

## THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

### XXIV. MANNER OF ASSISTING WORTHILY AT THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

To assist worthily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to give God the glory He deserves, there are four things you must do.

1. As soon as you leave the house to go to Mass, you should realize that you are going not merely to attend or watch, but actually to perform an action more holy and divine, greater and more sublime, more noble and admirable than any other in heaven or on earth. Consequently, you must perform it in a holy and divine manner, that is, with thoroughly holy and divine dispositions, with great care and attention of mind and heart, and with the realization that what you are going to do is more vitally important to you than anything else in the world. I stress the words "you are going to perform" because all Christians are one with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and, therefore, they share in His divine Priesthood. Hence, they are called priests in Holy Scripture (I Peter 2, 9). The faithful are consequently entitled not only to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but also to participate in the action of the priest, that is, to offer with him and with Jesus Christ Himself the Sacrifice that is offered to God on the altar.

2. Upon entering the Church, you should profoundly humble yourself in spirit, considering yourself most unworthy to enter the house of God, to appear before His face, and to take part in so great a mystery, - a mystery which contains in itself all the mysteries and all the wonders of heaven and earth. Remember your nothingness and your sins, for which you ought to enter into a spirit of penance, humiliation and contrition at the beginning of the Mass, accusing yourself of your sins with the priest at the Confiteor, asking God's forgiveness, and begging Him to give you the grace and strength to keep yourself free from sins in future. To make reparation, offer your Heavenly Father the Holy Sacrifice of the Precious Body and Blood of His Son,

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once offered to Him on the Cross, and now about to be offered to Him on the altar.

3. Having adored our Lord Jesus Christ, Who becomes present on the altar to receive the homage and adoration we owe Him, pray that He, who changes the base and earthly nature of bread and wine into His body and blood, may also change and transform the heaviness, frigidity and dryness of our earthly and hearts into the ardor, tenderness and vitality of the holy dispositions of His divine Heart. Then remember that all Christians are one with Jesus Christ, as members with their Head, and, therefore, share all His qualities. Recollect that Jesus Christ consummates this sacrifice as both Priest and Victim at the same time, so all present must likewise attend Mass both as priests and sacrificers, to offer up one and the same Sacrifice with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and as hosts and victims, forming one Host with Jesus Christ just as they form one Priest with Him, one Host to be immolated with Jesus Christ, to the glory of God.

Thus you participate in the divine priesthood of Jesus Christ. As a Christian and member of Jesus Christ you bear the name and character of priest; therefore you ought to act in that capacity and exercise the rights it confers upon you, the right of offering up to God, together with the priest and with Jesus Christ Himself, the Sacrifice of the divine body and blood of God the Son in Holy Mass, and to offer it as far as possible, with the very dispositions with which it is offered by Jesus Christ, His Son, with holy and divine dispositions. What holy and filial dispositions! What humility, what purity and sanctity, what detachment from self and from all things, what attentiveness to God, what charity towards man and what love towards His Father! Unite yourself in desire and intention with these sublime dispositions. Pray to Jesus to implant them in you, enabling you to offer up this divine Sacrifice with Him in union with the

dispositions of His adorable Heart.

Unite yourself also to the intentions for which Christ offers His endless Sacrifice. There are five principal intentions. The first is to honor God the Father in all that He is in Himself and in all things, and to pay Him fitting honor, glory, and love. The second is to render

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the All-bountiful Father a tribute of thanksgiving that measures up to His goodness and all the benefits He has ever bestowed on all His creatures. The third is to make complete satisfaction for all the sins of the world. The fourth is to perfect the fulfilment of all His designs and His holy will. The fifth intention is to beseech Divine Providence to grant you the things necessary to all men, both for their bodies and their souls. So, in conformity with these intentions of Jesus Christ, you ought to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as follows:

(1) In honor of the Most Holy Trinity, in honor of all that Jesus Christ is in Himself, in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, actions and sufferings, and in honor of all that He is and achieves whether through mercy or justice, in His Blessed Mother, in all the angels and saints, in His whole Church Militant, Suffering and Triumphant, and in all creatures of heaven, earth and hell.

(2) In thanksgiving to God for all the benefits and graces whether temporal or eternal, imparted to the sacred humanity of His Son, to the most Blessed Virgin, to all angels and men, to all creatures and especially to yourself.

(3) In satisfaction to His divine justice for all your sins and for all the sins of the world, especially for those of the poor souls in Purgatory.

(4) For the fulfilment of all His designs and desires, especially those He entertains on your behalf.

(5) To obtain from His goodness all the graces necessary to you and to all mankind, so that He may be served and honored by all creatures with the perfection He demands of each one.

All this you should perform in the Christian role of priest. But over and above that, in the role of host, when you offer Jesus Christ to God in Holy Mass as a victim you are obliged to offer yourself also, like Him, as a victim. Better still, pray that Jesus Christ will enter into you and draw you into Himself to unite and incorporate you with Himself as host, to sacrifice you with Him for the glory of His Father.

The Host to be sacrificed must be slain and consumed by fire; so you must implore Our Lord to make you die to yourself, to your passions, to your self-love and to all that displeases Him, that He may consume

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you in the sacred fire of His divine love, and cause your whole life to be henceforth a perpetual sacrifice of praise, glory and love for His Eternal Father and for Him.

4. You should prepare yourself for communion-if not sacramental, at least spiritual communion. Consider that our Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves you beyond measure, becomes present in the Sacrifice not only to be with you, but to be with you in intimate friendship and to impart to you His gifts and graces. And what is far more, He wills to be actually within you. He has a most ardent desire to dwell in your very heart, and give Himself to you in sacramental or spiritual communion. Therefore, you ought to prepare yourself to receive Him by fostering dispositions necessary to communicate sacramentally, namely, sentiments of humility and love. Humble yourself before Him, considering yourself most unworthy to

receive Him; nevertheless, since He so earnestly desires to have communion with you, you must also long to receive Him and invite Him, by countless acts of love, to enter your heart and to live and reign in you perfectly.

5. Finally, after having thanked Our Lord for the graces He has given you in Holy Mass, leave the church with a firm resolution to spend the day well in His service, with the thought that you must henceforth be a host at the same time living and dead: dead to all that is not God, living in God and for God, totally consecrated and sacrificed purely to the glory and love of God. Declare to Our Lord that you will be a victim of His love, and that you offer yourself to Him to do and suffer, for that end, whatever may please Him. Pray that He may accomplish this in you by His very great mercy; ask Him to give you the grace to lift up your heart to Him frequently during the day, to do everything for His glory. and choose to die rather than offend Him. For all these intentions, ask Him to give you His holy blessing.

Such is the way you should make use of so divine an event as the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If you do not feel the need of so many intentions to keep your mind devoutly occupied during Mass, select the most helpful and inspirational. To assist you to acquire greater facility in the use of these exercises, I now present them in the form of prayers, which you are to use not in haste and confusion, but

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in a leisurely and recollected state of mind and heart, if you want to reap fruits for God's glory.

#### **XXV. PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING OF HOLY MASS.**

O my God and Sovereign Lord, behold me prostrate at the feet of Thy mercy. Deign to look with kindness upon so insignificant a creature, who recognizes and confesses before heaven and earth, that he is the most unworthy and ungrateful of all creatures.

O Father of mercies, I accuse myself before Thee, before the angels and saints, of all the lapses of my past life, all the offenses I have committed against Thy divine majesty, my great coldness in Thy ardent love, my neglect in Thy holy service and in following Thy inspirations, and countless other faults of which Thou well knowest me to be guilty. O my God, when I consider that Thy well-beloved Son, whom I am here to adore, gave me even the first moment of His life, I account myself exceedingly guilty for not having consecrated to Thee the very first use of reason given me by Thy divine majesty.

O my Lord Jesus, Thou didst spend all Thy days in poverty and suffering and didst end them on the Cross for love of me. Thou didst spend Thy whole life in uninterrupted works of ardent and exceeding great charity towards my soul. Yet I, treating my days and my life as something all my own, spend them ordinarily in useless or indifferent neglect, and often in offending Thy divine majesty. O my Saviour, grant that I may detest all my faults, since the very least of them was a reason why Thou didst will to be born in a stable and die on the Cross to expiate even that fault before the justice of Thy Father.

O my Jesus, the very least of Thy humanly divine and divinely human actions, repeated so often for my benefit during the thirty-four years of Thy life on earth, possesses such value and merit, that even if it had taken place no more than once, it could rightfully claim that my whole life should be devoted to doing Thy will, as a mark of gratitude and thanksgiving and by way of repayment to Thy divine majesty. Yet I do not do this. On the contrary, it would seem that I was born for the sole purpose of offending and insulting Thee. O what ingratitude! What infidelity! How I detest my treachery! How

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sorry and ashamed I am, Most Lovable Jesus, of having been so unfaithful and ungrateful, and of having

corresponded so miserably with so great and strong a love as Thine for me! My God, I cast all my sins into the stream of Thy Precious Blood, into the abyss of Thy mercies, into the fire of Thy divine love. Cleanse me and utterly consume my sins. Atone for all my failings, O Good Jesus, and accept in satisfaction this most holy Sacrifice of the Precious Body and Blood, which Thou didst offer on the Cross, and I now offer Thee in reparation.

O my sweet Saviour, the disordinate love of myself and of the world is the source of all my offenses. Forever and with all my might I renounce that love. O Most Amiable Jesus, annihilate in me all earthly affections and establish in me the kingdom of Thy divine love.

## **XXVI. PRAYER DURING HOLY MASS.**

O Jesus, my Lord and my God, Thou dost descend upon this altar that I may contemplate and adore Thee, love and glorify Thee, to recall to my memory the great love that caused Thee to suffer and die for me on the Cross. O great God, I adore Thee and glorify Thee to the full extent of my limited powers. O abyss of love, O infinite goodness, O immense charity, would that I were all love for Thee! O Most Beloved, Most Loving and Most Lovable Jesus, when will the time come when I shall love Thee perfectly? O ye Seraphim, angels and saints of paradise, give me your love, that I may employ its ardor to love my Jesus. O ye men, O creatures capable of love, give me all your hearts that I may sacrifice them to my Saviour. O loving Redeemer, would that I possessed all the love of heaven and earth! With what willingness would I direct it all to Thee! O Thou Wellbeloved Son of the Eternal Father, O Thou treasure and delight of heaven and earth, how art Thou now adored, loved and glorified on this altar by the thousands of angels who there surround Thee! How much shouldst Thou be venerated, praised and loved by men, since it is not for the angels but for love of men that Thou art present! Let all angels and men, all creatures on earth and in heaven be transformed into adoration, glorification and love of Thee! May all the powers of

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Thy divinity and humanity be employed in magnifying and loving Thee forever!

O Most Mighty Jesus, I adore the power of Thy sacred words by which Thou dost change the earthly nature of bread and wine into the substance of Thy most Precious Body and Blood. I surrender myself absolutely to Thy might, so that it may transform my sluggishness, apathy and aridity into the warmth, tenderness and vitality of Thy celestial and divine Heart. Grant that I may be so transformed into Thee as to be of one heart, one mind, one will, one soul and one life with Thee.

O my most gentle Redeemer, Thou art present on this altar to recall and re-enact before us Thy bitter Passion and cruel death. Grant that I may possess a continual remembrance and vivid realization of all Thou didst do and suffer for me. Grant that I may bear with humility, submission and love all the contradictions that may befall me to-day and during my whole lifetime. O Good Jesus, Thou dost so abhor sin that Thou didst die to put it to death; and Thou dost so cherish and prize my soul as to give Thy life to make it live. Grant, O my Saviour, that I may henceforth fear and abhor nothing save sin alone, that I may prize and seek only Thy glory, and that I may hold everything else as unworthy of my love or hatred.

## **XXVII. PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, HIGH PRIEST.**

O Jesus, I adore Thee as High Priest, Thou who dost ceaselessly exercise this function in heaven as well as on earth, sacrificing Thyself for Thy Father's glory and our love. Blessed be Thou a thousand times, O Good Jesus, for the infinite honor Thou dost give the Heavenly Father, and for the exceeding great love Thou dost manifest for us in this divine Sacrifice. Thou art not satisfied with sacrificing Thyself for us so many times, but Thou dost further desire to associate us with Thee in this great work, causing us all to participate in the character of high-priest, giving us the power to participate with Thee in this supreme

and wonderful act, that is, to offer Thee in sacrifice when Thou dost offer Thyself, at the hands of Thy holy priests, for the glory of the Almighty Father and for our salvation. Unite me with Thee, O Divine Jesus, since it is Thy will that I should now

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offer with Thee this most Holy Sacrifice. Grant that I, too, may offer it with holy and divine dispositions like Thine. Oh, with what devotion, what purity and sanctity, what charity for us, what recollection and love for Thy Father dost Thou perform this holy action! Implant these dispositions in me, that I may accomplish with Thee and like Thee this act which Thou dost perform in a manner so holy and divine.

O Father of Jesus, Thou hast given us Thy Son and Thou hast, as it were, placed Him in our hands, in our power and possession. Hence I offer Thy Divine Son to Thee as though He were truly mine to give, and I desire to offer Him in union with the humility, purity, charity, love and all the other holy dispositions with which He offers Himself to Thee.

So also I desire to offer Thy Beloved Son for the same intention, with which He sacrificed Himself. Hence I offer Him to Thee:

1. In honor of all that Thou art, O my God, in Thy divine essence, in all Thy divine perfections, in Thy Three Eternal Persons, and in all the great external works Thou dost effect. I offer this sacrifice in honor of all that Thy Son Jesus is in Himself and in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, acts and sufferings, and all that His external dispensations, either of mercy or of justice, in heaven, on earth and in hell.

2. I offer this sacrifice to Thee in thanksgiving for all the benefits and graces, both temporal and eternal Thou didst ever impart to the sacred humanity of Thy Son, to His most Blessed Mother, to all angels and men, and above all to me, the most unworthy of all creatures.

3. I offer this sacrifice to Thee in satisfaction for all the dishonor given Thee by all the sins of the world, past, present and future, and above all by my own, and those of the people for whom I am especially bound to pray, both living and dead.

4. I offer this sacrifice to Thee for the fulfilment of all Thy designs, especially Thy providential designs for me and all my associates, begging Thee never to permit us to impede Thy holy will.

5. I implore Thee, O my God, that in virtue of this holy oblation and precious gift that I render unto Thee, Thou mayest grant us all

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the spiritual and bodily graces we need, to serve and love Thee perfectly and to be Thine entirely and forever.

#### **XXVIII. PRAYER TO JESUS CHRIST, SACRIFICIAL VICTIM.**

O Jesus, I contemplate and adore Thee in this mystery as the sacred Host laden with the sins of the world which Thou dost expiate, and as the Victim immolated by Thine own self for the glory of God and the salvation of men. I learn from St. Paul that Thou dost desire us all to be living and holy hosts, worthy of being sacrificed with Thee to the glory of God the Father (Rom. 12, 1). O my Saviour, in honor of and in union with Thy supreme oblation and sacrifice, I offer myself to Thee to be for ever a victim of Thy will, a victim immolated to Thy glory and to the glory of Thy Eternal Father. Unite me to Thee, O Good Jesus.

Absorb me into Thy sacrifice so that I may be sacrificed with Thee and by Thee and, since it is necessary that the host of a sacrifice should be slain and consumed by fire, make me die to myself, that is, to my vices and passions and to all that displeases Thee. Consume me utterly in the sacred fire of Thy divine love, and grant that henceforth my whole life may be a continual sacrifice of praise, glory and love of Thy Father and Thyself.

#### **XXIX. PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.**

O Most Good and Lovable Jesus, I am not worthy to think of Thee, nor that Thou shouldst think of me; still less am I worthy to appear before Thee, or that Thou shouldst deign to become present to me. Yet Thou dost not only think of me and become present to me in the Holy Eucharist, but Thou dost even long to give Thyself to me, with an infinite desire of abiding in my heart and in my soul. O dearest Lord, how wondrous are Thy mercies and how great is Thy kindness! Alas, what is there in me, wretched creature full of filth and sin, what is there capable of attracting Thee to me? Surely it is nothing but the excess of pure charity that urges Thee to come into my soul. Come, come then, O Dearest Jesus, for I love and desire Thee beyond measure! Would that I were utterly transformed into aspirations, desire, longing and love for Thee! Come, my sweet light, come, my dearest love, hasten and delay not to come into my heart

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which renounces all else and desires nothing save Thee alone. O Thou king of my heart, O Thou life of my soul! O my treasure beyond all price, my only joy, my most dear, most desired and most beloved Jesus! O my all, come into my mind, come into my heart and into my soul! Annihilate my pride, my self-love, my self-will and all my other vices and imperfections. Come and establish Thy humility, charity, sweetness, patience, obedience, zeal and all Thy other virtues., Come to me, there to love and glorify Thyself and perfectly unite my spirit with Thy divine spirit, my heart and Thy Sacred Heart, my soul with Thy holy Soul. Grant that this heart, this soul and this body, which are often so closely and so intimately united with Thy Heart, Thy soul and Thy body by the Blessed Eucharist, may never have any other ideas, affections, desires or emotions save those of Thy holy Heart, Thy sacred body and divine soul. Come, my Jesus, enter into me there to live and reign absolutely and forever. Veni, Domine Jesu.

#### **XXX. PRAYER AT THE END OF HOLY MASS.**

O Jesus, most worthy of love, I praise and thank Thee countless times. I summon all the angels, all the saints and creatures to bless and glorify Thee with me, for all the graces Thou hast given me by this divine sacrifice. May it please Thee to preserve and multiply in my soul all the holy desires, thoughts, affections and sentiments which Thou hast implanted in my soul during this Holy Mass, and to give me the grace to bring forth the fruit Thou dost expect of me. Thou hast lowered Thyself to become present to me by this holy mystery. Grant, I beseech Thee, that during this day I may not let one hour go by without lifting up my heart and becoming present to Thee in spirit. Thou didst descend to this altar to take possession of our hearts and receive from us the homage we owe Thee as our Sovereign Lord. Then take possession of my heart, Good Jesus; consecrate it to Thee forever. I recognize and adore Thee as my King and Sovereign Lord.

I render homage with my being, my life and all my acts, especially those I shall perform today. Take them and do with them whatever pleases Thee. Give me the grace to die rather than offend Thee, and to be a host at the same time living and dead

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-dead to all that is not Thee, living in Thee and for Thee. May my whole life be a perpetual sacrifice of praise and love for Thee, and may I be utterly immolated and consumed for Thy pure glory and for Thy holy love. To this end I implore Thee with my whole heart, O Good Jesus, to give me Thy most holy blessing.