child, and in return gave him peace and the pledge of eternal peace.

This example of a sacrifice is apt because the wheat was placed between heaven and earth. At another time there was a greater sacrifice—when the Son of God was hanged between heaven and earth dying upon a Cross, expressing in that manner the same things the man expressed in this manner. And the example is more especially apt because it is wheat. For the Son of God to this day continues that same Sacrifice of the Mass, when He is present in the act of sacrifice under the form of wine and bread, which is made from wheat.



### **1. What is sacrifice?**

Sacrifice is the giving of something to God—which makes those holy who give it.

**2. Is a sacrifice a prayer?**

Yes, a sacrifice is a very good prayer, because in a sacrifice we give something to God as a gift by which God will be pleased with us.

**3. Does a sacrifice have the two parts of nearly every prayer?**

Yes, a sacrifice gives something to God, and brings something to men of good will.

**4. What do we give to God in a sacrifice?**

In a sacrifice we give to God that which all men owe to God.

**5. What do all men owe to God?**

All men owe God love, honor, praise, obedience, thanks, and sorrow for sin.

**6. How can we give all these things to God in a sacrifice?**

We can give all these things since that which we give as a gift to God in sacrifice stands for all that men owe to God.

**7. Has man anything that does not belong to God?**

Man has nothing at all which is really his own, except his sins.

**8. What should we do since all things belong to God?**

We should give to God everything we have and everything we are.

**9. If any man ever gave to God everything he has and everything he is—what would that be?**

That would be a perfect sacrifice of himself.



## IV. OF THE SACRIFICE



“WHEN HE cometh into the world He saith, ‘Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me: that I should do Thy will, O Lord.’”

These words St. Paul applied to our Lord, who came to obey the will of God the Father, and to show us how to obey with Him, and to enable us to associate our obedience with His. The entire life of our Lord was one of self-sacrifice and obedience. In His youth He went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents. This is obedience to God’s will, for God has told us explicitly that He wishes children to obey their parents. All the actions of Christ were in perfect accord with the will of God the Father. Often our Lord said explicitly that it was so. “I came down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him that sent Me.” “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work.” “As the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.”

All His multiple acts of obedience and self-sacrifice are summed up and united, however, in that tremendous act of Sacrifice upon the Cross. All those many single acts of self-sacrifice may be compared to the multiple repetition of the small arches of a cathedral,

summed up and united in the triumphal arch which would be the Sacrifice of the Cross.

As our Lord draws nearer to the Sacrifice of the Cross, His obedience becomes more explicit. In the garden that evening He prayed in agony, "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." When He told Peter to sheath his sword, He added, "The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" "He became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross; and just as by the disobedience of one man (Adam) many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just."

Now our Lord's death upon the Cross was a true sacrifice, and a sacrifice is the giving of something to God. What was it that our Lord gave? As we saw, He gave His obedience. But He gave more than that. He gave honor, respect and gratitude to God. He gave His life, His Body and Blood, He gave Himself. It was the self-sacrifice upon the Cross—He gave all He is and all He has. Who could give more?

The manner in which Christ expressed that complete and absolute oblation of Himself was by His intense suffering and death. He might have expressed that complete giving of Himself in any other manner He wished. And as a matter of fact He did express it in another manner. He offered the Sacrifice of Himself at the Last Supper. There at the first Mass, He offered Himself just as He did upon the Cross. The separate consecration of the bread and wine into His Body and Blood indicated the actual separation of His Blood from

His Body upon the Cross. The act by which He offered Himself at the Last Supper was continued into His death on the Cross on Good Friday. And that same act of offering, of giving, of oblation of Himself is continued in space and time by means of the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the Mass He continues the act of sacrifice, for there, by the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, is remembered the time when His Blood was actually separated from His Body on the Cross. That is in memory of His suffering and death. And yet it is precisely the same act of sacrifice continued from the very beginning of our Lord's life, through the Last Supper, through the agony of Good Friday and on perpetually in space and time by means of the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is the same as the Last Supper. It is the continuation of the Cross. It is the extension of the triumphal act of sacrifice in space and time. Like the rainbow it spans the earth and reaches to heaven. Like the triumphal arch it sums up and unites all smaller acts of sacrifice. Like the Cross itself it extends its arms to the East and the West, embracing and drawing to the heart of Christ all nations, all prayers, all things.

Now we have but to ask one question. Why does Christ continue the Sacrifice of Himself on the Cross by means of the Mass? And the answer is very simple and yet it is an answer one must never forget. Christ continues the act of Sacrifice so that I can consciously associate myself with Him in that Sacrifice. Christ gave His obedience. I give my obedience to God the Father through and with Christ my Lord. Christ gave His

honor and respect. I associate myself with Him in paying my debt of honor and respect to God. Christ gave His life. I dedicate my life with Christ to God the Father. Christ gave His death. I give my death in advance. Christ's Sacrifice of Himself is complete. He gave all He is and all He has. My association with Him will be complete only if I give all I have and all I am.

This is the rising curve of the prayer of the Mass. This is what one gives. There is no need to describe the falling curve of the Prayer. Every one knows what he receives.

Long ago there lived in Ruysbroek a mystic named John. He spoke of this mystery of love:

"It is the property of love ever to give and ever to receive. Now the love of Christ is both avid and generous.

All that He has, all that He is, He gives.

All that we are, all that we have, He takes.

He demands more than we are able to give, for He has a mighty hunger.

He would absorb our life in order to change it into His own.

Where He has taken all, there it is that He would give Himself as food."



**1. Did any one ever make a perfect sacrifice of himself—that is, give everything he has and everything he is?**

Yes, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ made a perfect Sacrifice of Himself.

**2. What did Christ give, or offer, in that perfect Sacrifice?**

Christ gave, or offered, His own body and blood, His whole life, His love, His glory and obedience—everything He has and everything He is.

**3. Why did Christ offer this perfect Sacrifice of Himself?**

Christ offered this perfect Sacrifice of Himself to make up for disobedience to God.

**4. For whose disobedience did Christ offer Himself?**

Christ offered Himself for the disobedience of our first parents and for our own disobedience and sins.

**5. When did Christ offer Himself?**

Christ offered Himself during His whole life, and in every action of His life—all of which was one continuous Sacrifice.

**6. But when especially did Christ offer Himself?**

Christ offered Himself at the Last Supper, which was the first holy Mass.

**7. But just when did Christ offer Himself so that all might see and know that He was making a perfect Sacrifice of Himself?**

Christ offered Himself in a way that all might see and know that He was making a perfect Sacrifice of Himself when He died on the Cross for our sins.

**8. Does our Lord still continue the Sacrifice of the Cross?**

Yes, our Lord still continues the Sacrifice of the Cross in His Church.

**9. How does Christ continue this Sacrifice in His Church?**

Christ continues the Sacrifice of the Cross in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

**10. What is the Sacrifice of the Mass?**

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross in space and time, that is, in many places and till the end of time.

**11. The Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrifice of the Cross, and the Last Supper—are these the same?**

Yes, they are one and the same Sacrifice.

**12. Why are these three the same Sacrifice?**

The Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacrifice of the Cross, and the Last Supper are the same because in each there is the same Christ our Lord offering Himself to God.

**13. If they are the same Sacrifice, why do we call them by different names?**

We call them by different names because the manner, place, and time of offering is different for each.

**14. What did the Sacrifice of the Cross do for man?**

The Sacrifice of the Cross redeemed mankind—that is, made up for the sins of man and thus made it possible for man to give due glory to God.

**15. What does the Sacrifice of the *Mass* do for man?**

The Sacrifice of the Mass brings to men of good will the graces gained by Christ in the Sacrifice of the Cross.

**16. Why does Christ continue this perfect Sacrifice of Himself in holy Mass?**

Christ continues this perfect Sacrifice of Himself so that we can really join ourselves with Him in holy Mass.

**17. Have you then a part in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass?**

Yes, I have a part in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

**18. What is your part in the Sacrifice?**

My part in the Sacrifice is, to offer myself with Christ to God.

**19. When will your part in the Sacrifice be perfect?**

My part in the Sacrifice of the Mass will be perfect when I, like Christ, offer to God everything I have and everything I am.

**20. Is your part alone in the Sacrifice a perfect prayer?**

No, my part in the Sacrifice is only the first part of a perfect prayer.

## V. OF THE MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS



THE MASS is divided into two parts, the first of which is the Mass of the Catechumens, and the second the Mass of the Faithful. The first part is a simple prayer and instruction service for those who have not yet been baptized, for those who are studying catechism. One receives the gift of faith in Baptism. Before that he is a catechumen; after Baptism he is full of faith—faithful.

In ancient days only the faithful were permitted to remain for the Mass of the Faithful. Catechumens left when the Mass of the Catechumens was finished. After the sermon the deacon announced that the catechumens were dismissed and that they were to go, just as today the deacon announces the end of the Mass of the Faithful. The name "Mass" comes from this dismissal. "Dismissed" in Latin is "missa," which became Mass in English. The Mass of the Catechumens means the dismissal of the catechumens; *i. e.*, everything up to the time when the catechumens were dismissed. So also the Mass of the Faithful means the dismissal of the faithful; *i. e.*, everything up to the time the faithful were dismissed.



In our time the difference no longer exists. Everyone may stay till the end. But the Mass of the Catechumens has exactly the same purpose. It serves as a preparation for the actual Mass. Formerly it served that purpose both for the faithful and the catechumens. For the faithful it was an immediate preparation; for the catechumens it was a preparation somewhat mediate and removed, but it was nevertheless a preparation for the Sacrifice of the Mass in which they would some day take part.

The Mass of the Catechumens has lost none of its significance or its beauty, even though the discipline of the Church has changed entirely. It is still a preparation prayer. It is still like a preface to the book, a prelude to the play, an overture to the opera.

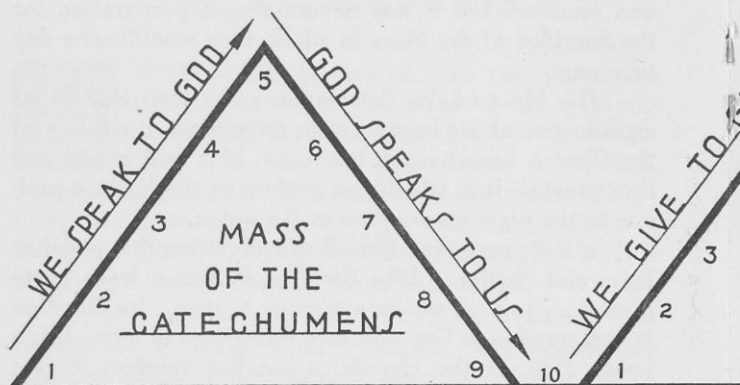
It is a prayer and like all prayers it has that peculiar form and rhythm. Like the Our Father it leads us to give glory to God and brings peace to men. Its direction is first upward to God and then downward to men. It is a lesser arch in the church, a smaller rainbow in the heavens.

The upward curve of the Mass of the Catechumens comes first, just as it comes first in all prayers. These are the prayers at the foot of the altar. "I will go to the altar of God" is the picture of a man standing at the foot of the steps looking upward.

In the Gloria we bless Him, adore Him, glorify Him. This is praise. In the Collect we direct our attention upward still.

This form of prayer in the Mass of the Catechumens is not rigid or comprehensive. The Church did not

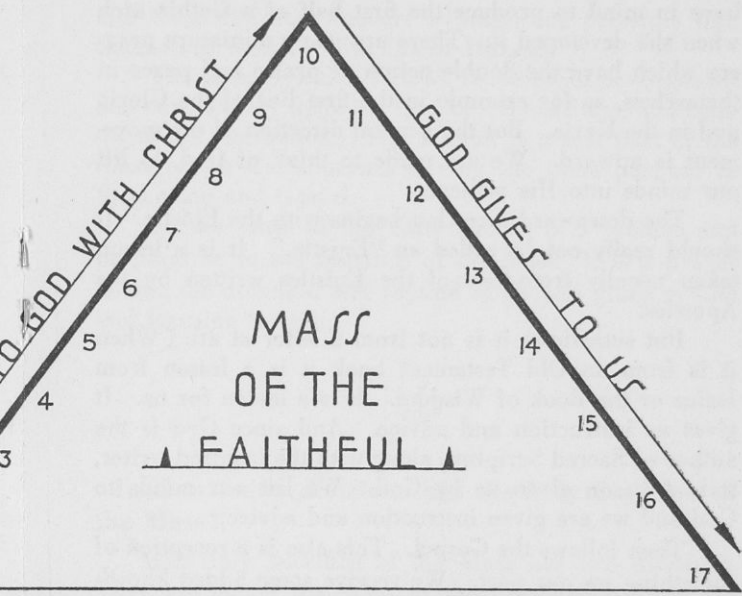
# DIAGRAM OF THE ACTION OF MASS



- ↑ 5 COLLECT  
4 GLORIA  
3 KYRIE  
2 INTROIT  
1 PRAYERS BEFORE

- ↓ 6 EPISTLE  
7 GRADUAL  
8 GOSPEL  
9 SERMON  
10 CREED

- ↑ 10 DOX  
9 ME  
8 OFF  
7 WO  
6 OFF  
5 ME  
4 PR  
3 SEC  
2 OFF  
1 OFF



DOXOLOGY  
 MEMENTOS { DEAD  
 OURSELVES  
 NATURE  
 OFFERING & INVOCATION  
 WORDS OF CONSECRATION  
 OFFERING & INVOCATION  
 MEMENTOS { CHURCH  
 LIVING  
 SAINTS  
 PREFACE  
 SECRET  
 OFFERTORY  
 OFFERTORY VERSE

11 OUR FATHER  
 12 THE BREAKING OF BREAD  
 13 AGNUS DEI  
 14 COMMUNION  
 15 POST COMMUNION  
 16 DISMISSAL  
 17 LAST GOSPEL

have in mind to produce the first half of a Gothic arch when she developed it. There are many miniature prayers which have the double action of praise and peace in themselves, as for example in the first line of the Gloria and in the Kyrie. But the general direction of the movement is upward. We are made to think of God, to lift our minds into His presence.

The downward direction begins with the Epistle. It should really not be called an "Epistle." It is a lesson taken usually from one of the Epistles written by the Apostles.

But sometimes it is not from a letter at all. When it is from an Old Testament book it is a lesson from Isaias or the Book of Wisdom. It is a lesson for us. It gives us instruction and advice. And since God is the author of Sacred Scripture along with the inspired writer, it is a lesson given us by God. We lift our minds to God and we are given instruction and advice.

Then follows the Gospel. This also is a reception of something on our part. We receive some added knowledge of Christ. We are taught, or made to re-remember, a miracle, parable, or action of the God-man. This knowledge is so high as to be invaluable. For whom or what can we ever know that is more important than Christ? And it is principally by means of the selection of Gospel passages that the Church makes her children follow in the footsteps of Christ. Every year she leads her children from Bethlehem, over Calvary, to the empty tomb. Every year she increases the knowledge and love of Christ in her children by leading them along the way,

and those children who are willingly led presently find themselves walking with Christ Himself.

The sermon which follows is merely a development and commentary upon the Gospel. It continues and completes the instruction. The sermon is a real part of the Mass of the Catechumens serving the same purpose as the Lesson and Gospel.

So the Mass of the Catechumens is a prelude and preparation to the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is a prayer having the direction and rhythm of prayer, glory to God and learning to men.



**1. How many divisions has the holy Sacrifice of the Mass?**

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass has two divisions. They are called the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful.

**2. Where is the end of the Mass of the Catechumens?**

The last prayer of the Catechumens' Mass is the Creed.

**3. Who are the catechumens?**

The catechumens are those who are not yet baptized but who are studying Catechism to get ready for Baptism.

**4. Why is this first division of holy Mass called the Mass of the Catechumens?**

It is called the Mass of the Catechumens because long ago it was the only part of the Mass at which the catechumens could stay. When it was finished they had to leave.

**5. Who stayed for the Mass of the Faithful?**

Only the faithful stayed—that is, those who were already baptized and so had received the gift of Faith.

**6. How many parts has the Mass of the Catechumens?**

The Mass of the Catechumens has two parts.

**7. What is the first part?**

The first part of the Mass of the Catechumens is praise and prayer—the lifting up of the mind and heart to God.

**8. What is the second part?**

The second part of the Mass of the Catechumens is instruction—that is, the part in which we are taught the word of God.

**9. Where is the end of the upward part?**

At the last Collect. (The Lesson, or Epistle, coming down, begins to instruct us.)

**10. What is a Collect?**

A Collect is the prayer which the priest says for all the people just before the Epistle.

**11. What makes up the second part?**

The second or instruction part of the Mass of the Catechumens is made up of the Epistle, Gospel, Sermon, and Creed.

**12. Do any of the parts of the Mass of the Catechumens change from day to day?**

The Introit, Collects, Epistle, Gradual, Gospel, and Sermon change from day to day. The other parts of the Mass of the Catechumens do not change. (Although certain parts are sometimes omitted.)

## VI. OF THE OFFERTORY



THE MASS of the Faithful begins with the Offertory and ends with the end of Mass. Of this there are two great divisions just as there are two divisions in almost every prayer. And these two parts correspond in movement and direction to that peculiar characteristic of all prayer. But here in the Mass of the Faithful the movement to and from God is more sublime and perfect, more beautiful and more grand than anywhere else. For the Mass of the Faithful is like the rainbow spanning the earth and reaching to heaven. It is like the triumphal arch, summing up in itself all other prayers, all other offerings, all other personal and particular sacrifices. Here are all things brought to a Head in Christ. "If I be lifted up I will draw all things to Myself."

The upward movement begins with the Offertory and ends with the Doxology just before the Our Father. This may be divided into the Offertory itself and the Consecration. The Offertory begins with the Offertory antiphon and ends with the Secret. The Consecration is the Canon beginning with the Preface, and ending with the Doxology before the Our Father.

The Offertory is merely the act or process of taking bread and wine. At the Last Supper our Lord "took



bread into His holy and venerable hands." The Offertory is the Church re-enacting that act of Christ.

In older days Catholics had a much greater and truer appreciation of their part in the Sacrifice of Christ. They realized in their lives the fact that their part in the Sacrifice of the Mass was a tremendous privilege and a happy duty. They knew that our Lord offered Himself—all He is and all He has—upon the Cross and that He continued that offering of Himself in the Mass. And they knew that one reason for that continuation was so that they could take part in the Sacrifice; so that they could, with and in Christ, offer themselves (all they were and all they had) to God.

They saw in the bread and wine symbols of themselves. They came to Mass bringing their gifts of bread and wine (and other things). At the Offertory they came forward in procession, presenting their gifts at the altar. They knew that the giver always went with the gift, that they were actually bringing themselves to Christ. The gifts they brought were the elements of the Sacrifice. The bread and wine were consecrated; and presently they came once more to receive their gift from God—holy Communion.

At that time the prayers for the offering of bread and wine were not in the Missal. But they were not needed because the action of offering by the people expressed the offering of themselves much better than words.

In the course of time this custom became unpractical and fell into disuse. But the custom of taking up the collection at the Offertory is still the old custom in a

different guise. Money, which could purchase the elements and everything else necessary for the Sacrifice, took the place of the procession.

But the meaning of the procession was preserved in the prayers. Now instead of the Offertory procession we have the Offertory prayers which express the same meaning for us as the procession did for our forefathers.

In the Offertory there are three things offered—bread and wine and ourselves. The priest holding the bread on the paten in a position of presentation offers the bread for himself and all who are present and for all the *faithful* both living and dead.

Then there is the prayer for the pouring of wine and water which we shall discuss later. Then we, the priest and ourselves, offer the chalice of salvation for our salvation and for that of the whole world. Notice especially that it is *we* who offer and that it is offered for the *whole world*. "If I be lifted up I will draw *all things* to Myself."

Then immediately bowing down in a posture of humility the priest prays, and we pray with him, that since we are humble in spirit (not proud) and contrite of heart (sorry for our sins)—that *we* ourselves will be received by God and that our sacrifice (the part we have in the Sacrifice of Christ; *i.e.*, the offering of ourselves) may be pleasing to God.

These three things, bread and wine and ourselves, we offer to God in the first part of the *upward* movement of the Sacrifice of the Mass. We come bringing our gifts, and our gift includes the one who gives it. The Sacrifice of the Body of Christ bears with it the sacrifice of our-

selves. And we come praying that God will cleanse our hearts and our minds so that we shall become less unworthy of that tremendous privilege and that happy duty.

There are several things one should know in order to appreciate the beauty of the Mass. One of these things is the nature and effect of sanctifying grace. Recall that a sacrifice is something given to God which has the quality of making the one who gives it holy. That is what sanctifying grace does: it is a gift that makes us holy and pleasing to God.

I know of no better way to learn about grace than by coming to understand the prayer for the pouring of wine and water. Of all the prayers of the Missal there is none that expresses the meaning of grace like this one. And the Church has known that for ages, for she has it said every day by her children.

“O God, who in a wonderful manner didst create human nature, and ennoble it, and in a more marvelous manner hast renewed it, grant, that by this mystical union of water and wine, we may be made sharers in His divinity who was made sharer in our humanity, Christ our Lord.”

Almost every prayer in the Missal begins by addressing God the Father as this one does. Our Lord told us to say “Our Father” when we pray, and so the Church has always been very careful to pray in that manner. “O God, who in a wonderful manner didst create human nature.” That refers to our first parents. They were made in a manner which should make anyone wonder at them, whether he be an evolutionist or not. No matter how man was made—as he is now he is wonderful. The

mind of Shakespeare wondered at him. "What a piece of work is man. How noble in reason. How infinite in faculties. In form and moving how express and admirable. In action how like an angel. In apprehension how like a god. The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals."

"And didst ennoble it." The nature of man is a sufficient theme for a great deal of wonderment. But man made supernatural is sufficient theme for a great deal more wonderment. That which made the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals, noble was sanctifying grace. It gave him a nobility which no one in his right senses would think of comparing with the nobility we know on earth. For it did not make him the son of a count, or prince, or even a king. It made him a son of God. It did not make him capable of falling heir to a title and a kingdom. It made him capable of falling heir to the kingdom of heaven.

You all know the story of how our first parents discarded that nobility, of how they lost it for themselves and all their children by committing sin.

"And in a more marvelous manner hast renewed it." The manner in which God renewed or made human nature over again, after the fall of original sin, was more marvelous even than creation and the original gift of grace. It is sufficient theme for unceasing wonderment because that gift of grace was gained for us by the life and death of the Son of God made man.

This first part is the upward curve of the arch of this prayer. With the word "grant" we have come to the keystone of the arch. The first part directed our

attention to God and to three great and marvelous things God has done: creation, the grant of grace, and the Redemption. The part of the prayer which follows flows downward to us. The word "grant" introduces the petition.

"That by the mystical union of this water and wine" . . . As these words are said the priest pours a few drops of water into the wine which is in the chalice. The water and the wine are united, and the union is called "mystical" because it is what it is—a union of wine and water—and because it stands for something else. The water stands for human nature and wine stands for God. So just as the water and wine are united, just so are men united to God by grace. Such is the effect of grace that we are united to God after the manner of the union of the water. As closely as that. The water and wine are united so closely in the chalice that it is almost impossible to separate them. Men in the state of grace are united so closely to Christ, that is, the Church, that it is almost impossible to separate them. The only way one can separate himself is by committing a mortal sin. The water and wine are united in the chalice. Men and Christ are united in the Church. The water in a sense becomes wine. Men in a sense become God. The union of water and wine is a material though a very close union. The union of men with God in Christ is a spiritual and also a much closer union.

"We may be made sharers in His divinity who was made a sharer in our humanity." The second Person of the Blessed Trinity was made a sharer in our humanity when He was made man. The effect of that is to raise

human nature to share in His divinity. Such is the manner of the marvelous renewal of human nature. And it is just as marvelous that men should share the life of God as it is that God should become man and thus share the life of men. St. Augustine says the reason Christ became man was so that men might become God. Sanctifying grace gives man supernatural life, it makes him a living branch of the true Vine, it makes him a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, it makes him a son of God, it makes him a partaker of the divine nature, it makes him a sharer in the priesthood of Christ so that he can co-offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, it makes him not unworthy of receiving holy Communion.

There is one more consideration. Every single person is united to God in Christ in the manner just described. But men are not united as so many single persons bearing a relation to God but none among themselves. They are united in a community. There is a common bond between them. Because they are united to the same One (Christ) they are united to each other. It is as if Christ walked along the way of life holding each of His children by the hand. All those who are in the state of sanctifying grace are the children that He holds, so to speak, by the hand. Those whom He holds by the hand comprise the Church. That is a figure of speech designed to show a spiritual fact by means of a material picture. Actually the union is more real, more profound than that because it is a spiritual union. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and those in the Church bear the same relation to Christ as the members of a body bear to the head, and they have the same intimate rela-

tion to each other as the parts of a body have to each other.

Words, so you see, fail to express the depth of the mystery. Such is the greatness of the gift that we are distressed at either understanding or expressing it. "If I be lifted up," He said, "I will draw all things to Myself."



**1. How many parts has the Mass of the Faithful?**

The Mass of the Faithful has two parts.

**2. What is done in the first part?**

In the first part Christ and the members of His Mystical Body offer themselves to God the Father.

**3. What is the Mystical Body of Christ?**

The Mystical Body of Christ is that whole body which we call the Church, of which Christ is the Head and of which all the faithful are members.

**4. What is the second part of the Mass of the Faithful?**

The second part of the Mass of the Faithful is holy Communion.

**5. When does the first part of the Mass of the Faithful begin?**

The first part of the Mass of the Faithful begins with the part called the Offertory and ends with the words by which we praise God just before the Our Father.

**6. What is done at the Offertory?**

At this point the gifts of bread and wine, which stand for us, are offered and dedicated to God.

**7. What becomes of these offerings of bread and wine?**

The offerings of bread and wine will be consecrated—that is, changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**8. What do we ourselves become through the holy Sacrifice of the Mass?**

Through the holy Sacrifice of the Mass we ourselves become more sanctified if we take part in the Mass with pure hearts and a lively faith.

**9. What does it mean to become more sanctified?**

To become more sanctified means that we are made more perfect members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, and so more holy and pleasing to God.



## VII. OF THE CANON



THE UPWARD curve of the arch of the Mass begins with the Offertory and continues on through the Canon. But the action of the Canon is most intense and perfect. Here it is that Christ is lifted up and so draws all things to Himself in a spiritual, but nevertheless a most real manner. If you will look closely, you will find that the Canon enumerates the things which are drawn; if you look more closely, you will see that it is all things that are drawn, that there is no thing left out.

The center is the words of Consecration—words which cause what they express. "This is My Body," causes Christ to be present. And He is present in the act and memory of offering. For the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ remembers the time when the Body and Blood of Christ were actually separated upon the Cross. His death on the Cross was the offering of Himself in a bloody manner and in a manner that all might see. The Mass is the same offering of Himself in an unbloody manner and in a manner that all may see who have faith. Immediately following the words of Consecration and the command to "do this in commemoration of Me," comes a prayer which offers the Sacrifice in memory of the

Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ. This prayer shows the difference between the Last Supper and the Mass. The Last Supper was offered in anticipation of the Cross; the Mass is offered in memory of the Cross. The words of Consecration, then, and the prayer immediately following which begins "Wherefore we" are the center of the Canon—Christ being lifted up. Around them are immediately grouped four prayers of offering—two before and two after. These four prayers of offering surround the Consecration, express its meaning. The two before pray that God will accept the Sacrifice, that He will approve and bless it. The two after pray that God will accept it as He accepted the sacrifice of Abel and Abraham, that God in heaven will receive the sacrifice offered on earth.

These four prayers of offering encircle and set off the actual words of Consecration. And when we pray that God will receive the Sacrifice we are concerned mainly with our part in it. There is no doubt about the acceptance by God of the Sacrifice of His Son. That is infinite and absolutely perfect. There is question of the acceptance of ourselves. We are certainly not perfect and we are very finite. And in addition we have sinned. Undoubtedly we are unworthy of association in this perfect and infinite Sacrifice of Christ. Our desire in these prayers is that we shall receive the grace to become less and less unworthy.

The essence of the Sacrifice is offering. But the Sacrifice is universal. Our Lord associates all things with Himself. "If I be lifted up I will draw all things to Myself." So it is that around the four prayers of

offering there are six prayers of remembrance—six prayers (three before and three after) which recount the things that Christ draws to Himself. First is a remembrance of the Church on earth, then a remembrance of the living, then of the saints. These three come before the Consecration. After the Consecration is a remembrance of the dead, then of us sinners, and then of all nature.

In these prayers of remembrance all things are included. All human beings, except those in hell, are remembered, because every one is either living or dead, and every one is either a saint or a sinner. Whether they are alive or dead, whether they are saints or sinners they are remembered—and helped in the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Of course, how much they receive depends upon the persons themselves. People can, and often do, refuse the grace of God.

The first Memento is of the Church, the last of the world. "These good things," spoken of in the last refer to the good things of nature. Formerly, and in some places even today, the good things of nature were blessed at this part of the Mass. We have then the Church and the world, the living and the dead, saints and sinners remembered and drawn to Christ. They are offered to God through and in Christ our Lord. Thus all the prayers conclude—"through Christ our Lord."

The Canon then consists first of the center, the actual Consecration; then of the four prayers of oblation (two before and two after); then of the six prayers of remembrance and association (three before and three after).

On either side of all these are two prayers of thanksgiving. At the Last Supper our Lord took bread and *giving thanks* did bless, etc.—That gave character to the Sacrifice. It made it one of thanksgiving. So it is called the Eucharist or the eucharistic Sacrifice, that is, the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. The Preface which begins the Canon is the first of these and the Doxology which ends the Canon is the second. The Preface is a rather long prayer which enumerates different reasons for giving thanks—reasons which change with the time of the year. There is a different reason for giving thanks at Christmas, a different one on Pentecost. So the Prefaces are proper to the season of the year. The Doxology is a short prayer which sums up in a quite perfect manner the meaning of the entire Sacrifice: through Christ and with Him and in Him is to God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory.

The Canon then consists of the Consecration, which is surrounded by four prayers of oblation, which are encircled by six prayers of remembrance, which are enclosed by two prayers of thanksgiving. Together with the Offertory it constituted the upward curve of the movement of the Mass. It is the action of Christ being lifted up and drawing all things to Himself.



### **1. When are the offerings of bread and wine consecrated?**

The offerings of bread and wine are consecrated in the part of the Mass called the Canon.

**2. When does the Canon of the Mass begin and end?**

The Canon of the Mass begins with the Preface and ends with the words by which we praise God just before the Our Father.

**3. What is the Canon of the Mass made up of?**

The Canon of the Mass is made up of the words of Consecration, four prayers of offering, six prayers of remembrance, and two prayers of praise and thanks.

**4. How do the words of Consecration continue the Sacrifice of the Cross?**

The words of Consecration continue the Sacrifice of the Cross by making Christ and His Sacrifice really present on the altar.

**5. How is the Sacrifice of Christ really present on the altar?**

The Sacrifice of Christ is really present on the altar through the separate consecration of the bread and wine by which the Blood of Christ is made present as if separated from His Body, and in this way the real separation of Christ's blood from His body on the Cross is remembered.

**6. Why is the Sacrifice of the Mass a remembrance of Christ?**

The Sacrifice of the Mass is a remembrance of Christ because it shows the death of the Lord until He will come again—that is, until the end of time.

**7. Where are the four prayers of offering in the Canon of the Mass?**

Two of the prayers of offering are just before the Consecration, and two of them are right after the Consecration.

**8. Why is not the first prayer after the Consecration included with these?**

That prayer is almost part of the Consecration. It shows the relation of the Last Supper to the Mass. At the Last Supper the Body and Blood of Christ were offered in anticipation of the Cross. In the Mass that is done in memory of the Cross.

**9. Where are the six prayers of remembrance?**

Three prayers of remembrance are in the part of the Canon before the Consecration and three are in the part after the Consecration, next to the prayers of offering.

**10. What do the three prayers in the part before the Consecration remember?**

The three prayers in the part before the Consecration remember, first the Church on earth, then all the living, and then all the saints (the Church in heaven).

**11. What do the three prayers in the part after the Consecration remember?**

The three prayers in the part after the Consecration remember, first the dead (the Church in purgatory), then us sinners, and then the good things of nature (the fruits of the earth).

**12. What did our Lord and Savior say about remembering and bringing together in His Sacrifice everything in the world?**

Our Lord said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself," and so there is nothing that is not remembered in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

**13. What are the two prayers of praise and thanks in the first part of the Mass of the Faithful?**

One of the prayers of praise and thanks is the Preface, and the other is made up of the words by which we praise God just before the Our Father.

## VIII. OF HOLY COMMUNION



AS WE saw, the ascending action of the Mass of the Faithful begins with the Offertory and continues on throughout the Canon to the "Amen" which ends the Doxology. The descending action begins with the Our Father and continues till the end of Mass. The first part is our gift to God; the second part is God's gift to us. The first is an action of giving; the second an action of receiving.

Catholics in general understand the sacrament of Holy Communion much better than the entire Sacrifice. In a way it is rather selfish of them to know so well what it is they receive, and at the same time to know so relatively poorly what it is they give.

Since we appreciate the gift of holy Communion so well, it is unnecessary to say much about it. However it should be considered briefly in its relation to the entire Sacrifice. Holy Communion is an integral part of the Mass. To separate it from the Mass is to confuse sequence and to disturb proportion. Moreover, there can be no other preparation—no private prayer, no personal devotion—which can possibly compare with the Mass of the Catechumens and the Offertory and Canon. Private prayers and personal preparation may be good and useful to some extent, but no one individual would be so forward



as to claim he had devised a manner more perfect than that of Christ and the Church.

In the prayers which accompany holy Communion there is one outstanding feature. It is peace. Many times it is mentioned. The first part of the Sacrifice gives glory to God in the highest; the second brings peace on earth to men of good will. It is peace here on earth, and moreover a pledge of eternal peace. And to one who profoundly associates himself with Christ in the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is the peace which surpasseth all understanding.

Besides preparation there is thanksgiving after holy Communion. We have become accustomed to think of thanksgiving as a few moments of intense prayer immediately after the reception of holy Communion, whereas a long lifetime would be much too short for an adequate thanksgiving. Gratitude for holy Communion lasts longer than fifteen minutes. It lasts till the day of our death, and without doubt it continues to be a theme of gratitude after the day of our death.

Holy Communion unites a person to Christ. The intimacy of that union is indicated by the prayer for the pouring of the wine and water. That union lasts forever unless we deliberately separate ourselves by mortal sin. Our gratitude for it can best be expressed by the avoidance of sin. Certainly if one appreciates the immense condescension and unexcelled grandeur of that union, he will be the last person in the world to break it. Our life, then, reflects our gratitude for holy Communion. Thanksgiving is a lifelong process.

The preparation for holy Communion is the preced-

ing part of the Sacrifice, the thanksgiving is a more perfect Christ-life, the effect is peace.



**1. When does the Communion part of the Mass of the Faithful begin and end?**

The Communion part of the Mass begins with the Our Father and ends with the last words of the Mass.

**2. Do we give anything in this part of the Mass?**

No, we do not give anything, but God gives to us His greatest Gift—the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in holy Communion.

**3. What is the best way to get ready for holy Communion?**

The best way to get ready for holy Communion is to take part in the offering of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

**4. How can we best take part in offering the holy Sacrifice of the Mass?**

We can best take part in offering the holy Sacrifice of the Mass by joining our minds and hearts with the prayers of the priest at the altar.

**5. Why is taking part in offering the holy Sacrifice the best way to get ready for holy Communion?**

Taking part in offering the holy Sacrifice is the best way to get ready for holy Communion because then

God gives Himself to us in Communion after we have given ourselves to Him in the offering of the Sacrifice.

**6. What must we do after receiving holy Communion?**

After receiving holy Communion we must thank God for this greatest Gift of Love, not only by saying a few prayers of thanks, but also by showing our love throughout the day and all our lifetime.

**7. How can we best give thanks in our lives for holy Communion?**

We can best give thanks in our lives for holy Communion by becoming more Christlike in all our thoughts and words and actions.

## IX. OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND THE SACRIFICE



THE AMERICAN people as a whole are a forward and confident lot, who believe themselves a great deal superior to other nations and more highly civilized than any of their forefathers.

And yet I hardly imagine there is any single American who believes that his daily life is quite acceptable to God, or that his actions measure up to the standard of Christian perfection. There surely cannot be anyone who has not some trepidation at the prospect of presenting his daily life to God and hoping to get in exchange the fulfillment of God's promise of heaven.

As a matter of fact he would necessarily be a very ignorant person who thought that his daily actions could in the least degree merit any supernatural reward, or be regarded by God with any degree of favor. For even an American's daily life is streaked with selfishness; his actions are often done with lower motives than he would care to admit. Even the good he does is done with one eye on the press.

And yet it is by one's everyday life that one must work out one's salvation. It is by these selfish and worldly attempts in time that one must fill up for eternity

what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ. It is these basely-motivated acts that even the American must present to God, and in view of their imperfection hope to receive personal immortality in happiness beyond his powers of comprehension.

Surely he must see that here there is no *quid pro quo*, no even exchange, but rather robbery. And he must see the basic truth and wisdom of the Apostolic counsel to work out his salvation in fear and trembling.

He must come to comprehend that it is only through Christ that his daily life can be made acceptable to God; and that it is only through union with Christ that he may receive in uneven exchange the fulfillment of the wildest hope for happiness that he is able to entertain.

Accordingly he comes to the Sacrifice on Sunday bringing seven days of daily life. He comes carrying of necessity the imperfection of a week's living. He must offer these good (?) works to God in the Sacrifice of Christ and hope to achieve union with God in communion with the Savior. In saying the words of the Sacrifice he is filled with hesitation about the acceptability of his actions. He confesses his sins and asks the aid of the saints and the Blessed Virgin. He avows that it is with a sorrowful heart and in a spirit of real humility that he presents himself to God. He asks God to bless what he offers and make it worthy. Again and again he asks God to receive the Sacrifice and his adoration.

When he says these words he must know that he is not praying to God to accept the Sacrifice of Christ, for that is infinitely perfect. He must know that the hesitation comes from the fact that the American's sacrifice of

himself, that the Christian's offering of his life for a week is united with Christ. Only in such company can he hope to exchange his poor gift of self for the heavenly blessing that comes with God's gift to him.

Here, then, one may find a real standard of morality. If a person does during the week only what he can offer to God on Sunday, then he may have well-founded hope for heaven. If he does during the week what he cannot offer to God on Sunday, then he had better go to Confession in sorrow on Saturday and make a new and better effort the next week.

Understood thus, the Mass is lived. And just as Christ's life on earth was wholly directed toward the Cross and was continuously sacrificial, so the Christian's life on earth may be always spent in the shadow of the Cross and be also continuously sacrificial.

In the Canon of the Mass the third Commemoration (of the saints) before the Consecration has the rubric "Infra Actionem"—within the Action. The theory is that at some early time this remembrance was placed before the Canon and prefixed with that direction. Later it was placed within. At any rate the rubric may be taken as a direction for us to place our daily life within the Action of Sacrifice, to live in such goodness that the everyday actions of the week may be not too unworthy to be remembered within the Action.

The Mass may thus become the chief motive for right living. In it one may find not only a standard of morality but a standard of perfection as well. And any Christian, American or otherwise, may very easily spend all the years of his life in the endeavor to put into prac-

tice the oft-repeated admonition of the Cure d'Ars, "Do only what you can offer to God."



**1. May the everyday life of a Christian become part of the Mass?**

The everyday life of a Christian should become part of the Mass.

**2. What are some daily actions that might be offered in the Mass?**

Every temptation overcome, every virtue tried for, every good, kind or generous action done; prayers, fasting, self-denials, sorrows, disappointments, difficulties, and many other things.

**3. Should these be offered to God?**

Yes, they are part of ourselves.

**4. How can one tell whether one should or should not do something?**

By asking, "Could I offer that to God?"

**5. Were our Lord's actions sacrificial?**

Yes, His whole life was directed toward the Cross, which gained grace for all men.

**6. Should our life be sacrificial?**

Yes, because a life that is offered in the Mass must be lived in union with Christ.

**7. When will our offering be perfect?**

It will be perfect when we give everything we are, everything we have, and everything good we have done.

## X. THE MORNING OFFERING OF THE MASS



MANY persons have the praiseworthy habit of making what is known as the morning offering. When they say this prayer they offer to God all the thoughts they will think, the words they will speak, and the actions they will perform during the day. That is a prayer greatly to be recommended, especially if a person remembers it for a longer time than it takes to say it. If the actions of a person can all be offered to God they must be very good actions. The person who frequently thinks of the implications of the morning offering, and strives to conduct himself so that everything he does is offerable to God, will lead a very good Christian life.

But still the prayer he makes is purely internal and private. He makes it all alone as a single individual, and how can anyone expect of himself to bridge the gap between men and God?

Suppose that in the same city there lived a thousand people who had the same praiseworthy custom. And suppose that some day they should gather together in a stadium and there, as they stood in the light of the early sun, they should make the morning offering all together



and out loud. Such a prayer would be greater than the former one by the individual, because, whereas before it was internal, now it has been made external also; and while it was private before, now it has been made public as well; and whereas before it was the prayer of a single person, now it is the prayer of a body of people, united in intention and locality, if nothing else.

The picture of a thousand people facing the early rays of the sun, and offering their lives for the day to their Creator, is the picture of a truly great prayer which would really honor God.

But still the prayer is only human. Who are these sinful people to think that God should accept the offering of fallen creatures? Between them and God there is an infinitely great space.

Now suppose by a miracle God should become a man among them, and stand there with them. While they stood in the early morning, suppose He should act as their spokesman, making their prayer His own. Gathering all their love and honor, their devotion and obedience, all their promises and hope, their sorrows and resolutions, their forgiveness and reverent respect—suppose He should be their Priest and they His people, and He should offer with them all these good things to God.

And suppose, furthermore, that He should offer them in union with a tremendous and glorious offering which He made once upon a Cross, which had saved these people from death and brought them life.

Now the prayer is truly a perfect prayer. Besides

being public and external and corporate, it is now divine and there is no separation of creatures from God.

Such is the morning offering of the Mass. And more than that. In Christ the Priest are united not only a thousand people but all the millions alive in the world today. In Him are united and offered not only the lives of the people of a single day, but of every day of the year. Through Him is offered to God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, the homage of these multitudes not only of our generation, but of every age since Christ came blessing the earth.



