

world and hell. Thus risen, the Church went into the cities, villages and valleys and far up mountainous heights, entering into the basilicas, marble temples, grand cathedrals, numberless churches and chapels, built therein altars, and celebrated, as formerly in the stillness of the night, but now in the light of open day, in the presence of the assembled congregations, the heritage of the Lord, the mystery of His Last Supper, the perpetual Sacrifice of His death on the Cross. From this time on, she fulfilled for all ages her mission of carrying to all countries of the world her most holy inheritance. She gathered nation after nation around her altar, celebrated with them, generation after generation, the sacrificial death of the Redeemer, distributed to them the Body of the Lord (and the chalice of His Blood), and thereby accomplished the new and eternal covenant: 'Do this in commemoration of Me,' and fulfilled the testament of the Lord: 'It is consummated!' As the Prophet had predicted, she offered the new and clean, the true and perfect Sacrifice of the New Law everywhere, thus glorifying the name of the Lord in all parts of the globe, from the rising of the sun until the setting thereof" (Geissel).

#### ARTICLE THE SECOND.

#### The Essence and the Efficacy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

#### 15. The Essential Characteristics of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

All that we have demonstrated from the written and traditional word of God, the infallible Church has solemnly and formally declared in the Council of Trent, defining that in Holy Mass "a true and real Sacrifice" (*verum et proprium sacrificium*) is offered to the triune God.<sup>1</sup> This revealed truth of salvation is eminently included in the "divine mysteries, which by their nature so far transcend created intelligence, that though divinely revealed to us and comprehended through faith, they yet remain hidden to our eyes by the veil of this very faith, and enveloped in a certain obscurity, as long as we are pilgrims in this mortal life, at a distance from God. Yet reason enlightened by faith, if it inquire diligently, devoutly and prudently, may with the assistance of God obtain a certain and, at the same time, a very profitable insight into these mysteries," and, consequently, into the mystery of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, we should not be contented with the proof that the Mass is a true Sacrifice, but we should endeavor to acquire a fuller and more profound knowledge of this adorable mystery.

In the first place, the question arises as to the essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. To answer it, we must show that, and to what extent, in the celebration of the Eucharist are found all the conditions absolutely necessary for a true sacrifice. To every sacrifice, and, consequently, to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, appertain a sacrificial gift, a sacrificing priest and the action of sacrifice.

<sup>1</sup> Sess. 22, can. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican. constit. de Fide, cap. 4.

1. Which is the sacrificial gift in the Holy Mass? The Church has declared that upon the altar precisely the same sacrificial gift (*una eademque hostia*) is offered, as was once offered on the Cross.<sup>1</sup> But Christ, with His holy humanity, with His Body and Blood, was offered on the Cross: consequently, He is likewise the sacrificial gift on our altars; hence upon them there is nothing less offered than the God-Man Himself. The Mass is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. Some theologians<sup>2</sup> have indeed taught, that bread and wine belong also to the matter of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, that is, that besides and with the Body and Blood of Christ they are truly offered in the Holy Mass; but evidently this is incorrect. Neither the substances nor the appearances of bread and wine constitute a part of the matter of the sacrifice,<sup>3</sup> although they are necessarily required for the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The substances of the bread and wine disappear, in order that, under the species remaining, the Divine Victim of sacrifice may take their place, that is, that they may be changed into the Host of Salvation. The sacramental species render the offering of Christ a visible sacrifice; they form the sensible, perceptible covering, under which the Body and Blood of Christ are offered. — The Body of Christ, once immolated in a bloody manner, and the Blood of Christ, once shed unto death on the Cross, and consequently the whole Christ, once sacrificed upon Golgotha, by the sacrifice of His Body and the shedding of His Blood (Heb. 10, 10; 9, 12), is also on the altar the gift or object of our unbloody sacrifice. A higher and holier, a better and more precious sacrificial offering, than Christ the Lord, can neither be presented nor imagined.<sup>4</sup> To possess so glorious a sacrificial Victim is for us an inappreciable grace and it imparts to us unspeakable dignity.

2. Who offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice?

a) It is beyond question, that in the Holy Mass Christ is not only the Victim Sacrificed, but also the Sacrificing Priest (*sacrificium et sacerdos mirabiliter et ineffabiliter constitutus* — Oratio S. Ambros.); for, “as He once offered Himself on the Cross, He now also offers Himself on the altar, but in an unbloody manner and through the ministry of the priests” (*sacerdotum ministerio*).<sup>5</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Suarez. disp. 75, sect. 1. — Coninck, De sacrament. q. 83, a. 1, d. 4. concl. 3. — Tanner tom. 4, d. 5, q. 9, dub. 2, n. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Dicendum est, panem et vinum quoad suam *substantiam* nullo modo esse materiam oblatam in sacrificio Missae, sed tantum terminum a quo materiae oblatae; similiter *species* panis et vini non pertinere ad rationem victimae tamquam partem ipsius et proinde non esse rem oblatam (Pasqualigo, De sacrific. Nov. Leg., tr. 1, q. 29—30).

<sup>4</sup> Sacerdos perpendat, *quid* offerat, videlicet corpus et sanguinem Salvatoris, imo ipsummet Christum, Unigenitum videlicet Dei, qui secundum naturam suam divinam est dignitatis et excellentiae penitus infinitae; secundum naturam vero suam humanam, ut Verbo aeterno unitam, est toto dignior universo (Dion. Carthus. De vita Curator. art. 15).

<sup>5</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2.



Christ in the Eucharist is both the one that sacrifices and the object sacrificed. *Ipse offerens, ipse et oblatio*. As the true Melchisedech, He possesses an imperishable priesthood and unceasingly exercises the priestly office, inasmuch as He daily offers Himself on the altar as a gift and an oblation of sweet odor unto God (Eph. 5, 2), to save those who by Him approach unto God (Heb. 7, 25).

If Christ in the Mass truly makes the offering and this by the visible priest, then it follows that He is the principal celebrant (*offerens principalis*). To be such in reality it does not suffice, that the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice and commanded the celebration of it; nor that He imparts power and efficacy to it; He must rather co-operate directly, through His holy humanity, in performing the Eucharistic Sacrifice. He must always and everywhere be found acting as priest wherever Mass is celebrated. Condescending to the words of the visible priest, Christ as invisible Highpriest changes the elements of bread and wine into His Body and Blood, that is, He places His Body and His Blood, His humanity, Himself, in a state of sacrifice. And this action of sacrifice of Himself He, at the same time, directs to the glory of God, to propitiate Him, and also to contribute to the salvation of mankind. — In the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Lord indeed is, in a certain sense, dependent upon the ministry of visible priests; yet He Himself always performs directly and principally the real act of sacrifice. At the celebration of every Mass, Jesus with His soul, with His human will and heart, gives proof anew of His priestly sentiments, His unchangeable love of sacrifice, His inexhaustible devotedness to the honor of God and the salvation of the world. — From what has just been said, we may draw several conclusions. Since Christ on the altar is the direct and principal Offerer, because He Himself by His Highpriestly act celebrates and offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice, therefore, like the Sacrifice of the Cross, the Mass possesses absolutely infinite value and infinite perfection. For the excellence of the Sacrifice depends chiefly upon the merit and dignity of the person who offers it. — Furthermore, it follows that the Eucharist always and everywhere remains the spotless Sacrifice, as the chief Offerer, Jesus Christ, is at all times infinitely holy, although the visible and representative priest be ever so imperfect and unworthy.

b) As the Eternal Highpriest according to the order of Melchisedech Christ does not and will not cease until the consummation of time to offer Himself in the Mass to His Heavenly Father; but now He no longer does so alone in a personal, visible manner, as He did at the Last Supper and upon the Cross, but invisibly and with the assistance of a human representative. Christ is indeed the principal celebrant at the altar, for He has the primary and chief part in the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; still He does not perform this action alone and without assistance, but employs for it specially authorized servants and instruments, namely, validly ordained priests.

The visible priest acts as the living and free agent of Jesus Christ ; therefore, he performs, though only as the instrument of the Lord, but yet in a real manner, the act of consecration or sacrifice at the altar. At his ordination he receives the exalted superhuman and divine power to change the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, that is, to celebrate Mass ; for only God can impart such power. This power, like holy Orders in general, can neither be lost nor destroyed ; just as little as the sacerdotal character can be effaced from the soul of the priest, so in like manner, the power of sacrificing cannot be taken away from him. Every validly ordained priest, and only such a one, can offer the Sacrifice of the Eucharist. In this action he always represents the person of Christ and, as an authorized minister, acts in His name. Here the privileged character and dignity of the officiating priest are in contrast with the condition of the faithful, to whom such a heavenly sacrificial power has not been imparted.

c) At the altar, the officiating priest acts not merely as the representative and as the organ of Christ, but also in the name and under the authority of the Church. For the Eucharist is the property of the Catholic Church : to her our Lord bequeathed the Eucharistic Sacrifice, that she might always be able to render to the Most High due honor and glory, as well as to dispense with lavish hand to her needy children the fulness and riches of all blessings. Christ our Lord, in the excess of His divine bounty and goodness, made over to the Church His Body and Blood, Himself with all the treasures of His grace, placing this as an offering in her hands, that she might offer it in sacrifice to God. By the Church we understand all the faithful in so far as they, united to one another and under submission to their lawful Pastor, form but one fold and one kingdom, the one mystical body and the one spouse of Christ. — The entire Church, therefore, offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice ; for it is a public and solemn act of worship, which is always celebrated in the name and for the welfare of all the people of God.<sup>1</sup> Now, the Church cannot celebrate without a priest ; he is ordained to be the representative of men (*constituitur pro hominibus* — Heb. 5, 1), that is, that he may really celebrate and offer sacrifice in the name of the faithful as mediator between God and the people. — Therefore, at the altar, the priest is the authorized representative of Jesus Christ and of the Church, but in a twofold manner : Jesus Christ, the Divine Highpriest, celebrates by the priest who is His subordinate minister ; the Church, on the contrary, celebrates in the person

<sup>1</sup> Datum est hoc sacrificium universae Ecclesiae, ut ipsa illud offerat, quamvis per sacerdotes, quibus potestas offerendi specialiter commissa est, ut dicit Trid.; et ideo sess. 22. cap. 6 addit, Missae omnes, quantumvis privatim dicantur, communes esse censendas, quia a publico Ecclesiae ministro, non pro se tantum, sed pro omnibus fidelibus, qui ad corpus Christi pertinent, celebrantur; dicuntur enim pro eis celebrari, non tantum, quia pro eis offeruntur, sed etiam, quia ipso- rum nomine, tanquam eorum sacrificia offeruntur (Suarez disp. 74, sect. 3, n. 1).



of the priest, who is the superior mediator given her by God. When he consecrates, that is, celebrates the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the priest represents, first, the person of Jesus Christ, and then the Church. Then also he acts and speaks in the name of the Church, inasmuch as he performs the remaining acts of divine worship, namely, the ceremonies and liturgical prayers accompanying and surrounding the sacrificial function. — Hence it follows that the Mass prayers are not the private prayers of the priest, but public prayers, that is, the prayers of the Church; and as such there is attached to them a special, efficacious, impetratory character, independent of the disposition of the priest celebrating (*valor ex opere operato*).<sup>1</sup>

The priest, therefore, celebrates in the name of the Church, in the name of the whole Christian people, so that in as far as they are members of the Church, all the faithful at least habitually offer through him as their representative the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For this reason also the Prince of the Apostles calls all Christians “a holy and a kingly priesthood” (1 Peter 2, 5—9), that is, called “to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” — The actual participation of each individual faithful in the Eucharistic Sacrifice takes place in different ways and in different degrees, according as their activity and co-operation is merely interior or also exterior.<sup>2</sup> For example, he who assists devoutly at Mass, he who communicates during Mass, he who serves at the altar, he who has a Mass said or who contributes what is necessary for the Sacrifice, participates in a more especial manner in the celebration of the Sacrifice, than he who merely interiorly, that is, without being present in body, unites his intention with the holy Sacrifice and the prayers of the priest at the altar.

3. In what does the sacrificial act of the Eucharistic service properly consist (*sacrificatio vel immolatio hostiae*)?

a) The Eucharistic Sacrificial action (*actio sacrificia*) consists

<sup>1</sup> In Missa duo est considerare, sc. *ipsum sacramentum* quod est principale et *orationes* quae in Missa fiunt pro vivis et mortuis. Quantum ergo ad sacramentum non minus valet Missa sacerdotis mali quam boni, quia utrobique idem conficitur sacramentum. *Oratio* etiam quae fit in Missa potest considerari dupliciter: *uno modo* inquantum habet efficaciam ex devotione sacerdotis orantis et sic non est dubium quod Missa melioris sacerdotis magis est fructuosa; *alio modo* inquantum oratio in Missa profertur a sacerdote in *persona totius Ecclesiae*, cujus sacerdos est minister, quod quidem ministerium etiam in peccatoribus manet sicut ministerium Christi. Unde etiam quantum ad hoc est fructuosa non solum oratio sacerdotis peccatoris in Missa, sed etiam omnes ejus orationes, quas facit in ecclesiasticis officiis, in quibus gerit *personam Ecclesiae*, licet ejus orationes privatae non sint fructuosae (S. Thom. 3, q. 82, a. 6).

<sup>2</sup> Cum ad proprie dictum sacrificium offerendum haec duo requirantur: hostiae <sup>†</sup> *immolatio*, hujusque immolationis *oblatio*, improprie dicentur sacrificium offerre, qui sacrificium a sacerdote celebratum interne aut etiam externe in Dei honorem referunt, vel qui aliqua ratione sacerdoti in sacrificii oblatione subveniunt eumque adjuvant (Lambrecht, De ss. Miss. sacrif. pars 3, c. 3, § 3).

in the double consecration, by which the Body and Blood of Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine, are placed in a state of sacrifice and are, therefore, sacrificed. — All the prayers, ceremonies and actions that partly precede and partly follow the consecration in the celebration of the Mass are, consequently, not essential to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. — The oblation-prayers at the Offertory and after the Elevation, the fraction of the consecrated Host and the co-mingling of a particle of it with the Sacred Blood, are important and profoundly significant constituent parts of the ancient, venerable rite prescribed for the Sacrifice by the Church, but in nowise are they integral or essential portions of the sacrificial action instituted by Christ. That the Communion of the faithful who are present is not necessary for the Sacrifice, is admitted by all Catholics. — But the case is quite different with regard to the Communion of the officiating priest. The officiating priest must necessarily communicate at the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, not merely by reason of a command of the Church, but in virtue of a divine ordinance from Christ Himself. The Communion of the celebrant, therefore, is so necessary, because although it does not appertain to the essence, it is, however, indispensable to the external completeness of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; for by this Communion the Sacrifice attains its end as a food-offering and, consequently, by it the Sacrifice is in a certain sense perfected and consummated.<sup>1</sup> The celebrating priest must partake of the same sacrificial matter which he has just consecrated, in order that the unity of the visible Sacrifice may in its essence and integrity be perfectly secured. — The so-called Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday is, therefore, no sacrificial celebration, but only a Communion celebration; for it is without consecration and consists only of the reception of the Sacrament consecrated on Holy Thursday. This Communion of the priest may be regarded as a continuation and completion of the Mass celebrated on Holy Thursday; and this throws sufficient light and explanation on the liturgical formulas of prayer occurring in this service.<sup>2</sup>

That the essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice depends neither wholly nor in part on the Communion of the celebrant, but rests solely and entirely in the consecration, is the most solid and the more general opinion. As is frequently repeated in the ancient

<sup>1</sup> *Partes alicujus rei compositae aliae sunt essentialia, aliae integrantes: sine partibus essentialibus res non est talis naturae; essentia vero rei salva consistit sine partibus integrantibus. Hac distinctione in sacrificio Eucharistiae facta, juxta communem Theologorum sententiam dicimus, in sola Eucharistiae consecratione essentiam sacrificii consistere, et ad integritatem ejus referri utriusque speciei consecratae sumptionem, quae a sacerdote fit in Missa (De Augustinis S. J., De re sacramentaria, lib. 2, p. 3, art. 5).*

<sup>2</sup> *Aliud est conficere sive consecrare, aliud est offerre; et quamvis in die Veneris sancto non fiat confectio, fit tamen oblatio, quia sacerdos corpus in praecedenti die consecratum offert in altari (S. Bonav. IV, dist. 12, p. 2, dub. 2).*



liturgies and by the Fathers, the Communion of the priest and of the people is a sacrificial banquet, that is, a partaking of the accomplished Sacrifice or the reception of the Lamb of God offered in sacrifice. The sacrificial banquet must, in fact, be preceded by the sacrificial action; only the immolated or sacrificed victim can be partaken of as food. — St. Gregory of Nyssa thus appropriately expresses this truth. "Christ, who is both priest and victim, offered Himself mystically for us in sacrifice. When did He do this? At the Last Supper; for when He gave to the disciples, assembled around Him, His Body to eat and His Blood to drink, He publicly declared that the Sacrifice of the Lamb was already accomplished. The body of the victim to be slain cannot be eaten as long as it is in a natural, living state (*ἐμψυχον, animatum*); as He then gave His disciples His Body to eat and His Blood to drink, His Body was already sacrificed in an unspeakable and inconceivable manner, as it pleased the Lord to perform this mystery by His power."<sup>1</sup> What is here said of the first celebration of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, naturally holds good with respect to the daily repetition of this unbloody Sacrifice on our altars. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is perfectly the same here, as it was there: its essence consists in the act of the twofold consecration.

b) The mysterious obscurity, in which the mystery of the Eucharist is shrouded from our weak vision, extends particularly to the question, in how far by the act of the dual consecration Christ is really and actually sacrificed. According to the teaching of our holy faith, we must hold firmly that the Eucharist is not merely a simple oblation or a consecrated gift, but much more, truly and properly a Sacrifice. Now for this a sacrificial action, that is, an actual sacrificing (*sacrificatio*), and not a mere offering (*oblatio*), is necessarily required, — a sacrificial action, in which both an interior and an exterior quality are taken into consideration and distinguished. — The interior consists in the disposition of the heart to sacrifice, in the hidden intention of the will to sacrifice, on the part of the priest who celebrates; the exterior, by which the real sacrifice essentially differs from the simple oblation, consists in this, that the offering to God of the sacrificial object, even in its visible form, is accomplished by a change or transformation, corresponding also to the meaning of the Sacrifice. — Conflicting answers are given to the question, whether and how far there takes place a similar change or transformation of the matter of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by the dual consecration, as is essentially the case in every sacrifice. In order to throw some light on this much disputed question — under what aspect the eucharistic consecration is a true sacrificial act — we will here make a few observations.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice wholly peculiar and singular (*sacrificium singulare*), and of a higher and mysterious order.<sup>2</sup> The es-

<sup>1</sup> First Sermon for Easter Sunday.

<sup>2</sup> Deus hoc sacrificium instituit modo extraordinario et singulari aliis victimis et sacrificiis non communi (Mastrius disp. 4, q. 4, a. 1, n. 72).

sence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is of divine institution and, therefore, must not be indiscriminately decided or judged by the same standard as other known sacrifices. First and above all the peculiarity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice consists in this, that the object sacrificed is offered under foreign or sacramental species, whilst in other sacrifices the sensible objects are always offered in their own natural forms. Another peculiarity is that in the Eucharist the living, glorious God-man is the matter or object of the unbloody sacrifice, although always and everywhere living beings can be sacrificed only by the actual shedding of their blood and by their immolation. According to the correct conception of the eucharistic transsubstantiation, there can be no question of the destruction of the bread and wine, nor of the production of the body and blood of Christ, so that evidently the explanation of the essence of our sacrifice cannot be based on either of these suppositions. In like manner, every attempt to prove a real change in the sacrifice of the eucharistic body must end in failure. Numerically the same glorious Christ, reigning in heaven, is indeed present on the altar, without undergoing any change in Himself; only the external relation of His humanity to space and the surroundings is different. On the altar, then, we have a true and real sacrifice without any real change in the eucharistic victim. So peculiar a sacrifice is rendered possible only by Christ being offered as a living victim, not in His natural form, but under the symbolical envelope of the sacramental species. The Eucharistic Sacrifice takes place simply and merely by Jesus Christ becoming present, by virtue of the words of consecration, under the separate species in a state of immolation or death, that is, of sacrifice, so far as external appearances go.<sup>1</sup> — Sacramentally, that is, according to external signs, the blood of Jesus Christ is separated from His body, and therefore shed, since by the words of consecration there is designated and effected, on the one hand, the presence of the body of Christ under the solid species of bread, and, on the other hand, the presence of His blood under the fluid species of wine.<sup>2</sup> This sacramental separation of the blood of Christ from His body, or this mystical immolation of Christ, is fully sufficient for the actual and symbolical expression of the Saviour's interior intention of sacrificing Himself — that is, for the consummation of a real sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> Sacrifice is, indeed, an exterior symbolical sign of

<sup>1</sup> *Exhibetur Christus per modum mortui sub speciebus, quamvis in se non sit mortuus, et hoc fit ex vi actionis sacrificativae; haec autem exhibitio sufficit ad protestandum totum id, quod protestari posset realis destructio, nempe totalem submissionem respectu Dei et recognitionem supremæ majestatis* (Pasqualigo tr. 1, q. 43, n. 5).

<sup>2</sup> *Quantum est ex vi verborum consecrationis, corpus et sanguis Christi sistuntur et exhibentur seorsum, unum ab altero, sicut in cruce separatus fuit sanguis a corpore, atque ita Christus mystice et incruente immolatur* (Sylvius 3, q. 83, a. 1, concl. 4.)

<sup>3</sup> *Cum Christus sit principalis offerens, dum in se ipso facit repræsentationem propriæ mortis se offerendo Patri, declarat affectum se totum tradentis in obse-*



the interior sacrifice; according to this, the mystical shedding of blood on the altar performs the same office as did the real shedding of blood on the cross. The unbloody immolation of the eucharistic victim through the sacramental shedding of blood proves the reality of the sacrifice of Christ under foreign sacramental species. The Eucharist is a mystical, that is, a sacramental and, at the same time, a real or actual sacrifice. — *Mystica nobis, Domine, prosit oblatio* (Miss. Rom.).

The eucharistic service is not only a true sacrifice, accomplished in the present on the altar, but also, at the same time, the mysterious copy and representation, or renewal, of the past sacrifice of the cross. For the dual consecration should be considered under a two-fold aspect; first, in so far as a mystical immolation, it makes the present offering of the body and blood of Christ a real sacrifice; and secondly, inasmuch as it represents in a visible manner the past sacrifice of the cross.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, by one and the same thing, namely, by the transsubstantiation of the two elements, that the eucharistic offering acquires the character of an absolute and relative sacrifice, that is, of a true sacrifice in itself, but which, according to its intrinsic nature and constitution, not only relates to the sacrifice of the cross, but also visibly copies it. There was something similar in the bloody sacrifice of the Old Testament. One and the same immolation, or blood-shedding, rendered them not only peculiar sacrifices of the worship then obtaining, but also figures of the future sacrifice of Christ. In the Eucharist a merely mystical shedding of blood suffices to constitute a true sacrifice, for on the altar there is question, not of acquiring the merit of propitiation, but only of applying the fruits of redemption acquired on the cross. For this purpose the Victim actually immolated on Golgotha, with His inexhaustible treasures of merits, is constantly represented and sacrificed to God the Lord, in the eucharistic service through unbloody immolation. — The complete essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice consists, therefore, in the mystical shedding of blood wrought by the words consecrating both elements; — and, indeed, it consists in this blood-shedding, inasmuch as said blood-shedding is a real expression of the present intention of sacrifice and of the self-offering of Christ taking place on the altar, and, at the same time, in so far as it represents and renews the Sacrifice of the Cross. This conception of the Eucharistic Sacrifice commends itself, not only on account of its

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quium Patris, qui est interius sacrificium, atque adeo oblatio externa cum illa representatione mortis declarat hunc affectum et ideo hujusmodi representatio est sufficiens destructio pro sacrificio: nam illa tantum destructio requiritur, quae possit declarare interius sacrificium (Pasqualigo tr. 1, q. 43, n. 4).

<sup>1</sup> Christus Dominus vi consecrationis tanquam verus Agnus et victima sistitur in altari sub speciebus panis et vini, et in quodam statu mortis constituitur, quatenus per spirituales verborum gladium sub diversis et separatis speciebus immolatur et offertur Deo Patri. — Porro haec mystica, quae vi verborum fit, separatio corporis ac sanguinis, apte separationem cruentam sanguinis a corpore in cruce peractam repraesentat (Puig et Xarrié, *De euchar.* c. 4, § 1, n. 620).

simplicity and theological foundation, but also because it has a positive basis in the words of the institution of our Lord as well as in the ecclesiastical tradition. The Saviour Himself characterizes the Eucharistic Sacrifice as an unbloody offering, or breaking, of His body, and as a mystical shedding of His blood "for the remission of sins." In agreement with this the ante-tridentine theology always taught, that the formal character of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist consists only in the mystical immolation of Christ through the words of the dual consecration.<sup>1</sup>

4. The priest should frequently reflect that it is God who has called and consecrated him to the exalted office, as a servant of Christ and in the name of the Church, to accomplish and offer the adorable Sacrifice of the Eucharist. The most sublime act of his priestly power consists in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, that is, in his power "to call the Lord of Glory with holy words down upon the earth, to bless Him with his lips, to hold Him in his hands, to receive Him into his mouth and to distribute Him to the faithful," whilst at the same time "the angels stand about him in order to honor Him who is sacrificed." Hence the strict obligation incumbent on him to preserve his body and soul pure, and continually to work at his sanctification. "In the Lord", said the Seraphic Francis to his spiritual sons, "I entreat all my brethren, who are priests of the Most High, that, as often as they celebrate Mass, they be spotless and that they thus offer with purity the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." To animate them still more, he draws their attention to the Virgin who conceived our Lord by the power of the Holy Ghost and who, in the days of His childhood, touched Him with her most pure hands and carried Him in her most pure arms. And in truth, the priest has reason to regard with special veneration that Blessed One, the blessed Mary ever Virgin, of whom was born for us the God present in the Sacrament, and with peculiar fervor to endeavor to make his heart like unto her holy and immaculate heart. As Mary, in a marvellous manner, conceived and gave birth to the Son of God, the priest has received power to call Jesus Christ from heaven to earth. As Mary, standing constantly and to the last at the foot of the Cross, offered Her Divine Son to the Heavenly Father, in like manner does the priest offer Him daily upon the altar of the Cross. As Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, so are priests, the instruments of the Holy Ghost, to continue in the Church the mystery of the Incarnation for the salvation of men. As Mary gave herself unreservedly to God, the Church requires of her priests a cheerful and self-sacrificing love. As Mary, who conceived the Son of God and carried him in her womb, excelled as a vessel of the Holy Ghost (*vas spirituale*) all creatures in purity of heart, so Christ and the Church require a special purity of heart in the priest who places the Eucharistic Christ upon the altar, carries Him in his hands, receives Him and gives

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Pasqualigo tr. 1, q. 42—44. — Billot, De sacram. 1, 556 seqq.



Him to others, and thus in a more special manner appears as a vessel of the Holy Ghost. This Virgin is, consequently, the honor and joy of all good priests. A priest, inflamed with love for Christ in the Eucharist, clings also with the most tender devotion and truly filial love to the Virgin Mother of God, and such a sentiment obtains for him the special protection of this powerful Virgin. Under her auspices, he is enabled to live a pure life and to celebrate in a holy manner the true Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. His filial piety at all times urges him to implore the holy Virgin to permit him to participate in her profound humility, her exceptional purity and ardent charity. A priest, assiduously intent on this object, will learn from experience that the Mother of the Eternal Word will be propitious to him.<sup>1</sup>

#### 16. The Relation of the Sacrifice of the Mass to the Sacrifice of the Cross.

In the eucharistic celebration are found all the conditions essential to a sacrifice; hence it is a true and real sacrifice. The God-Man — His Body and His Blood — is in reality immolated upon the altar (*immolatur*), and not merely represented and offered (*offertur*) to the Heavenly Father. To the essential characteristics of the Eucharistic Sacrifice belongs its interior peculiar relation to the Sacrifice of the Cross. The sacrifices prior to Christ did indeed prefigure the future Sacrifice of the Cross; but the Sacrifice of the Mass is in an infinitely more perfect manner a copy of the Sacrifice of the Cross accomplished on Calvary. The Eucharist is in its nature a relative sacrifice, that is, a true sacrifice in itself, but which at the same time relates to the Sacrifice of the Cross and objectively represents it. It is in consequence of Christ's institution that this relation to the sacrificial death of Christ is an essential feature of the Mass. Whilst setting this forth, we shall also clearly show the identity of the Sacrifice of the Mass with that of the Cross, as well as the difference that exists between them.

1. Jesus Christ left to His Church in the Eucharist a true and real Sacrifice, "that by means of it that bloody Sacrifice, which He once offered on the Cross, may ever be represented and its remembrance be preserved until the end of the world, and its healing power be applied and spent for the remission of those sins daily committed by us."<sup>2</sup> According to the doctrine of the Church, the Holy Mass

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Neues Pastoralblatt für die Diöc. Augsburg., Jahrg. 1876, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Visibile sacrificium, quo cruentum illud, semel in cruce peragendum, repræsentaretur, ejusque memoria in finem usque sæculi permaneret, atque illius salutaris virtus in remissionem eorum, quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur, peccatorum applicaretur* (Trid. sess. 22, cap. 1). — According to the teaching of St. Thomas, the essence of the Eucharistic Sacrifice consists in the *immolatio Christi*; therefore, the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is also an *imago repræsentativa*, *repræsentatio*, *figura quædam et exemplum dominicæ passionis*, that is, a living likeness of the Passion of Christ, the actual representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross,

is not a mere memorial of sacrifice (*nuda commemoratio sacrificii in cruce peracti*), but a true memorial sacrifice, that is, a real sacrifice endowed with a commemorative character (*sacrificium commemorativum*). The Mass is not a mere shadowy copy, but the living and essential representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

a) That the celebration of the Eucharist is the representation of the sacrificial death of Christ, is evident even from the words of the institution. Our Lord Himself calls the Eucharistic Sacrifice the giving of His Body and the shedding of His Blood. In making choice of these words, He would not merely signify the true Sacrifice of His sacramental Body and Blood, but He would, at the same time, designate that the mode and manner of this Sacrifice by the mystical shedding of blood under the separate species should represent symbolically the violent separation of His body and blood, the real shedding of His blood on the Cross. — He then gives to His Apostles and to their successors in the priestly office the command and the power to celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of Him. — The Apostle explains and proves this command, by adding that the celebration of the Eucharist is of itself always an actual announcement of the death of Christ and must, therefore, be perpetuated among Christians until our Lord shall return in glory at the consummation of time to judge the world (1 Cor. 11, 26).

b) The sacramental offering of the Body and Blood of Christ on the altar is frequently styled in tradition the figure, the representation, the symbol (*typus, figura, imago, signum, symbolum*) of the passion and sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross. Gaudentius expresses himself happily on this subject: "Christ willed that His benefits should be permanently imparted to us; He willed that souls should be sanctified by the representation of His own passion (*per imaginem propriae passionis*). Therefore, He commissioned His faithful disciples, whom He ordained the first priests of His Church (*quos primos Ecclesiae suae constituit sacerdotes*), unceasingly to celebrate these mysteries of eternal life, which all priests should celebrate in all the churches of the universe until He returns from heaven, in order that the priests themselves and all believing nations also may have a copy (a true representation) of the passion of Christ (*exemplar passionis Christi*) daily before their eyes, may bear it in their hands, receive it into their mouths and hearts — and thus by this celebration the remembrance of our redemption may ever be indelibly impressed on their minds."<sup>1</sup> — St. Gregory the Great writes: "The Eucharistic Sacrifice preserves in a unique manner the soul from eternal perdition, as it renews mystically the death of the only-begotten Son of God (*nobis mortem Unigeniti per mysterium reparat*). Although Christ be risen from the dead, He dieth no

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and, consequently, it is, moreover, at the same time, the applicatio et participatio fructus dominicae passionis, namely, the application and participation of the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross. Cfr. S. Thom. 3, q. 83, a. 1 et 2.

<sup>1</sup> Sermo 2.



more, and death has no longer dominion over Him, yet in His immortal and imperishable life He is sacrificed anew for us in this mystery of sacred oblation (*pro nobis iterum in hoc mysterio sacrae oblationis immolatur*). Let us, therefore, consider attentively all that this Sacrifice (*sacrificium*) is for us, since for the remission of our sins it represents continually the passion of the only-begotten Son of God (*pro absolutione nostra passionem Unigeniti Filii semper imitatur*)."<sup>1</sup> In a similar sense, the words of consecration separately spoken over the bread and wine, which cause Christ's Body and Blood to be present under the separate species, are designated as a spiritual, reasonable and incorporeal sword, by which the Victim is slain upon the altar. Hence St. Gregory of Nazianzum addresses the following petition to Amphilocheus: "Delay not to pray for me, when by the word (of consecration) you call down the Word (= the Son of God), when by an unbloody separation you slay the Body and Blood of the Lord with the sacrificial knife of His word (*φωνήν ἔχων τὸ ξίφος*)."

c) Finally, how dear to Catholics and how wide-spread among them is devotion to and the hearing of the Holy Mass; they look upon it as a mystical representation, an unbloody celebration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ! — "To our churches Christ could not have given any more effectual or more proper means to preserve the remembrance of our redemption, than His Body and Blood, the price of our ransom. How could we be unmindful of our redemption, when we have before our eyes the Body of Christ mystically sacrificed in death for our salvation, and His Blood shed for our sins? At the very sight of these visible signs (in which we behold with unwavering faith the true Body and Blood of Christ) our hearts should be encouraged to think upon the redemption of the human race, saved by this Body and Blood, and we should be inflamed with devotion and be moved to implore from our inmost heart that God, on account of this holy and precious Sacrifice which in this Body and Blood was once offered for the redemption of mankind, may grant that it profit us for our reconciliation with Himself, and through His mercy for our salvation and beatitude. That this remembrance might remain in constant practice in the Church of Christ, He conferred upon His Apostles the priesthood of the New Law, commanding them to celebrate this Sacrifice: *Do this in commemoration of Me*." (Ein Vergissmeinnicht, p. 45.)

The words of the Saviour and of the Apostles, the teaching of the Fathers and the prayers of the liturgies, the conviction and acknowledgment of the faithful, place it beyond doubt that the celebration of the Eucharist has also for object to bring before our eyes and to represent to us Christ's sacrificial death, in order that the memory thereof may always be preserved fresh and living in all hearts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dialog. 1. 4, c. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Notandum, quia quotidianum nostrum sacrificium idem ipsum dicit (S. Chrysostomus) cum eo, quo Christus semel oblatus est in cruce, quantum at ean-

2. A painting or a crucifix may represent the Lord's death on the Cross; but this is a merely figurative and, consequently, an imperfect representation of that divine sacrificial drama, once enacted on Mount Calvary. Quite different, — infinitely more complete and actual, is the bloody sacrifice of Christ represented by the Mass. It is, namely, the real and objective, the living and essential representation of the Sacrifice of Redemption accomplished on the Cross.<sup>1</sup> — The reason for it lies in the inmost nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as it was instituted by Christ. Upon the altar appear the same Priest and the same Victim as upon the Cross. For in the Eucharist Jesus Christ offers Himself, His Body once immolated on the Cross and His Blood once shed on the Cross, with all the merits there acquired, in an unbloody yet in a real and true manner. — We should, moreover, consider the way and manner in which Christ's Body and Blood are to be offered. This consists in the mystical shedding of blood, that is, in the separate consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The separate species, under which Christ's Body and Blood are rendered present by virtue

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dem veram hic et ibi corporis Christi substantiam: quod vero nostrum quotidianum illius semel oblatis dicit esse *exemplum*, i. e. *figuram* vel *formam*, non dicit, ut hic vel ibi essentialiter alium Christum constituat, sed ut eundem in cruce semel, in altari quotidie alio modo immolari et offerri ostendat: ibi in veritate passionis, qua pro nobis occisus est, hic in *figura* et *imitatione passionis ipsius*, qua Christus non iterum vere patitur, sed *ipsius verae memoria passionis* quotidie nobis iteratur. . . . Non ergo est in ipsius Christi veritate *diversitas*, sed in *ipsius immolationis actione*, quae dum *veram Christi passionem et mortem quadam sua similitudine figurando repraesentat*, nos ad imitationem ipsius passionis invitet et accendat, contra hostem nos roboret et muniat, et a vitiis purgans et virtutibus condecorans, vitae aeternae nos idoneos ac dignos exhibeat (Alger. De sacramentis corp. et sanguin. domin., l. 1, c. 16, n. 109).

<sup>1</sup> Triplex habemus *memoriale passionis*, sc. in *scripto*, in *verbo* et in *sacramento*. — In *scripto*, ut quando passio describitur vel narratur per scripturam, vel quando imaginibus exprimitur; et hoc est *memoriale quasi mortuum* et habet fieri ad visum, qui apprehendit magis de longinquo. — In *verbo*, utpote cum aliquis verbotenus narrat passionem Christi; et illud *partim est vivum, partim mortuum*. *Vivum* est in corde bonorum praedicatorum, sed mortuum in corde tepidorum et malorum; vel *vivum* in corde et cogitatione, non *vivum* in voce; et hoc est ad *auditum*, auditus autem non ita apprehendit de longinquo. — In *sacramento* vero est memoriale, cum ipsum corpus Christi significatur et continetur in specie panis et sanguis in specie vini; et hoc est memoriale *vivum*, quia ipse Christus seipsum ibi praebet, offerens nobis corpus, quod pro nobis fuit occisum, et sanguinem, qui pro nobis fuit effusus, et hoc est ad *gustum*, qui de proximo apprehendit, ut jam non quasi speculatione, sed quadam experientia passionis ejus memores simus. — Si ergo accendit affectum nostrum passio *descripta*, et amplius ferventer *praedicata*; multo magis inflammare et afficere debet in hoc sacramento *expressa*. Et hoc absque dubio facit, si quis sensum habet et illum convertit ad hoc sacramentum. Ille ergo est, qui ex hoc sacramento efficaciam reportat, qui se convertit; ille vere audit Missam, non qui tantum verba dicit vel audit sine devotione, sed qui ad hoc memoriale totam mentis intentionem convertit (S. Bonav. 4, dist. 12, p. 2, a. 1, q. 1 ad 3).



of the words of consecration, that is, mystically immolated, are symbols of the violent and bloody death of Christ on the Cross.<sup>1</sup> The separation of Christ's Body and Blood takes place on the altar — of course, not in reality, but only in appearance: for the Eucharistic Victim can no longer be slain in a bloody (physical), but only in an unbloody (mystical) manner.<sup>2</sup> This mystical immolation, therefore, in consequence of which the Divine Victim under the two species appears "as if slain" (*tanquam occisus*), is well calculated to represent Christ's Body and Blood in that form of separation which took place on the Cross.<sup>3</sup> By this mystical blood-shedding, which brings the real shedding of blood on the Cross vividly to view, the Eucharistic Sacrifice becomes, in a most perfect manner, a memorial Sacrifice.

The distinct consecration of the elements of bread and wine, the separate representation of the Body and Blood of Christ under the two species, that is, the mystical shedding of blood, is, in virtue of the institution by Christ, absolutely necessary, not merely for the lawful, but also for the valid celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. If culpably or inculpably but one substance is consecrated, then Christ is indeed present under one species, but the Sacrifice is not accomplished, because an essential characteristic and requisite, namely, the twofold consecration, is wanting.<sup>4</sup> Hence it is of divine ordination, that both elements — bread and wine — must always be

<sup>1</sup> Consecratio utriusque speciei valet ad repraesentandam passionem Christi, in qua seorsim fuit sanguis a corpore separatus: unde et in forma consecrationis fit mentio de ejus effusione (S. Thom. 3, q. 76, a. 2 ad 1). — Ipsum corpus et sanguis Domini, ut sunt sub illis speciebus (panis et vini), signa sunt ejusdem corporis et sanguinis, ut fuerunt in cruce; repraesentat enim Eucharistia passionem Christi (Bellarm. De sacramento Eucharist., 1. 2, c. 15).

<sup>2</sup> Quod consecratio ex vi verborum ponat sub una specie corpus, non autem sanguinem, et sub altera specie sanguinem, non autem corpus, minime probat, consecrationem esse actionem realiter destructivam Christi, sed solum quod sit mystica mortis ejus repraesentatio: quia consecratio non pertingit ad causandam illam separationem inter corpus et sanguinem Christi in se, sed solum in *sacramento*, h. e. in *signo* et *repraesentatione* (Salmant. disp. 13, dub. 2, n. 38).

<sup>3</sup> Consecratio est maxime expressa significatio sacrificii crucis, quatenus per eam ex vi verborum seorsim ponitur sub specie panis corpus Christi velut occisum et sub specie vini sanguis velut effusus: unde haec separatio, quantum est ex vi verborum, passim dicitur *mystica Christi mactatio et immolatio* (Platelius, Synopsis tot. curs. theol. P. 5, cap. 4, § 6, n. 469).

<sup>4</sup> Ut hoc mysterium absolute et simpliciter sit *verum sacrificium*, prout a Christo est institutum, *essentialiter* requiritur *utriusque speciei consecratio*. . . quia de essentia hujus sacrificii est *expressa* repraesentatio mortis et passionis Christi; sed haec *intrinsece* requirit consecrationem *utriusque speciei*. . . quando sanguis statim post corpus *separatim* consecratur, quasi in viva imagine repraesentatur *ipsa effusio* sanguinis et consequenter *separatio* animae a corpore, quae ex effusione sanguinis secuta est; nam (ut Scriptura interdum loquitur) vita hominis in sanguine est et ideo solet anima per sanguinem repraesentari (Suarez disp. 75, sect. 6, n. 7). — Cfr. Salmant. De Euch. sacr. disp. 4, dub. 5, n. 92.

consecrated, in order that the Eucharistic Sacrifice may take place. Our Lord instituted the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar in this manner, because He willed that by its very nature it should be a visible representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, which was accomplished by a violent shedding of blood unto death.

3. The Holy Mass, accordingly, is a relative Sacrifice which, as a living copy, represents the original of the Sacrifice of the Cross. — Between the two there exists the most perfect unity (oneness), in so far as we consider the Victim and the Priest; for it is Christ who offers upon the altar His Body and His Blood, consequently, the same gift which He once offered on the Cross. — Still, the Sacrifice of the Mass and that of the Cross differ in several respects. The Church says that the way and manner of offering differs, that is, the sacrificial act is differently constituted (*ratio offerendi diversa* — Trid. sess. 22, cap. 2).<sup>1</sup> On the Cross, the Sacrifice of Christ consisted of the bloody offering of His life and divine self to an actual death: on the altar it consists also in the offering of His holy humanity, but in an unbloody manner, to the mystical sacramental death under the two Eucharistic species. — On Calvary Christ offered Himself in His own natural and human form, and without the assistance of a subordinate priest; He offers Himself here under the veil of the Sacrament and by the ministry of visible priests. — There the human nature of Christ was susceptible of suffering and death. — The Sacrifice of the Cross, therefore, was infinitely painful. Here on our altar His human nature is glorified and immortal — the Sacrifice of the Mass, consequently, is a Sacrifice free from pain. The object of the Sacrifice of the Cross was to obtain the price of the redemption of the world; the purpose of the Sacrifice of the Mass is to apply to individual man the treasures of grace merited and amassed by the Sacrifice on the Cross. — The bloody Sacrifice of the Cross Christ offered but once, in order to acquire for the redemption of

<sup>1</sup> In order to judge of the specific and numerical unity, of the dissimilarity of the sacrifices, the sacrificial offering and the sacrificing priest, as well as the sacrificial action must be taken under consideration. — The Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass are identical, that is, they are one and the same sacrifice, inasmuch as on the part of each there is *una eademque hostia* — *idem offerens* (Trid.). But, as in the bloody sacrifice the shedding of blood is real and only mystical in the unbloody sacrifice, the sacrificial act is different as well according to number (*numero*) as according to species (*specie*). Therefore, the majority of theologians rightly understand the words of the Council of Trent to mean, that “only the manner of offering varies” (*sola offerendi ratio diversa* = *modus sacrificandi diversus, actio sacrifici diversa*). — *Sacrificium Missae non differt specie aut essentia a sacrificio incruento, quod Christus obtulit in coena, distinguitur tamen numero et quibusdam accidentalibus conditionibus* (Suarez disp. 76, sect. 1, n. 2). — In like manner, the daily sacrifices of the altar, in consequence of the continually repeated sacrificial act, differ according to number (numerically), not merely from the Sacrifice of the Cross and from that of the Last Supper, but even from one another, — and only *ratione victimae et sacerdotis principaliter offerentis* are all these sacrifices identical. Cfr. Vasquez disp. 222, cap. 2. — Tanner disp. 5. de ss. Euch. et Miss. q. 9, dub. 2. — Pasqualigo, De sacrific. N. L., tr. 1, q. 52.



fallen man an inexhaustible treasure of satisfaction and merits ; the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar He often offers, in order to apply to us "the fruits of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross in a most abundant measure."<sup>1</sup> On the Cross, the inexhaustible fountain of eternal redemption was opened ; from the altar it perpetually pours forth its streams into the hearts of men. — Neither amid the glory of heaven nor in His sacramental state can Christ any longer merit, nor can He satisfy any more ; for by divine disposition both are possible only in this mortal life, that is, as long as we are pilgrims on earth. The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, draws its power and efficacy, its fruit from the Sacrifice of the Cross, that is, Holy Mass applies to us the graces and blessings of Calvary. On the Cross and upon the altar, consequently, there is the same sacrificial fruit ; the distinction consists only in this, that in the former it was merited, and in the latter it is applied.

4. Let us, in conclusion, adduce another difference. The Sacrifice of the Cross was exclusively the Sacrifice of Christ ; the Eucharist is, at the same time, the Sacrifice of the Church and that of Christ — inasmuch as the Church offers it and is offered together with it at the altar. Christ left the Eucharistic Sacrifice to His Church ; it is her chief dower, her glorious mine of wealth, her greatest joy, her all-hallowed sanctuary. At the altar she enters into living communion of sacrifice with Christ ; the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered not alone for the Church, but also by her and through her to the Most High. And this is the principal reason why the Eucharist is and is called the Sacrifice of the Church. — To this is added, moreover, the circumstance that the Church Militant during Holy Mass offers herself and is at the same time offered. Christ has placed Himself in the hands of the Church, that she may offer Him to the Heavenly Father ; with the infinitely meritorious and acceptable sacrifice to God of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Church unites the offering of herself. In union with the sacrifice of Christ the faithful should offer themselves with all their labors, sufferings and prayers, with body and soul. St. Augustine expresses this sentiment in an appropriate manner, when he says : "The whole body of the redeemed, that is, the society and communion of saints (of Christians), is presented to God as a joint sacrifice by the High-priest who in His passion also offered Himself for us in the form of a servant, that we might become the members of so exalted a Head. . . . The Church celebrates this in what is known to the faithful as the Sacrament of the Altar, in which she also is offered while offering it" (*in ea re, quam ipsa offert, ipsa offertur*). And in another place he says, that the Church as the mystical body of Christ "learns to offer herself through Him" (*se ipsam per ipsum discit offerre*).<sup>2</sup> — This truth obtains its most beautiful expression in the

<sup>1</sup> Quia fructu dominicæ passionis quotidie indigemus, propter quotidianos defectus, quotidie in Ecclesia regulariter hoc sacramentum offertur (S. Thom. 3, q. 83, a. 2).

<sup>2</sup> De civ. Dei 1. 10, c. 6. 20.

prayers and ceremonies of the rite of the Mass: it is signified not only by the mixing of wine with water, but, moreover, by the two sacrificial elements of bread and wine. As the Fathers remark, the bread is made of many grains of wheat and the wine from many grapes; therefore, the sacrificial bread, as well as the sacrificial wine, is a symbol of the mystical body of Christ, consisting of many members, which in union with the true and natural Body is offered on the altar.<sup>1</sup>

With Christ, in Christ and through Christ, the Church during Mass daily offers herself to the Most High "as a holy, living sacrifice, pleasing unto God" (Rom. 12, 1). — With Christ: at the sight of the Divine Victim, whose Body is daily mystically broken upon the altar and whose Blood is daily mystically shed before our eyes, she is encouraged and animated cheerfully to drink with Him of the chalice of bitter affliction, — to embrace with joy labors and sufferings, persecutions and calumnies. — In Christ: for in Him as her Head, that is, in her most intimate connection and fusion with His Sacrifice, the Church offers herself to tread the rough and lonely, the weary and painful way of the Cross, until she shall have arrived at the heavenly Jerusalem. — Through Christ: for the true and mystical Body of Christ (*corpus verum et mysticum*) constitutes the sole sacrifice, whose sweet odor ascends to Heaven, "through Christ our Lord," through whom alone we may approach to God, and by whom alone we can please Him.

How boundless in goodness, how unspeakably rich in mercies is the Lord in presenting us with so precious a Sacrifice! Let us also remember how highly favored we are, how enviable is our lot, since the well-beloved Son of the Eternal Father is and will forever remain our Victim, that we may not have to appear before God empty-handed, but may have a rich and worthy gift to offer Him, and that in union therewith we may offer ourselves also. Since He was once "born and given to us by the Immaculate Virgin" (*nobis natus, nobis datus ex intacta Virgine*), He wished to be always our own. His love can be requited only with love, and His sacrifice only with sacrifice!

5. From all that has hitherto been said concerning the relation of the Sacrifice of the Mass to that of the Cross, it is evident how distasteful and ridiculous is the offensively oft-repeated objection, that the Sacrifice of the Mass undervalues and detracts from the worth and dignity of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Sacrifice of the Altar is, by its very nature and very object, the living re-presentation of the Sacrifice of the Cross and the perpetual application of its fruits. — Therefore, the Mass does not cast Christ's death on the

<sup>1</sup> Quoniam corpus (Christi) mysticum est ex multis aggregatis in unum, talia elementa esse debuerunt, quae ex multis aggregantur in unum; tale autem est panis, quia est ex multis granis puris, tale etiam est vinum, quod est ex multis racemis puris; ideo recte unionem corporis Christi mystici signat (S. Bonavent. IV, dist. 11, p. 2, a. 1, q. 1).



Cross in the shade, but, on the contrary, rather sets it forth in the clearest and most refulgent light.<sup>1</sup> There certainly is not a more glorious testimony to the necessity and profitableness, to the inexhaustible graces and blessings of the bloody Sacrifice of redemption, than precisely this perpetual celebration of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist. At the altar millions draw and drink from the fountain of grace of the Sacrifice of the Cross, without its healing waters ever drying up or becoming diminished. — The bitter sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross should be profoundly engraved upon our minds, and should live unchangeably fresh in our memories and in our hearts. How can this be more easily and surely attained than by the daily celebration of the Eucharist, in which Christ's bloody sacrificial death, with all its blessings, is presented to us so vividly and so touchingly and, indeed, is even, in a certain sense, renewed? Where is the devotion to the passion and death of Christ more highly esteemed and more fervently cultivated, where is the love of the Cross and of the Crucified more strongly inculcated and more fervently practised than in the bosom of the Catholic Church, in which upon thousands of altars the bloody death of Christ is daily celebrated in an unbloody manner, mystically proclaimed and held in constant remembrance? Every altar is a mystical Mount Calvary, upon whose summit waves "the banner of the Cross," at the sight of which the believing soul, deeply moved, entering seriously into herself, exclaims: *Amor meus crucifixus est!* — "My Love is crucified!" But take away the memorial Sacrifice of the altar, and sooner or later the great Sacrifice of atonement, offered on Golgotha nearly nineteen centuries ago, will disappear in a mythical distance, and with it the personality of the Saviour and the entire work of the Redeemer will fall more or less into a deplorable oblivion.

"Ah! my own sweet Good, sovereign Lord and sweet Guest of my soul, I would fain ask yet one more question. Tell me, dear Lord, what advantage is to be derived from the Mass? Is it necessary that every day Thy death should be celebrated anew, for assuredly Thou didst enough for the whole world on Good Friday? Yes, though there had been a thousand worlds, Thou wouldst still have done sufficient for them all! — *Jesus Christ*: This I have done out of My great love, and for mankind have I planned this delightful invention of love; for since men daily need it because of their human frailty, I have willed that that worthy Sacrifice be daily offered anew for the sins and weakness of men, according to the

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<sup>1</sup> Nulla ratione sacrificium Missae, quod aiunt impii homines, derogat peracto in cruce sacrificio; quinimo ejus merita ac beneficia quam latissime propagat, atque in omnes uberrime diffundit. Siquidem Christus in hoc sacrificio pro iis, quos redemit, omnibus eundem pretiosum sanguinem et vulnera Patri suo ostendit ac offert, quibus ad dexteram ejus in coelis sedens gratiam nobis apud eum conciliat. Utrobique enim sempiterno sacerdotio fungitur, ut possit salvare in perpetuum accedentes per semet ipsum ad Deum, semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis (Hebr. 7, 25). Coll. Lac. III, 493.

words of St. Thomas: All the fruitfulness and advantages wrought by God on the day upon which He died, are daily to be found in every Holy Mass, and the same grace is received by all who partake worthily of the worthy Body of our Lord. — Our fervent desires should lead us to have a longing to assist at all the Masses celebrated throughout the world. At every Mass (at which we assist) we should endeavor to receive the Blessed Sacrament, recommending to God in our prayers all whom in our love we bear in mind, whether living or dead. In this manner, we participate not only in the Mass at which we assist, but, moreover, in all the Masses celebrated throughout the world." (Tauler.)

**17. The Value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as also the Reason and the Manner of its Efficacy.<sup>1</sup>**

In the midst of the earthly Paradise stood "the tree of life" (Gen. 2, 9), that is, the tree, the fruit of which was destined to impart to man perpetual youth, strength and beauty. It was a figure of the true tree of life, that stands in the midst of the new paradise, namely, of Holy Church. We are to understand by this true tree of life, first, the Cross of Christ, and then the Eucharist, which imparts fulness of heavenly and imperishable life to all who desire it. We have already investigated the root and the trunk of this tree of life; we must now endeavor to know the quality of its rare and plenteous fruit, "beautiful to behold and agreeable to the taste." This tree of life of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, planted by God in the garden of the Church, rears its blooming top high toward heaven, and spreads wide its shady branches over the earth, dropping down graces and blessings on all men. — The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass may also be considered as the golden bridge uniting heaven and earth, — for while clouds of incense of adoration and thanksgiving rise unceasingly from the altar to the throne of God, the blessed clouds of grace and mercy descend on mankind. *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis!* — "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!" (Luke 2, 14.) This Chant of the Angels, which at the birth of Christ resounded for the first time on the plains of Bethlehem, "as the voice of many waters," echoes and re-echoes throughout all ages, and finds its most splendid fulfilment in the celebration of the Eucharist. In as far as it is a Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, the Mass procures all honor and glory to God; inasmuch as it is a Sacrifice of propitiation and petition, it obtains for men the plenitude of peace, that is, of all graces and blessings.<sup>2</sup> That the Sacri-

<sup>1</sup> *Valor sacrificii* Missae est ipsa dignitas et virtus, qua pollet, ratione rei oblatae et principalis offerentis. — *Efficacia* est complexus effectuum ejus in se inspectorum et modus quo illos operatur. — *Fructus* est effectus sacrificii quatenus nobis applicatur (Schouppe, Element. theol. dogm., p. 2, c. 3, a. 2, n. 339).

<sup>2</sup> Tibi, Domine, sacrificia dicata reddantur: quae sic ad *honorem nominis tui* deferenda tribuisti, ut eadem *remedia* fieri nostra praestares (Secreta Dom. X. post Pent.).



fice of the Mass possesses in reality the above mentioned fourfold character of praise and thanksgiving, propitiation and petition, that in these four characteristics it unfolds its efficacy in a striking manner, is evident even from the fact that it not only replaces and transcends the figurative sacrifices of the Old Testament, but also that it infinitely surpasses them. For as the fulfilment and completion of the sacrifices prior to Christ, Holy Mass includes in itself all the goods foreboded by them.<sup>1</sup> Now, in the Old Law different sacrifices were prescribed for the above-named fourfold object; consequently, the Eucharistic Sacrifice alone must, in the most perfect manner, answer all these various objects for which sacrifices were chiefly offered.<sup>2</sup> The sole and perpetual Sacrifice of the New Testament, therefore, enables us to cancel all our indebtedness toward God and to fulfil all our obligations towards Him, to avert from ourselves all evils and to implore all favors. — However, before we explain that and how the Holy Mass is the most perfect sacrifice of praise and the most precious and worthy sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, and the fullest sacrifice of propitiation and the most powerful sacrifice of petition for men, some preliminary questions remain to be answered, relating to the value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as also to the reason and nature of its efficacy.

The value (*valor*) and efficacy (*efficacia*) of sacrifice in general depend chiefly upon its essence and form. The more excellent and precious the object sacrificed, the higher the dignity and holiness of the priest sacrificing, and also, the more perfect his intention and his sacrificial act, the more valuable in itself and the more efficacious for the attainment of its object will be the sacrifice. First and chiefly, we shall consider the person of him who sacrifices, as well as the way and manner of the sacrifice. As there are more than one person offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice, who offer it in different ways, we shall examine and explain its value and efficacy under this aspect.

1. First of all, the Eucharistic Sacrifice is to be considered in so far as in it Jesus Christ offers Himself, that is, He is not only the sacrificial gift, but also the most eminent sacrificer. In this respect the Sacrifice of the Mass is not inferior in value to that of the Cross: both are equally infinite, equally beyond all estimation and equally valuable. — The infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass consists, indeed, also in the immensity of the object offered; but principally in the infinite dignity of the sacrificing Man-God. The object offered on the altar is the richest and the most glorious, the very best and the most precious that can be imagined, for it is Christ Himself, His Body and Blood, His holy humanity, which of

<sup>1</sup> Haec oblatio illa est, quae per varias sacrificiorum, naturae et legis tempore, similitudines figurabatur, utpote quae bona omnia, per illa significata, velut illorum omnium consummatio et perfectio complectitur (Trident. sess. 22, cap. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Deus, cui, omnium sacrificiorum varietate finita, hostiam nunc offerimus singularem, adesto votis tua inspiratione conceptis (Liturg. Gallic.). — Legalium differentiam hostiarum unius sacrificii perfectione sanxisti (Secreta Dom. VII. post Pent.).

itself, that is, by virtue of its natural and supernatural prerogatives and perfections, is incomparably more noble and valuable than all other creatures, and which by the hypostatic union with the Eternal Word, in which it is offered, even attains and possesses infinite dignity and sublimity above every creature.<sup>1</sup> — But although Christ's precious Blood, which is mystically shed in the chalice, has an infinite, eternal and imperishable value, nevertheless, this of itself would not suffice to impart infinite value to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, since, for this purpose, it is requisite, above all, that the person who celebrates should possess infinite greatness and majesty, as is the case with the God-Man, and with Him alone. — Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin, offered her Son in the Temple and at the foot of the Cross; but, however holy and perfect her sentiments, however acceptable to God her offering may have been, still it was not infinite in value, not infinitely meritorious. The divine dignity and grandeur of the person sacrificing would, on the contrary, impart infinite value to a trifling gift. But since Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God and the Splendor of the glory of the Father, offers in the Mass His own self, His own flesh and blood, the Sacrifice of the Altar is in every respect infinitely valuable and precious.<sup>2</sup>

The infinite value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice must be distinguished still more minutely, that is, considered in a twofold sense. First, we may thereby mean the infinite grandeur, excellence and perfection peculiar to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, because Christ is the sacrificing priest and the victim offered. This value, this moral dignity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, depends upon the grandeur and holiness of Christ; inasmuch as He in the present sacrifices Himself and is sacrificed on the altar. — But if we understand thereby the infinite value of the satisfaction and merit, that is, the infinite price and ransom, the inexhaustible treasure of the redemption contained in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, it also originates from Christ, but not in so far as He now offers Himself on the altar, but in so far as He once offered Himself on the Cross; for by the Eucharistic Sacrificial act Christ can no longer make satisfaction and acquire merit, but merely constantly apply to us the treasure of merit fully acquired on the Cross.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christus secundum quod Deus, est dignitatis prorsus incomparabilis et immensae; secundum assumptam vero humanitatem ut Verbo aeterno unitam et omni gratiarum plenitudine perornatam, dignior est toto universo (Dion. Carthus. in 1. Petr. 2, 6).

<sup>2</sup> Res oblata in hoc sacrificio est infinita et offerens est etiam persona infinita, nempe Christus, qui est principalis offerens, et proinde actio quoque offerendi est infinita, utpote correspondens infinitati offerentis: ergo consurgit sacrificium valoris infiniti; nam non alia ratione sacrificium crucis fuit infinitum, nisi quia res oblata et offerens fuerunt infiniti (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 117, n. 9).

<sup>3</sup> Omnis efficacia hujus sacrificii debet fundari in aliquo merito et satisfactione Christi, sed non in novo merito et satisfactione, quae Christus habeat in-cruente offerendo. . . . Christus namque jam non est in statu merendi vel satisfaciendi. . . . ergo fundatur in merito et satisfactione, quae Christus habuit in vita mortali et in cruce consummavit (Suarez disp. 79, sect. 1, n. 10).



Now, if we consider the Eucharistic Sacrifice in itself, that is, the divine dignity of the Sacrificing Priest and Victim,<sup>1</sup> as well as the inscrutable treasures therein enclosed of the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross, we then perceive how Holy Mass possesses a value absolutely infinite. As an infinitely valuable and infinitely perfect sacrifice, the Holy Mass evidently possesses also power infinitely great to produce those effects which by Christ's institution belong to it and are peculiar to it. But, it may be asked further, are the effects actually brought forth by the infinitely valuable and efficacious Sacrifice of the Altar, likewise infinite and unlimited, or are they not rather finite and limited? In order to answer this question, we must consider the Eucharistic Sacrifice in its relation to God, to whom it is offered, and afterward in its relation to man, for whom it is offered.

In sacrifice its relation to God is always the first and the most essential feature, since according to its very nature, sacrifice is an act of religion. Therefore, the Sacrifice of the Mass is primarily to be regarded as an act of divine worship (*λατρεία*). It serves to honor and glorify God not only in its quality of a sacrifice of praise, adoration and thanksgiving, but also as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, for God is always honored and glorified, — both when we endeavor to appease His justice and to move His goodness to impart graces to us, and also when we worship His majesty and pay Him our grateful thanks for His liberality. Since the Eucharist, in reference to all these ends, possesses infinite value and infinite power, that is, since it is a Sacrifice infinitely worthy and perfect of adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation and petition, there is given to God on the altar always the greatest possible, that is, infinitely great, homage. If, therefore, we consider the feature of *latría*, or divine worship, which chiefly consists in adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and also in propitiation and petition, then beyond a doubt the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice contains in itself a worship of infinite value and, in fact, renders it to the Most High. In this connection, the Sacrifice of Christ, which in itself is infinite, always displays its full power: — for by the celebration of the Mass the triune God infallibly and at all times receives a truly infinite homage, that is, perfectly worthy adoration, praise and thanksgiving.

But the case is different when the Eucharistic Sacrifice is considered in its relation to man. From this point of view it aims at procuring our salvation and sanctification, and is, consequently, a means of grace, or rather a source of grace, bringing us the riches of heavenly blessings. The Mass, especially as a sacrifice of propitiation and petition, produces for men the operations of grace. Assuredly, acts of propitiation and petition are offered to God in the Mass, but with the intent and purpose that He may be moved by

<sup>1</sup> *Dignitas carnis Christi non est aestimanda solum secundum carnis naturam, sed secundum personam assumentem, in quantum sc. erat caro Dei, ex quo habebat dignitatem infinitam* (S. Thom. 3, q. 48, a. 2 ad 3).

reason of the sacrifice of propitiation and petition to restore us again to His favor and to impart to us His gifts. As has already been indicated, the value and dignity, that is, the intrinsic efficacy, of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is infinitely great in this respect also, that is, in appeasing an irritated God and moving His mercy to grant us His benefits. For the entire ransom paid for our redemption, the immense treasure of satisfaction and merit which was acquired on the Cross, are all upon the altar ever presented anew and offered by Christ to His Heavenly Father, that they may be applied to mankind. The Sacrifice of the Mass, accordingly, contains not only a superabundant atonement for the remission of all possible sins and punishments, but also an inexhaustible fund for the purchasing of innumerable graces and goods. Nevertheless, — as it is in the nature of things — the Mass cannot produce for man or in man infinite effects. For positively infinite effects are impossible as to number or magnitude; nor would the finite creature be capable of receiving them. The fruits which the Sacrifice of the Mass obtains for us from God are only finite, that is, restricted to a certain number and determined measure, as is also the case in the Sacrifice of the Cross.<sup>1</sup> The Sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, with respect to man can have only a restricted efficacy, and in its fruits is capable of only a limited application. This restriction and limitation of the fruits of the Eucharistic Sacrifice may be understood in a two-fold sense — intensive and extensive.

The Sacrifice of the Mass does not always produce effects so great and so manifold as the capacity of the recipients would warrant; it acts rather in an intensively limited degree, that is, its effects are restricted to a definite measure, even if they are different in individual cases — sometimes greater, sometimes less. — This is confirmed by the practice of the Church, according to which the Holy Sacrifice is not seldom repeatedly offered for obtaining some benefit, for example, the deliverance of a suffering soul from purgatory, the conversion of a sinner, health of body. If the Eucharistic Sacrifice always yielded the entire efficacy of which it is capable, a single holy Mass would actually suffice to obtain as many and as great blessings as are desired. — Evidently the reason of its limited efficacy does not lie in the essence and value of the Sacrifice, since it possesses infinite power for producing every effect; nor is it solely and alone due to the greater or less susceptibility of the person for whom the fruit of the Sacrifice is applied. This susceptibility, nevertheless, is duly considered therein, for it exerts its influence upon the measure of the fruit of the sacrifice to be obtained; but the final and decisive reason for the more or less plentiful application of the sacrificial graces is the will of Christ, in other words, is to be

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<sup>1</sup> Quoad efficaciam sacrificium Eucharistiae non potest esse infinitum, cum nec sacrificium crucis hoc habuerit, quia efficacia respicit effectum in re ipsa dandum; non datur autem nec dari potest effectus infinite intensus (Suarez disp. 79, sect. 9).



sought in the positive ordinance of God.<sup>1</sup> The Sacrifice of the Mass is a means of grace; for it is intended to convey to us the riches of redemption. But for this there is need of a positive ordinance on the part of God. The Eucharistic Sacrifice can communicate graces to us only in as much and in as far as it is destined by God for this purpose. Now, in the distribution of His gifts, God requires our co-operation; the better our preparation, the more liberal is He, as a rule, in the dispensation of His graces. This is the case not only with the Sacraments, but also in regard to the Holy Mass. The greatness of the fruit of the Sacrifice to be derived by us, therefore, is determined by God, but with regard to the dispositions of those for whom the Mass is offered. — But here above all the good pleasure and the wise providence of God, who lovingly ordains all things, must be taken into consideration; then the merciful will of the High Priest Jesus Christ, who offers and presents on the altar the price of His Blood to the Heavenly Father for specific effects, more or less great; finally, also the subjective state of the recipient of the effects of the Sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> — As we are bound to pray without intermission, the Sacrifice also must be offered without ceasing, in order that we may obtain the fruit and the graces desired. God has so ordained it, because the uninterrupted celebration of the Mass more effectually promotes His honor and our salvation.

b) The other much discussed question is practically of greater importance, namely, whether the effects of the Sacrifice of the Mass considered as to its extension, that is, in relation to the participants, be unlimited, or rather, on the contrary, limited and restricted. — Here we must make a distinction. The faithful who personally and

<sup>1</sup> Instituit et voluit Christus Deus, ut sacrificium offeratur et prosit ad finitum tantum et certum effectum satisfactionis et impetrationis, a se determinandum ac juxta dispositionem offerentium dispensandum, ut ideo tantum sacrificium frequentius et ferventius offeratur. Et confirmat hanc doctrinam efficaciter praxis Ecclesiae, quae est infallibilis interpret institutiois Christi: et ipsa ad eundem effectum obtinendum, ut maxime pro eadem anima defuncta multas Missas offerre consuevit, eo ipso indicans, valorem seu fructum unius sacrificii esse finitum et limitatum. Quodsi enim fructus satisfactorius esset infinitus, ut quamvis poenam majorem et majorem in infinitum delere possit, posset unico sacrificio totum Purgatorium exhauriri, nedum una anima, quamvis gravibus poenis obnoxia, liberari: ad quid ergo tot repetita sacra pro defunctis, etiam unica anima? Et si fructus impetratorius esset infinitus, ita ut unico sacrificio posset impetrari quodcunque bonum majus et majus in infinitum, certo et infallibiliter, quid opus esset pro eadem re impetranda, v. g. sanitate, serenitate aeris, peste avertenda, multiplicari tot sacra juxta praxim Ecclesiae? (Sporer, Theol. sacram., P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 3, § 3).

<sup>2</sup> Efficacia sacrificii est limitata ex institutione Christi. Quia cum consistat in applicatione virtutis sacrificii crucis, unde habet, quod sit applicativum ipsius, habet etiam, quod applicet secundum hanc vel illam mensuram. Habet autem ex institutione, quod sit applicativum virtutis sacrificii crucis (Trident. sess. 22, cap. 1). Efficacia ita est determinata, ut tamen habeat operari secundum mensuram dispositionis. Determinatio non tollit, quin effectus crescat ad mensuram dispositionis. Unde est veluti duplex determinatio: altera independens a dispositione et altera respiciens dispositionem (Pasqualigo, De sacrific. N. L., tr. 1, q. 119).

actively take part in the Sacrifice, that is, who devoutly assist thereat and unite in the celebration, gain thereby a special sacrificial fruit. This fruit, obtained by participation in the Sacrifice, is, as is universally admitted,<sup>1</sup> of unlimited extension, that is, it is applied undiminished, undecreased to all present, however numerous they may be. Whether there be many or few assembled around the altar, — each receives undiminished the whole and full fruit of grace, corresponding to his zeal, his intention, his devotion and his piety. — When several priests celebrate, that is, consecrate the same sacrificial species, as is the case at the ordination of priests and the consecration of bishops, we have in reality not merely one Sacrifice; for each of the celebrating priests performs a true sacrificial act and, consequently, each one's sacrificial act bears fruit entirely equivalent to that same which would result, had he alone celebrated the Mass.<sup>2</sup>

The question that now engages our attention, relates to another fruit, namely, to that fruit which, by special application of the priest, is imparted to some particular person or persons. The question is, does the Sacrifice of the Mass, when it is offered for many, impart to each the entire fruit, that is, as much fruit as it would have procured an individual, had it been offered for him alone, — or does the intensive-limited, sacrificial fruit, divided among the many, thus become proportionately less for each individual participant, the greater the number of those for whom the Sacrifice is especially offered? Some theologians of ancient times, and more still of recent date, answer the former question in the affirmative and the latter in the negative, that is, they assert, but probably without solid proof, that an extensive-unlimited efficacy of the Sacrifice is applied to the many. The majority of theologians, on the contrary, maintain, with full right, that the fruit of the Mass is divided among many individuals and becomes thereby proportionately less for each one, the greater the number of the participants for whom it is offered.<sup>3</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> Quod hic fructus non minuat in singulis ex aliorum consortio, a nemine, ut arbitror, negari potest (Suarez, disp. 79, sect. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Fructus sacrificii per respectum ad offerentes sive primarios ut sacerdotes, sive secundarios ut assistentes, potest dici infinitus syncategorematicè, i. e. major et major, si plures et plures fuerint offerentes. Ratio est, quia fructus proportionatur offerentium concursui: ergo quo magis augetur vel multiplicatur ille concursus, eo magis augetur et multiplicatur fructus; unde singuli tantum fructum obtinent, quantum obtinerent, si soli in suo ordine offerrent; et ideo non minorem fructum recipiunt Neo-mystae consecrantes cum Episcopo (si vere consecrent) ac si singuli consecrarent seorsim, sicut nec minorem habent mille assistentes sacrificio quam si quilibet assisteret solus. Cujus ratio ulterior est, quod multiplicatis offerentibus, multiplicantur et oblationes (Henno, de Euchar. sacram. disp. 11, quaest. 7, concl. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Sententia communior et verior negat simpliciter hanc infinitatem (extensivam) in Missae sacrificio (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 12, n. 264). — Effectus sacrificii, respondens oblationi uniuscujusque sacerdotis, quem ipse suo arbitratu potest aliis per modum operis operati applicare, finitus est; qui proinde diminuitur tanto magis in singulis, quanto in plures dividitur, ut ex communi contra nonnullos superius



By its nature the Mass could, nevertheless, show forth an extensive-unlimited efficacy, had it been thus ordained by Christ; for it depends wholly on the will of Christ. But that Christ did impart to the Eucharistic Sacrifice such an efficacy, cannot be proved. The opinion and practice of the Church, so important in such matters, is rather the opposite. For centuries, yes, from Apostolic times, the Church approves of and encourages the custom of offering the Mass specially for individuals. Now, it would evidently seem to favor a practice unwise and detrimental to the faithful, if the Mass could procure for hundreds and thousands, yes, for all equally great advantages, as much for the many as for one individual. By the special application in behalf of individuals, an immense amount of fruit would be lost to the remainder of the faithful, who, without reason, would be excluded from this gain. Why, then, should not the Sacrifice of the Mass be continually offered for all, the living as well as the dead? <sup>1</sup> — By the decision of the Church it has been determined, that a priest who receives several stipends and, in return, celebrates but one Mass, sins not only against the commandment of the Church, but also against justice (*contra justitiam*), and, consequently, he is obliged to make restitution. This presupposes that the individuals offering stipends in a case of the kind are actually wronged, that is, that they do not receive as much fruit from the Sacrifice as the exclusive application of the Mass would procure for each individual. — The intrinsic reason consists chiefly in the circumstance, that the sacrificial fruit in question is intensive-limited, that is, the fruit is confined to a certain measure. <sup>2</sup> Now, nothing justifies the assertion that this fruit ever increases by the mere fact of the priest's offering the Mass for several, and that thus this presupposed fruit is communicated undivided to each and every one. <sup>3</sup> —

dictum (Tanner tom. IV. disp. 5, quaest. 9, dub. 4, n. 106). — Dicendum est, efficaciam sacrificii quoad fructum medium seu fructum applicabilem a sacerdote esse determinatam seu finitam extensive, ita ut *quo magis extenditur, eo magis minuitur* (Pasqualigo l. c. tr. I, q. 123).

<sup>1</sup> Si sacrificium tantum prodest omnibus et singulis, quantum si pro uno tantum applicetur, cur non applicantur omnes Missae pro omnibus defunctis, imo et pro omnibus vivis et pro omnibus aliis necessitatibus? (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 12, n. 246.)

<sup>2</sup> Ad illud quod obicitur de sacrificio crucis et altaris, dicendum, quod quamvis idem sit, non tamen utrobique uniformiter; nam in cruce effusus est pretium in *inimoda plenitudine*, sed in altari habet *effectum determinatum*, cum quotidie assumatur. Et propter hoc prima oblatio non iteratur, sed secunda iteratur (S. Bonav. IV, dist. 45, a. 2, q. 3 ad 4).

<sup>3</sup> Quamvis virtus Christi, qui continetur sub sacramento Eucharistiae, sit *infinita*, tamen *determinatus* est *effectus* ad quem illud sacramentum (also as Sacrifice) *ordinatur*. Unde non oportet quod per unum altaris sacrificium tota poena eorum, qui sunt in purgatorio, expietur, sicut etiam nec per unum sacrificium, quod aliquis offert, liberatur a tota satisfactione debita pro peccatis: unde et quandoque plures missae in satisfactionem unius peccati injunguntur (S. Th. Supplem. q. 71, a. 14 ad 2).

Accordingly, the universal conviction of the Catholic people, that a Mass celebrated exclusively for an individual is of more benefit to him than if it were at the same time offered for others, is entirely founded on truth. — The reasons adduced show that the sacrificial fruit in question, taken in its entirety, is limited as to its extension. We make this remark, because some theologians draw here a distinction between the effects that the Mass produces as a Sacrifice of propitiation, and the effects it operates as a Sacrifice of petition. They are of opinion, namely, that although the fruit of propitiation (*propitiatio*) is limited as to its extension to a certain measure, but not the fruit to be obtained by way of petition.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the latter, they hold the application to be unlimited as to its extension; but the reasons they allege for this merely prove, that this application is possible in virtue of the infinite value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, but not that it was really intended by Christ and, therefore, actually takes place.<sup>2</sup>

Up to the present time, we have considered the value and efficacy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in so far as Christ is not only the victim, but also the sacrificing priest, in other words, in as far as the visible priest accomplishes and offers the Sacrifice as the servant and living instrument of Christ. From this aspect, the Holy Mass is that essential, therefore always and everywhere "clean oblation", which cannot be defiled by any unworthiness or sinfulness either of the celebrating priest or of the faithful assisting thereat, that is, become displeasing to God, or diminished in value or efficacy. Inasmuch as Christ Himself offers His own self by the hands of His visible representative, the value, efficacy and fruit of the Sacrifice of the altar do not depend upon the holiness and devotion of the priest and faithful, but solely and only on the infinite dignity of Christ and the merits which He acquired on the Cross.<sup>3</sup> This is what is meant, when it is said that the Sacrifice of Christ is always pleasing to God and efficacious *ex opere operato*, that is, by virtue of its valid per-

<sup>1</sup> Qui non offerunt, ii non aequalem partem accipiunt, si pro pluribus ac si pro uno dumtaxat offerretur. . . *ad satisfactionem* loquor; *ad impetrationem* namque nulla vis minor in sacrificio est, quod pro multis offertur, quam in eo, quod pro uno solo (Canus, De locis theolog., l. 12, c. 13, argum. 10).

<sup>2</sup> Etsi sacrificium ex parte rei oblatae et principalis offerentis, sc. Christi, sit infinitae virtutis, non tamen, ita ejus institutore Christo volente, infinitos producit effectus: secus si finem excipias colendi Deum et supremum patriae actum, qui sane ex qualibet quantumvis crebro repetita divinae victimae oblatione semper Deo exhibetur, superflua esset ejusdem iteratio; semel autem posito quod effectus sacrificii finitus sit, perspicuum jam est, illud plus ei prodesse, cui applicatur, quam aliis: nam aut consideratur tanquam propitiatorium seu satisfactorium et certe pro illo speciatim satisfacit, in cujus debiti solutionem Deo exhibetur, aut consideratur tanquam impetratorium et profecto ad beneficia illi uberius elargienda Deum movet, pro quo nominatim sacerdos divinam hostiam immolans Deum exorat (Bened. XIV. de ss. Missae sacrific. l. 3, c. 21, n. 6).

<sup>3</sup> Nullum catholicum contradicentem invenio ideoque certam existimo hanc veritatem (Suarez disp. 79, sect. 1).



formance without any further human co-operation. This fruit, which has its foundation immediately and solely in Christ and His infinite merits, is the greatest and most precious of the Sacrifice, the essential or real sacrificial fruit: it is always meant, when reference is made to the fruit of the Mass.

2. In the second place, the value and efficacy of the Sacrifice are to be considered, inasmuch as the celebration of it is an act of the united Church, or, in other words, inasmuch as the priest in the name and by the commission of the entire Church performs this sacred function at the altar. The Eucharistic Sacrifice and the prayers of the Breviary form the principal part of public divine worship, which by the ordinance and for the welfare of the Church, is conducted by ministers specially ordained and appointed for this purpose. At the altar the united Church offers and prays through the priest, her representative and delegate; there she presents to God the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of propitiation and petition. Under this aspect, the value and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass is measured by the dignity, merit and sanctity of the Church. From this it follows that the value of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, inasmuch as the Church offers it, is always finite and limited, for at no time has she been nor can she be infinitely holy. It is self-evident that on the part of the Church the effects which follow the celebration of Mass are always limited as to degree and greatness. It must here be noted, however, that the Church, inasmuch as she offers the Holy Sacrifice and prays through the priest, cannot merit and satisfy, since for this is required a positive action or suffering of a person pleasing to God. But in the celebration of Mass, there is, on the part of the Church, no such positive activity, to which could be attached the power of meriting or satisfying. Accordingly, the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by the Church has only impetratory power, that is, she can draw down graces and blessings from Heaven only by way of petition.<sup>1</sup>

Holiness is an essential mark of the Church and, therefore, it can never be wanting to her; the Church ever shines in the splendor and adornment of purity, for she is the Spouse of Christ. Consequently, the Sacrifice, offered by her hands, accompanied with many petitions and supplications, is always favorably regarded and received by God, and rewarded by Him with bountiful graces and

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<sup>1</sup> Quatenus Missa nomine totius Ecclesiae offertur, propitiatorium non habet effectum; nam quamvis sacerdos ab Ecclesiae superioribus deputetur, ut nomine omnium fidelium celebret, omnesque fideles in hanc deputationem saltem implicite consentiant, nihilominus in singulis Missae oblationibus haec Ecclesiae voluntas non existit nisi habitualiter. Atqui nemo potest mereri aut pro peccato satisfacere, nisi quando actu operatur, ac proinde ex illa habituali Ecclesiae oblatione propitiationis fructus profluere nequit. . . *Ipsa Ecclesia*, Missam per sacerdotem tanquam per suum legatum offerendo, apud Deum *impetrat*; nam hic non obstat defectus voluntatis actualis, siquidem oratio non minus per legatum ac proprio postulantis actu fieri possit (Lambrecht, De ss. Missae sacrif. P. 4, c. 1, § 2. 3).

blessings. But since the holiness of the Church consists in the sanctity of her members, it is not always and invariably the same, but greater at one period than at another; therefore, the Sacrifice of the Church is also at one time in a greater, at another in a less degree pleasing to God and beneficial to man.<sup>1</sup>

The Church not only offers the Sacrifice, but she moreover unites with its offering various prayers and ceremonies. The sacrificial rites are carried out in the name of the Church and, therefore, powerfully move God to impart His favors and extend His bounty to the living and the dead. By reason of the variety of the formulas of the Mass, the impetratory efficacy of the Sacrifice can be increased in an accidental way, and the efficacy be directed in a special manner to different objects. — The sacrificial fruit to be obtained by petition, through the mediation of the Church, is neither as to kind nor degree previously determined and limited. Therefore, the Church herself in her prayers is accustomed so to express her intentions and desires, that it can be known what benefits she wishes to obtain by the Mass and to whom she wills to apply them. Hence special prayers are more useful and more beneficial than general ones.<sup>2</sup> Not only the degree of holiness of the Church, but also the nature of the prayers of the Mass and even of its whole rite exerts accordingly an influence upon the measure and nature of the fruits of the Sacrifice. — From what has been said there follow several interesting consequences. Among others, that, on the part of the Church, a High Mass solemnly celebrated has greater value and efficacy than merely a low Mass;<sup>3</sup> — and also with regard to the Church's impetratory power a Votive or a Requiem Mass for a special intention is more valuable and efficacious than a Mass harmonizing with the Office of the day.

At a Solemn High Mass the external display is richer and more brilliant than at a low Mass; for at a solemn celebration the Church, in order to elevate the dignity of the Sacrifice, manifests greater pomp, and God is more glorified thereby. Let us consider the assistants (deacon, sub-deacon, acolytes), the precious vestments and sacred vessels, the greater number of lights, the incensing and the choral singing. This grander and more solemn celebration of the

<sup>1</sup> Purifica nos, misericors Deus: ut *Ecclesiae* tuae preces, quae tibi *gratae* sunt, pia munera deferentes, fiant *expitiis mentibus gratiores* (Secr. in fer. V. post Dom. IV. Quadrag.).

<sup>2</sup> Orationes eo magis et efficacius impetrant, quo sunt magis propriae et expressae (Quarti, In Rubr. Missal. P. I, tit. 5, dub. 7).

<sup>3</sup> Quo solemnior est Missa, nempe cum pluribus assistantibus ministerialiter, cum pluribus cantantibus consuetas preces, cum pluribus luminibus, cum pretiosioribus vestibus sacris, eo magis est fructuosum sacrificium ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis. Ratio est quia haec omnia augent pompam et majestatem sacrificii atque adeo etiam sensibilem cultum Dei et consequenter augent aestimabilitatem sacrificii et plures actiones satisfactoriae interveniunt. Efficacia autem sacrificii ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis crescit secundum mensuram aestimabilitatis, quam recipit ab ipsa Ecclesia (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. I, q. 131, n. 16).



Sacrifice is more acceptable to God and, therefore, better calculated to prevail upon Him to grant us, in His mercy, the favors we implore; — that is, to impart greater efficacy to the petitions and supplications of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Votive Masses deviate from the office of the day, and hence may be celebrated only for a reasonable motive and only on certain days. They are offered for special intentions and according to special formulas answering to the particular purposes. These liturgical formulas are, with respect to their contents, that is, their collects and lessons, so arranged, that the desired object or intention, for which the Mass is offered, can be the more easily and more surely attained. From this it follows that the Votive Mass in regard to the special intention possesses a greater impetratory power on the part of the Church than the ordinary Mass of the day.

The same may be said of Requiem Masses.<sup>2</sup> Their whole rite aims so much and so exclusively to implore for the suffering souls comfort, alleviation and abridgment of their pains, as to admit of

<sup>1</sup> Dicendum, Missam solemnem esse magis efficacem ad impetrandum pro eo, pro quo sacrificium offertur, quantum est ex parte oblationis Ecclesiae. In Missa solemni interveniunt plura ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis, quae augent majestatem sacrificii et acceptabilitatem apud Deum et quae valde augent cultum et obsequium Deo exhibitum: ergo augent etiam efficaciam ipsius ad impetrandum, quia efficacia impetrandi consistit in eo, quod adsint motiva apta ad movendum Deum ad concedendum, quod petitur. — Supponendum est, quod quando cum hac solemnitate offertur sacrificium ad instantiam alterius, non solum pro ipso offertur nudum sacrificium, sed tota illa solemnitas, quae stat in persona Ecclesiae, ordinatur simul cum sacrificio ad ipsius utilitatem. Quod ex eo constat; nam qui petit offerri pro se sacrificium cum tali solemnitate, nedum petit nudam oblationem, sed etiam illam solemnitatem, et ideo, qui se obligat, nedum se obligat ad sacrificium, sed etiam ad solemnitatem et ad exhibendum Deo hujusmodi cultum cum tota illa pompa in ejusdem beneficium. Deinde cum Ecclesia per suum ministrum applicet sacrificium ad favorem petentis, applicat etiam omnia connexa, cum quibus in persona ipsius offertur, et ideo stante applicatione sacrificii ex determinatione Ecclesiae, remanet etiam applicatus totus cultus, qui consurgit ex pompa et solemnitate sacrificii (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 131).

<sup>2</sup> Quod Missa de Requiem magis prosit defunctis, quam quaelibet alia Missa, ex eo manifeste constat, quod habet specialem fructum ordinatum ad suffragandum ipsis, quem non habent ceterae Missae. Siquidem cum preces, quae in ipsis recitantur, et totus ritus sit institutus ab Ecclesia pro suffragio defunctorum, et nomine Ecclesiae preces illae Deo offerantur, intervenit ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis aliquis specialis fructus seu suffragium, quod non intervenit in aliis Missis. Et cum Ecclesia sit sancta et Deo accepta, non possunt non esse acceptae preces ipsius et suffragia exhibita pro defuncto. Et proinde Missae de Requiem ex parte Ecclesiae offerentis magis prosunt defunctis (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 287). — In officio Missae non solum est sacrificium, sed etiam sunt ibi orationes. . . Ex parte ergo sacrificii oblata Missa aequaliter prodest defuncto, de quo-cunque dicatur; et hoc est praecipuum quod fit in Missa. Sed ex parte orationum magis prodest illa, in qua sunt orationes ad hoc determinatae. Sed tamen iste defectus recompensari potest per majorem devotionem vel ejus qui dicit Missam vel ejus qui jubet dici vel iterum per intercessionem Sancti, cujus suffragium in Missa imploratur (S. Thom. Supplem. q. 71, a. 9 ad 5).

no Collect whatever for the living. As a tenderly interested Mother, the Church makes every effort to free her suffering children from purgatory and to lead them to eternal rest.

The essential fruit of the Mass has its immediate and only source in the self-immolation of Christ, and is, therefore, independent of the contents of the formulas of the Mass Rite of the Church. Hence there is here question only of the accidental, or subordinate, fruit, arising from the liturgical prayers of the Mass, but added to the essential fruit, and benefitting directly those for whom the Mass is celebrated. Now, if the priest, when obliged to offer a Votive Mass on a day permissible by the rubrics, does not then satisfy his obligation, if he says the Mass of the day, nevertheless, this must be understood of a perfect satisfaction of his obligation, for the essential fruit of the Sacrifice is the same in all Masses, and he is in this case not obliged to make restitution.<sup>1</sup> — We see from several decrees, that the Church is far more reluctant in permitting the Mass of the day to be said instead of the prescribed Votive Mass than instead of a Requiem Mass.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this may be that in Masses for the suffering souls the fruit of the Sacrifice depends chiefly on its satisfactory effect, which is independent of the rite, while in Votive Masses the impetratory fruit is more prominent and principally intended; in this respect the liturgical prayers of the Mass are specially efficacious, particularly when they are, as is the case in the formulas for Votive Masses, chiefly composed with regard to specified intentions.

This efficacy and fruit of the Sacrifice, like the essential sacrificial fruit, is likewise independent of the worthiness or unworthiness of the officiating priest, and it can in regard to him be called *ex opere operato*; but with respect to the Church it is *quasi ex opere operantis*. This impetratory fruit on the part of the Church is entirely wanting in the Mass, when an interdicted priest celebrates it, for such a one cannot offer and pray in the name of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Certum est, quod hujusmodi sacrificantes, dummodo Missam applicent ad finem praescriptum, ad restitutionem minime tenentur, quia fructus principalis et satisfactorius, cui respondet stipendium, aequalis est in Missis omnibus (Cavalieri III, c. 10, n. 19). — This *non satisfacere* in such cases is of itself only a venial sin.

<sup>2</sup> On days that the rubrics do not prohibit, the private votive Mass must always be celebrated, if one be bound to such, since the Church has declared the application of the daily Mass in this case insufficient; while, on the other hand, she declares that the priest fulfils his obligation to the celebration of a non-privileged Mass for the departed even when he adheres to the rite of the day, although the celebration of a Requiem Mass be then allowed, — with two exceptions, however; namely, if the Requiem Mass is expressly desired or required for gaining the indulgence of the privileged altar (S. R. C. 12. Sept. 1840). Hence on all days on which there is an impediment, the private Requiem Mass, but not the private Votive Mass, may always be satisfactorily replaced by celebrating the Mass of the day; for as is evident from some of the decisions of the S. R. C., a dispensation of the Apostolic See is necessarily required, that on these days *oneri Missae votivae satisfieri possit*.

<sup>3</sup> Sacerdos in missa, in *orationibus* quidem loquitur in *persona Ecclesiae*, in



3. Thirdly, the value and efficacy of the Mass are to be considered, inasmuch as its celebration is a personal good work of the officiating priest and of the faithful assisting thereat. The priest who celebrates the Mass and the faithful who participate therein by hearing it, by serving at the altar, by giving a stipend, by procuring the requisite sacred vessels, &c., perform, without doubt, the holiest and most salutary of the acts of divine worship; for the Church herself says, that there "can be no other work so holy and so divine performed by the faithful" than the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Considered from this point of view, the value of the Sacrifice of the Mass is evidently only finite, its efficacy only limited and its fruitfulness only a restricted one. — The celebration of the Mass by the priest and the participation of the faithful in this most sacred function have, if the required conditions be complied with, like every other good work, not merely the power to obtain favors and blessings, but to remit the temporal punishment of sin, and also to merit an increase of sanctifying grace and heavenly glory. Of this threefold fruit, the impetratory and satisfactory, but not the meritorious, may be given to and benefit others. For the merit is wholly personal and cannot be transferred to others; whereas we may satisfy for others and obtain by prayer many graces for them. — This fruit originates *ex opere operantis vel operantium*; to gain it in full, one should be in the state of grace, act and pray with a good intention, with faith and reverence. It is evident that this fruit will be so much the more plentiful, the greater the piety and holiness, the love and devotion of the priest and of the faithful.<sup>1</sup> The essential sacrificial fruit (*ex opere operato*) and the Church's impetratory efficacy derived from the liturgy of the Mass cannot indeed be intrinsically either increased or diminished by the good or bad dispositions of the officiating priest, but virtue, holiness and devotion are necessarily demanded of him, that the Mass may, in every respect, be perfect, pleasing to God and rich in blessings.<sup>2</sup>

cujus unitate consistit, sed in consecratione sacramenti loquitur in persona Christi, cujus vicem in hoc gerit per ordinis potestatem. Et ideo si sacerdos ab unitate Ecclesiae praecisus missam celebret, quia potestatem ordinis non amittit, consecrat verum corpus et sanguinem Christi, sed quia est ab Ecclesiae unitate separatus, *orationes efficaciam non habent* (S. Thom. 3, q. 82, a. 7 ad 3).

<sup>1</sup> Quo quis melior, melius dispositus, sanctior est, quo ferventius et devotius in Missa pro se et aliis orat, eo plus gratiae et gloriae apud Deum sibi meretur, eoque plus sibi et aliis impetrat et pro peccatis satisfacit (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 5, sect. 2, § 2).

<sup>2</sup> Missa a malo sacerdote celebrata aequae valet *ex opere operato*, ac illa quae a bono offertur; item aequae valet vi *orationum*, quatenus eas nomine Ecclesiae sacerdos offerens fundit; at nequaquam, quatenus orat ut privata persona. Etenim certum est, sacerdotis sanctitatem ex hoc capite in fructum impetratorium orationis non parum influere, adeoque sacerdotem bonum et sanctum multo plus prodesse Ecclesiae et fidelibus, pro quibus celebrat, quam improbum aut minus pium (Schouppe, De Euchr. P. 2, c. 3, a. 2, n. 347). — Cf. Chrysostom, 2. Homily on the Second Epistle to Timothy.

All that has been said respecting the dignity and value, the power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, demonstrates that in the Holy Mass there is the inexhaustible ocean of the Divine mercies. Admission to this ocean of graces is so easy, and is free to all. God's liberality wills to enrich us with blessed gifts, and fill us with Heaven's blessing; O that our heart were not full of earthly thoughts and worldly attachments! Would that we knew how to esteem and profit by this Eucharistic Sacrifice for our salvation—this "precious pearl", this "hidden treasure" in the field of the Church — how soon should we become enriched with every grace! If the blessed Mystery of the Altar were celebrated in only one place, or the sacred elements could be consecrated by only one priest, with what ardent longing would not all Christians desire to hasten to that spot and to that priest, in order to assist at the celebration! But now many are ordained priests, and Christ is offered on many altars in many places to the end that God's grace and love for men may shine so much the brighter, as the reception of Holy Communion is spread more widely throughout the globe. It is truly distressing and deplorable that, in consequence of our tepidity and sloth, we do not feel ourselves drawn toward God with more ardent desires, although in Him rest all the hope and all the merit of those destined to receive the inheritance of salvation. He is our Sanctifier and Redeemer, He is the source of comfort for the pilgrim in time and the enjoyment of the blessed in eternity. Therefore, with pain and sorrow ought it to be deplored that many pay so little attention to so salutary a mystery, which rejoices Heaven and preserves the whole world! O the inconceivable blindness and hardness of the human heart, not to value more highly so ineffable a gift, and although afforded daily opportunity of hearing Mass, to fall into total indifference in its regard! (Cf. *Imitation of Christ*, IV, 1.)

#### 18. The Holy Mass — a Sacrifice of Praise and Adoration.<sup>1</sup>

1. It was for Himself that God made all things (*Prov.* 16, 4), and created all things (*Is.* 43, 7); therefore it is the end of all creatures to glorify their Creator, therefore the entire creation should form but one choir of joyful praise and exulting adoration of God. All that is in heaven and upon the earth and under the earth should bend the knee before the Lord of all things and praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness (*Ps.* 150, 2). But how could this be possible? Without measure and without end is His Majesty and praiseworthiness! "Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised, and of His greatness there is no end" (*Ps.* 144, 3). Numberless are the proofs of His power, of His wisdom and of His love, exhibited in the kingdom of nature, of grace and glory.<sup>2</sup> Hence

<sup>1</sup> *Laudis tue, Domine, immolamus hostias — hostias tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus — sacrificium tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus — offerimus tibi, Domine, hostiam placationis et laudis* (*Sacrament. Gregor.*).

<sup>2</sup> *Quamvis inter laudare, benedicere et glorificare Deum soleat assignari dis-*



“glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him as much as you can, for He is above all praise!” (Ecclus. 43, 32—33.) The works of the Lord do indeed praise Him, and His saints magnify Him (Ps. 144, 10): still, how could the worship of finite creatures be fully worthy of His infinite name? Tempestuous oceans and towering mountains, murmuring brooks and silent valleys, dark forests and smiling plains, fields of waving corn and blooming meadows, singing birds and roaring lions — all join in the full accord, in the marvellous harmony which resounds from one end of creation to the other in honor of the Creator. If we ascend upward from the earth, the heavens show forth the glory of God (Ps. 18, 2): the cerulean hue and the bright sunbeams of the firmament, the flying clouds and the majestic, rolling thunder, the morning flush and the sunset glow, the vivid lightning and the mysterious, quiet reflection of the nightly world of stars announce how great, how unutterably great, how exalted and worthy of all adoration is God our Lord. And beyond the stars — there “the abode of the blessed resounds with canticles of praise to the triune God in unceasing jubilation.” The saints of heaven trembling in joyful fear are prostrate in adoration before the throne of the Eternal Father, offering to Him glory and honor throughout eternity (Apoc. 4, 9—11). And the Angels — those indescribably beautiful and exalted spirits, those morning stars and first-fruits of creation, those princes of heaven, whose brightness outshines and dims all earthly splendor as the sun eclipses the stars — they, with their wings, cover their countenances before the majesty of God and, trembling with profound love and reverence, sing their never-ending hymn: “Holy, holy, holy!” And finally, the Virgin Mother of God, the glorious Queen of Angels and Saints, — is decked with the plenitude of grace and the ornaments of every virtue, robed in the glory and splendor of heavenly gifts, crowned with dazzling light and radiance. From the pure heart of this Queen of Heaven there issued and shall eternally issue forth the ecstatic joyous chant of the *Magnificat* in homage to the power, holiness and mercy of God; her whole being and life was and is nothing else than an humble and reverential adoration and glorification of God. Yet, however great and how glorious soever in its power the eternal canticle of praise and adoration, in which all creatures in heaven and upon earth unite, — what is it in comparison with the majesty, glory and greatness of Him who alone is great, who is infinitely great? —

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tinctio, nunc tamen laudationem Dei tam extense accipio, quod benedictionem et glorificationem ejus includit, ut Deum laudare sit bonitatem, virtutem et perfectionem ejus recta intentione proferre atque extollere: sicque laudandus et superlaudandus est Deus in se ipso et in suis operibus, in suis beneficiis ac promissis, in operibus naturae et gratiae ac gloriae, in operibus creationis, reparationis et glorificationis. Etenim justus Dominus in omnibus viis suis et sanctus in omnibus operibus suis, in quibus omnibus excellentia, bonitas, sapientia, omnipotentia et incomprehensibilitas Creatoris relucet (Dion. Carthus. De orat. art. 81).

"Lord," — thus prayed Blessed Henry Suso — "if the Cherubim and Seraphim and the immense number of exalted spirits all praise Thee to the best of their ability, what more can they do to enhance Thy unapproachable, immeasurable merit, than does the most insignificant creature? He that hopes worthily to praise Thee, acts as he who runs after the wind and would seize the shadow."<sup>1</sup> — But shall we by no means be able to render due honor and glory to the Most High? Oh! let us thank the Lord: in the Sacrifice of the Mass He has given us an infinitely perfect means of praising and glorifying Him commensurately with His dignity. Yes, a single holy Mass procures God more honor and praise than all the worship of all the citizens of heaven and of earth can offer Him throughout eternity.

2. The celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, indeed, contains an infinitely perfect adoration of God. Sacrifice by its nature and destination is an act of adoration and glorification of God; it is an efficacious, solemn acknowledgment of the supremacy and dominion of God over all creatures. The more perfect the Sacrifice, the greater the honor rendered to God. From this it follows that the Mass, being a sacrifice of infinite value, includes in itself infinitely worthy praise and adoration of the triune God. Upon the altar it is not merely a man who offers, it is not a mere creature who is offered, but it is the God-Man who offers Himself to the Heavenly Father as a holocaust of adoration and an incense-offering of praise. It is a Divine Person, it is the Son of God, eternal and infinite, like unto the Father and the Holy Ghost, it is Jesus Christ, the first-born of all creatures and the Head of the whole creation, who, in the Mass, according to His humanity, sacrifices and is sacrificed. Could God's majesty and sovereignty be declared and be acknowledged more emphatically than is done upon the altar, where the Son of God, under the sacramental species, conceals, annihilates and humbles to the very depths His most glorious, noble and precious humanity, that is, sacrifices it to the honor of God? — The Mass is then also the representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. All the honor and glory rendered to the Heavenly Father upon Golgotha is represented and offered anew to Him upon the altar by the mystical sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He is eternally well pleased. To honor and glorify the Father, Christ descended to the most profound abyss of abasement, became like unto a leper, as the last of men, like to the decayed root of a tree (Is. 53). His whole life was a life of incomparable adoration, praise and glorification of God. An ardent zeal for the house of God, for the kingdom and the honor of His Father consumed Him. All the prayers, labors and fatigues of His humble life, His painful passion and death, Jesus Christ, in the Mass, ever presents to His Heavenly Father, offers them to Him anew with the same inflamed Heart, with the same reverential submission, as when He was upon earth, in order

<sup>1</sup> Denifle, *Das geistliche Leben* p. 487.



to honor and glorify Him. Therefore, a more worthy adoration, a more profound worship and a greater homage than that offered to God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is impossible and even inconceivable. Holy Mass is an infinitely worthy sacrifice of praise and adoration — consequently, it is the most sublime glorification of the Divine Majesty.

3. But not only does Christ render upon the altar infinite homage and adoration to the Divine Majesty, but through and with His Sacrifice, the Church and we all are enabled perfectly to honor and adore the Most High in spirit and in truth (John 4, 24). The Eucharistic Sacrifice is the property of the Church; she offers it through the priest, in order to render due worship to God in the name of all. In our hands also Christ has placed Himself as a victim, that we may be able to offer a gift to God capable of rendering Him infinite honor and pleasure. Whilst offering the Divine Victim in the Mass, we render to God inexpressible homage and adoration, fully proportionate to His divinity and dominion. — How exceedingly joyful and happy are not the souls that love God at the thought of being able, by the Sacrifice of the Mass, worthily to honor, praise and adore the Lord of heaven and earth! For “to praise God is the sole occupation of the angels and saints in heaven, and of loving souls here upon earth; for them it is the most pleasing and most delightful occupation.”<sup>1</sup> The desire of praising God was beautifully expressed by Blessed Henry Suso: “Oh, woe is me! Who will grant to my overflowing heart, that before my death its desire of praising Thee may be fulfilled! Who will obtain for me, that in my own days I may worthily praise this loving Lord, for whom my soul craveth! Ah, my beloved Lord, though I am unworthy to praise Thee, yet my soul desires that heaven may praise Thee with its ravishing beauty, with the splendor of its sun and the brightness of the countless stars in its lofty, transparent firmament. I desire that the beautiful meadows may praise Thee, when under summer skies they clothe themselves in floral beauty and with Nature’s grandest and fairest charms. Ah! and may all the sweet thoughts and ardent desires that ever a pure, loving heart experienced in Thy regard, O Lord, when absorbed in the joy and happiness of Thy enlightening Spirit, praise Thee!”<sup>2</sup> Our sweetest occupation and happiest employment should be to magnify God every day and to praise His name forever, yea, forever and ever (Ps. 144, 2). As the Psalmist exhorts us, we will adore the Lord, we will bring praise and honor to the Lord, to the praise of His name (Ps. 28) — and this we will continue to do all the days of our life, in hours of sunshine and of gloom.<sup>3</sup> *Sit laus plena, sit sonora,*

<sup>1</sup> Ruysbroeck, bei Denifle a. a. O., p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> Denifle a. a. O., p. 485.

<sup>3</sup> *Laudabit usque ad mortem anima mea Dominum. Sicut orare convenit civibus militantis ac triumphantis Ecclesiae, magis tamen civibus Ecclesiae militantis, quoniam amplius indigent adiutoriis Dei atque Sanctorum, et in medio*

*sit jucunda, sit decora mentis jubilatio.* Full of devotion be the praise of God, and sweetly sounding in His ears, joyous from mind's gladness, beautiful the heart's exultation! Alas! our praise of God is frequently very imperfect and worthless; therefore, we should unite it with the infinitely perfect praise and adoration which our Head and Mediator, Jesus Christ, presents to His Heavenly Father on the altar. By this union alone is our insignificant worship made holy and meritorious, so as to ascend as clouds of fragrant incense before the face of God. — Then the reflection that God is so often forgotten and despised in the world, His holy name reviled and blasphemed, should deeply wound our hearts and inflame them with holy ardor, in order, as an atonement, to praise and magnify God with greater fervor — especially by celebrating and assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For in the Mass from the rising to the setting of the sun the name of the Lord is infinitely extolled, and there is given to Him the greatest honor and glory. Still not our heart and lips only should praise the Lord, but our life, our whole conduct ought to be a continual praise, a perpetual adoration of God.<sup>1</sup> At all times and in all places we should have God before our eyes, we should realize His blessed presence and, consequently, be profoundly penetrated with the spirit of profound reverence and adoration; then will our prayers be full of recollection and devotion, our works perfect and holy, our conversation circumspect and edifying, our thoughts noble and chaste, our desires pure and heavenly, our whole deportment modest and unassuming.<sup>2</sup>

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ambulant laqueorum periculisque diversis vallantur et viatores existunt, ita laudare utriusque Ecclesiae civibus ac filiis convenit, potius tamen civibus Ecclesiae triumphantis, qui ad terminum pervenerunt beatum suntque confirmati in bono nec ulli subjacent unquam periculo nec indigent pro seipsis orare: ideo cum incessabili atque plenissima jucunditate laudes et gratiarum actiones suo offerunt Creatori. . . . . Majus est Deum laudare quam orare, quia laudare est actus magis angelicus ac coelestis. Laudare quoque Deum est actus simplicior et minus ad commoda sua reflexus quam orare. Verumtamen imperfectis et pusillis magis convenit orationi quam laudationi insistere, quoniam egent purgatione multisque defectuositatibus involvuntur, propter quas ad laudandum Altissimum nondum satis aptati sunt; perfectis vero et contemplativis, quorum conversatio est in coelis, competit laudibus Dei jugiter immorari atque angelicam vitam inchoare ac quantum possibile est continuare in terris; nam et futurae illius beatitudinis suavi praegustu jam recreantur (Dion. Carthus. De orat. art. 31).

<sup>1</sup> Ergo, fratres, non tantum ad sonum attendite: cum laudatis Deum, toti laudate: cantet vox, cantet vita, content facta (S. August. Enarrat. in Ps. 148, n. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Meditatio praesentis vitae nostrae in laude Dei esse debet, quia exultatio sempiterna futurae nostrae vitae laus Dei erit, et nemo potest idoneus fieri futurae vitae, qui non se ad illam modo exercuerit. Modo ergo laudamus Deum: sed et rogamus Deum. Laus nostra laetitiam habet, oratio gemitum. Promissum est nobis aliquid, quod nondum habemus, et quia verax est qui promisit, in spe gaudemus: quia tamen nondum habemus, in desiderio gemimus. Bonum est nobis perseverare in desiderio, donec veniat quod promissum est, et transeat gemitus, succedat sola laudatio (S. August. l. c. n. 1).



19. **The Holy Mass — a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.**

Inasmuch as in the Holy Mass we adore, praise and magnify God through and with Christ, we fulfil in a perfect manner that first duty, which as creatures we owe to the Creator. Since God is the origin of all things, He is also the source of every good we possess, that is, He is our first and greatest Benefactor, unto whom it behooveth us to render due thanks. This duty of gratitude toward God we can discharge in no better way than by the celebration of Mass, which by preference and predilection is called the Eucharist, that is, Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. We shall, therefore, clearly show that the Mass is the most perfect, that is, an infinitely valuable sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the graces and favors received from God.

1. Gratitude to benefactors is not only a great and sacred obligation, but also an exceedingly beautiful and precious virtue, which seeks to repay favors freely, lovingly and graciously bestowed. Sincere thankfulness is the mark of a noble soul, rendering one amiable before God and man, while ingratitude is peculiar to a mean and proud spirit, and renders one displeasing to everybody. A humble, childlike disposition sees "in every blossom eternal love bloom"; an arrogant, self-conceited disposition claims everything as its due in strict justice. — The grateful man endeavors to make a return for favors received, first and chiefly by interiorly acknowledging, honoring and esteeming the noble disposition and liberality of the benefactor;<sup>1</sup> then he would express his gratitude also by exteriorly manifesting in word and deed his grateful feelings, thanking his benefactor and doing him good. — There are various circumstances that increase the value of a benefit, and oblige the recipient to still further gratitude. A gift is to be particularly esteemed, when it is *a*) in itself noble and precious, *b*) useful to the receiver, and *c*) frequently and generously bestowed. With regard to the benefactor, two things are to be observed: whether he is *a*) of exalted dignity, and *b*) whether he imparts his gifts with very great love. In regard to the recipient, it is to be considered whether *a*) he is mean and abject, and *b*) utterly undeserving of the gift, and perhaps has even rendered himself unworthy thereof. All these qualities are combined in the highest degree as to the graces and benefits which we have received and still daily receive from God. Let us, therefore, ever seek more clearly and more fervently to acknowledge the preciousness of the divine gifts, the greatness and love of the Divine Benefactor, and our own wretchedness and unworthiness, so that, by this knowledge, we may be all the more induced faithfully and humbly to prove our gratitude towards God.

Even the natural benefits of God are precious, but far more so are the supernatural, for everything desirable cannot be compared to them (Prov. 8, 11). God bestows these gifts on us, not as though

<sup>1</sup> S. Thom. 2, 2, q. 106. a. 3—5

their bestowal would in any way redound to His advantage — for He is, indeed, in Himself infinitely rich and happy, — but to make us happy in time and blessed in eternity. How abundant, durable and salutary to us are these excellent gifts of God! “God who spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how hath He not also with Him given us all things?” (Rom. 8, 32.) The days of our life are like a wreath plaited wholly of graces and benefits by divine love. As fishes in the waves of the ocean, so are we immersed in the divine favors; it would be easier to count the stars of heaven, the snow-flakes in winter, than to enumerate the blessings of ineffable sweetness wherewith God forestalls us (Ps. 20, 4). As the sun never fails to cast his rays upon the earth, as the spring unceasingly bubbles forth from the depths of the earth, so likewise the torrent of divine goodness and liberality will never cease to flow.

The value of these benefits is greatly enhanced by the infinite dignity and majesty, as well as by the immeasurable goodness and mercy of the Divine Giver. The most pure, disinterested and benevolent love of God is the source whence all these indescribable goods flow unto us. “With an everlasting love” — says the Lord — “have I loved thee; therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee” (Jer. 31, 3). St. Paul says that God hath overwhelmed us with heavenly gifts “because of His exceeding charity” (*propter nimiam caritatem suam* — Eph. 2, 4).

What are we, poor, frail, miserable and sinful men, that the Most High should be mindful of us, should turn His Heart toward us, and visit us with His grace? (Ps. 8, 5.) Indeed, we have by our guilt frequently rendered ourselves unworthy of His benefits.

Whenever I calmly and seriously reflect upon all that God has done for me, I must exult in grateful love and exclaim: “What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?” (Ps. 115, 3.) Even if I consecrate myself entirely to Him with all that I am and all that I have, my goods, my life’s blood, my body, my soul: how can this be a worthy return for His benefits? (Job 12, 2.) How can an earthly gift, a finite thanksgiving suffice to outweigh and adequately repay the infinitely valuable gifts of God? Lord, I am not worthy of the least of Thy mercies (*minor sum cunctis miserationibus tuis* — Gen. 32, 10), and am unable to offer Thee due thanks for Thy boundless love and liberality.

2. What is impossible to man, God hath made possible; what our weakness cannot perform, we accomplish through Christ our Lord. — “Give to the Most High according to what He hath given to thee” (Ecclus. 35, 12), the Holy Ghost admonishes us; but how can we do this? By thanking God and the Father through Christ (Col. 3, 17), and giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5, 20). In the Mass Christ offers Himself with the same infinitely perfect sentiments of gratitude, with which His soul was inflamed upon earth — during His life and



passion, at the Last Supper and on Calvary. This gift of thanksgiving which He offers to His Heavenly Father in return for all the benefits bestowed upon the human race, is the same as the divine oblation on the Cross — namely, His most noble body and most precious blood. Consequently, the Mass is an infinitely meritorious and acceptable Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, perfectly commensurate with all the benefits of God, wherewith heaven and earth are filled. Christ offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice for us, that is, that He may in our stead thank God and supply for the deficiency of our thanksgiving. — With Him and through Him, do we also offer the Sacrifice of thanksgiving, for He has bequeathed it to us as our possession. Through Christ and His Eucharistic Sacrifice, we have become so enriched that we are enabled to present in return to the Heavenly Father a gift inexpressibly glorious and sublime, as a worthy thanksgiving for every good and perfect gift (James 1, 17), which we receive from His hand. Of ourselves we cannot, indeed, render suitable thanks for even the least benefit; but by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are enabled fully to discharge our entire debt of gratitude, were it even infinite. At the altar we can adequately and worthily thank “the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation,” inasmuch as we can take the chalice of salvation and praise the divine name (Ps. 115, 4). — In the liturgical prayers and hymns with which the Church accompanies the Holy Sacrifice, there is expressed most excellently a spirit of the most sincere gratitude and most exalted thanksgiving. The same sentiments should fill our hearts also during the celebration of the Holy Mass. In His well-beloved Son the Heavenly Father has given us all things; we should return all to Him, by offering to Him in Holy Mass in thanksgiving His Divine Son, in whom He is well pleased. The prayer of thanksgiving is a rich source of new gifts. “I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed upon us, and for all the multitude of His good things to the house of Israel (the Church), which He hath given them according to His kindness, and according to the multitude of His mercies” (Is. 63, 7).

3. Do we faithfully profit by the Holy Sacrifice, in order conscientiously to fulfill our duty of gratitude toward God, — or are we like the slothful servant who buried in the earth the talent confided to him? Quite frequently is Holy Mass celebrated and heard to implore new favors of God: but is this done with the intention of discharging a debt of gratitude for benefits received? How earnestly and assiduously should we cultivate the spirit of thanksgiving and prayerful gratitude to God, uniting ourselves to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in order to make atonement, in some manner, to God for the base and shameful ingratitude wherewith the world so often offends His goodness and irritates His justice! “What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?” (Is. 5, 4) — thus inquires the Lord with reason. But

ingratitude is the reward of the world; which does not like to and which will not give honor to God. Not only through thoughtlessness and indifference, but even by abuse, contempt and disdain of His most noble gifts and graces the world wounds His paternal Heart. To very many Christians may be applied with more reason what Moses complained bitterly of in the conduct of the Israelites: "They have sinned against their God and are a wicked and perverse generation. Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? The beloved grew fat and kicked; he grew fat and thick and gross, he forsook God who made him, and departed from God his Saviour" (Deut. 32, 5, 6, 15). As the world is, for the most part, a land of forgetfulness (Ps. 87, 13), a barren desert, in which the venom of ingratitude thrives, we have in this thought a new and powerful incentive fervently to thank God; for "we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God" (1 Cor. 2, 12). — Behold the example of the Saints: how their hearts and lips overflowed with grateful sentiments! When the mortified St. Paul of the Cross, so severe to himself, walked through the woods and fields and meadows, all that he saw reminded him of God's goodness. Inflamed with love, he would cry out to the flowers and trees: "Be silent! Be silent! Preach no more!" Once, perceiving a flower by the wayside, he plucked it, and full of joy, showed it to his companion, saying: "Do you not see how the flowers exclaim: Love God! Love God!" And with a radiant countenance, as though he were in an ecstasy, he several times repeated the words: "And why do you not love God?" If the sight of a flower sufficed to inflame the soul of a saint with ecstatic love, should not our hearts burn (Luke 24, 32) with grateful love as incense on glowing coals, or as a lighted taper consuming itself, when we at the foot of the altar devoutly reflect, what wonderful mysteries of divine favor, mercy and condescension are accomplished in the celebration of the Mass? For the Eucharistic Sacrifice is not only our very best and perpetual thanksgiving to God, but, at the same time, it is the living source, whence we can and should unceasingly draw the spirit of thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup>

## 20. The Holy Mass — a Sacrifice of Propitiation.

The object of the Holy Mass, as a Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, is to glorify God as our Supreme Master and greatest Benefactor: it renders to Him infinite honor and offers Him infinite thanksgiving. Inasmuch as it is a Sacrifice of Propitiation and Petition, its celebration produces the most manifold effects for the welfare and salvation of men. These effects, then, of the Mass flowing to men are properly and by preference called the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass. That the Sacrifice of the Cross is not

<sup>1</sup> Suscipe, Domine, sacrificium placationis et laudis, quod nos . . . et perducatur ad veniam et in perpetua gratiarum constituatur actione (Sacram. Gregor.).



detracted from by this efficacy, but that rather its inexhaustible virtue and its fully infinite value are brought out in clearer light, is evident from the right understanding of the Catholic doctrine. The Church by no means teaches that the Sacrifice of Christ on the altar adds new satisfaction or new merits to the treasure of salvation acquired on the Cross, but she teaches only that the price of our redemption paid by the Sacrifice of the Cross, being incapable of increase and inexhaustible in its fulness, is actually applied to and benefits individuals by means of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ's treasure of grace remains always the same; only its application to and realization in individuals are new, and will continue to be so as long as there shall be men capable and in need of redemption. The fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass are, therefore, in general all those and only those which were borne by the noble tree of the Cross. What was acquired on the Cross for the whole human race, is applied to individual man in the Mass, for it is a Sacrifice of propitiation as well as of petition. The Church expressly teaches "that the Holy Mass is a true propitiatory Sacrifice and has this efficacy that we find therein mercy and grace, when we stand in need of assistance," — and it condemns the heresy, "that the Holy Mass is only a Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, but not of propitiation . . . and that it may not be offered for the living and the departed, for the remission of sin and of its punishment, for satisfaction and for other necessities."<sup>1</sup> In the first place, we shall here show that the Mass is truly a Sacrifice of propitiation — and, then, what and how it effects as a propitiatory sacrifice.

1. Holy Church often emphasizes and with force clearly sets off both by her teaching and practice the propitiatory character of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. As already quoted, the Council of Trent solemnly declares that the Mass is "a true propitiatory sacrifice," and in the Roman Catechism also we read that the Mass is "truly a propitiatory sacrifice, whereby we are reconciled to God and regain His favor."<sup>2</sup>

a) Since sin entered the world and weighs as a heavy yoke upon the poor children of Eve, a longing for reconciliation and pardon has obtained everywhere the primary place in sacrificial worship. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities!" (Ps. 50, 3.) This is the supreme cry that breaks forth from the bosom of sinful, yet contrite man, who sorrowfully longs to be free from debt and punishment. This consciousness of sin, this desire for redemption, finds its strongest expression in the offering

<sup>1</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2 et can. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Vere propitiatorium sacrificium, quo Deus nobis placatus et propitius redditur (Catech. Roman. P. 2, c. 4, q. 63). — Eucharistia in quantum est sacrificium, Deum placat: hostiæ enim placent, et quoniam Deus iratus est, non affectione, sed poenæ inflictione: ideo Deum placando non sedat ipsius affectionem, sed remitti facit poenæ acerbiteriam (S. Bonav. IV, dist. 45, dub. 3).

of sacrifice. Hence in the Old Law propitiatory sacrifices were the most frequent and the most prominent. Now the Mass, being the accomplishment and consummation of all the sacrifices prior to Christ, satisfies all the objects of sacrifice, and, consequently, must also have the character and effect of an atoning sacrifice, that is, must be propitiatory. In this respect the truth and reality of the New Law cannot be inferior to the shadow and figure of the Old Law.

b) Among the effects of the death of Jesus, Scripture often directs particular attention to the effacing of sin, to the redemption from the curse of sin, to the destruction of the handwriting that is against us, to the reconciliation of Heaven and earth. Now, if the Mass as a celebration of our redemption, as a renewal of the death of Christ, as a representation and continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross,<sup>1</sup> be intended to obtain for individual men the various effects of the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross, it must then possess a sin-effacing power, and apply to them the satisfaction rendered on the Cross. In other words, the Mass must be a Sacrifice of propitiation. Moreover, our Lord Himself expressly declared at the institution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, that His Body under the appearance of bread would be broken and delivered, His Blood be shed in the chalice for "the forgiveness of sin."

c) The ancient liturgies,<sup>2</sup> furthermore, the writings of the Fathers most clearly testify to the constant and universal belief of the Church in the propitiatory character of the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the Liturgy of St. James, the priest prays in this manner: "O Lord, may our sacrifice be pleasing to Thee and be sanctified by the Holy Ghost for the atonement of our sins and of the ignorance of the people, and for the repose of those who have fallen asleep. . . Lord, have mercy on us; for in fear and trembling we draw nigh to Thy holy altar, to offer this tremendous and unbloody Sacrifice for our sins and for the ignorance of the people." — In the Liturgy of St. Basil: "According to the abundance of Thy mercy, receive us who

<sup>1</sup> Per haec divina mysteria ad novi, quaesumus, testamenti mediatorem Jesum accedamus: et super altaria tua, Domine virtutum, aspersionem sanguinis melius loquentem, quam Abel, *innovemus* (Secreta in festo pret. Sanguinis D. N. J. Chr.). — Suscipe, Domine, hostiam redemptionis humanae — per haec veniat sacramenta redemptionis effectus — benedictio tua, Domine, larga descendat, quae munera nostra . . . nobis sacramentum redemptionis efficiat (Sacrament. Gregor.).

<sup>2</sup> Hostia, quam offerimus, vincula nostrae pravitatis absolvat — haec hostia emundet nostra delicta — hujus sacrificii munus oblatum fragilitatem nostram ab omni malo purget semper — hostias tibi, Domine, placationis offerimus, ut delicta nostra miseratus absolvas — per haec sancta commercia vincula peccatorum nostrorum absolve — suscipe, Domine, sacrificium, cujus te voluisti dignanter immolatione placari — supplices, Domine, te rogamus, ut his sacrificiis peccata nostra mudentur — munera nos, quaesumus, Domine, oblata purificent et te nobis jugiter faciant esse placatum — mystica nobis, Domine, prosit oblatio, quae nos et a reatibus nostris expediat et perpetua salvatione confirmet — iisdem, quibus famulamur, mysteriis mundemur — haec sancta, quae gerimus, et praeteritis nos delictis exuant et futuris (Sacrament. Gregor.).



approach to Thy altar, that we may be worthy to offer Thee gifts and sacrifices for our sins and for those of the people." — St. Augustine declares that "it must not be doubted that the departed receive help by the prayers of the Church and the life-giving Sacrifice"; "for" — he says further on — "thus it has been handed down to us by the Fathers, thus the entire Church observes it for those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when during the Sacrifice their memento occurs at the prescribed place, prayers are recited and attention is directed to the fact that for them also the Mass is offered."<sup>1</sup> St. Monica at her death had no other desire, no other request to make to her family than that "everywhere, wherever they might be, they would remember her at the altar." The holy Doctor then relates that, after her death, prayers and the Sacrifice of our redemption (*sacrificium pretii nostri*) were offered for her.<sup>2</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem calls the Mass "a Sacrifice of reconciliation" and then continues: "For the departed, though even they be sinners (that is, in venial sin), we offer supplications to God, yes, not only supplications, but Christ also who was slain for our sins, thereby for them as well as for ourselves to propitiate the Divine Goodness."<sup>3</sup>

2. The propitiatory power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass extends, as the Church says, to "sins, punishments, satisfactions." By divine institution the Eucharistic Sacrifice serves to bring about for man forgiveness of mortal and venial sins, and also the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

a) The Sacrifice of the Mass cannot directly and immediately cancel mortal sins, but it can only indirectly contribute to their effacement.<sup>4</sup> — Man can be washed and cleansed from the stain of mortal sin only by the infusion, that is, by the first imparting or by the restoration, of sanctifying grace. This grace of justification and, consequently, of forgiveness of mortal sin can, by God's will, be directly obtained only by the reception of baptism or of the sacrament of penance, or by making an act of perfect contrition. The Sacraments were instituted for the justification and sanctification of man; they moreover serve directly to establish and to

<sup>1</sup> Orationibus sanctae Ecclesiae et sacrificio salutari et eleemosynis, quae pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adjuvari, ut cum eis misericordius agatur a Domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt. Hoc enim a Patribus traditum, universa observat Ecclesia, ut pro eis qui in corporis et sanguinis Christi communione defuncti sunt, cum ad ipsum sacrificium loco suo commemorantur, oretur ac pro illis quoque id offerri commemoretur (Serm. 172, n. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Confess. 1. 9, c. 11—12.

<sup>3</sup> Catech. Mystag. 5, n. 8—10.

<sup>4</sup> Sacrificium Missae vere est propitiatorium, causans aliquo modo ac conferens ad remissionem peccatorum mortalium, justificationem peccatoris ac primam gratiam obtinendam ex opere operato: at non immediate est remissivum peccatorum mortalium (sicut sacramenta Baptismi et Poenitentiae) juxta communissimam Theologorum (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).

increase the supernatural life of the soul. Sacrifice, on the contrary, aims principally to promote the worship of God. The Mass, indeed, is also a means of salvation for man; but as such it is not destined directly to impart or bring about the grace of sanctification; consequently, the Sacrifice of the Mass cannot without the medium of another means efface or remove mortal sins.

The propitiatory power and efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass is not accurately explained by the mere saying that it procures actual graces, by means of which the sinner is led to true penance and sincere conversion. Such a statement almost totally annuls the distinction that exists between the character of propitiation and the impetratory efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, a distinction which must be strictly adhered to; for as a Sacrifice of propitiation and as a Sacrifice of petition the Mass has different effects, as well as different modes of operation.<sup>1</sup> Namely, in so far as the Mass is a Sacrifice of propitiation, it calms and appeases the righteous anger of God, disarms His justice, and induces the Lord to regard sinful man with favor and mercy. The effect of the atoning power of the Mass, therefore, is to cause God no longer to be angry and to punish, that is, it favorably disposes Him to remit wholly or in part the punishment due to guilty man.<sup>2</sup> This reconciliation and this remission of punishment on the part of God are effected in virtue of Christ's vicarious service or payment (*per modum solutionis*) offered to God for this purpose; for the ransom purchased by Christ with His Blood upon Golgotha for the atonement and satisfaction of sin is always presented anew in the Mass to the Heavenly Father, and this for particular persons, and that He may avert from them their well-merited punishment and impart to them again His mercy more bountifully. Whilst the Mass, as a Sacrifice of propitiation, restrains or disarms God's avenging justice against the sinner, it has, as a Sacrifice of petition, the power, through the divine goodness and liberality, to dispense manifold graces and benefits (*per modum impetrationis*).

Accordingly the Mass as a Sacrifice of atonement helps to cancel mortal sins, inasmuch as, as a Sacrifice of petition, it is an extremely powerful means to effect the grace of true repentance and sincere conversion. Propitiation and petition act in unison in the Mass; they support and perfect each other in order to draw down upon man graces which enlighten and incite him to turn to God by faith, hope, love and sorrow, and to receive worthily the holy Sacraments,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lugo disp. 19, sect. 9, n. 140—150. — Franzelin, De Sacrificio thes. 13. — Köln. Pastoralblatt Jahrg. 1874, p. 113 etc.

<sup>2</sup> Eucharistia instituta est, ut Ecclesia perpetuum sacrificium haberet, quo peccata nostra expiarentur, et coelestis Pater, sceleribus nostris saepe graviter offensus, ab ira ad misericordiam, a justae animadversionis severitate ad clementiam traduceretur (Catech. Roman. P. 2, cap. 4, q. 55, n. 1). — Est hoc proprie sacrificii effectus, ut per ipsum *placetur* Deus, sicut etiam homo offensam in se commissam remittit propter aliquod obsequium acceptum quod ei exhibetur (S. Thom. 3, q. 49, a. 4).



whereby he is interiorly sanctified and made once more a child of God. This is expressed by the words: "The Lord, being propitiated by the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, imparts the grace and gift of penance, remits sins and crimes, be they ever so great."<sup>1</sup> — Above all, God's justice must be propitiated, and only after it has been satisfied, does His mercy impart to sinful man particular graces that dispose him to sorrow and sincere conversion. By the commission of sins, especially if they be numerous and grievous, is God's majesty offended and His avenging justice provoked against the sinner. But among the punishments which the just and holy God inflicts on account of the commission of sin, one of the most severe consists in this that He refuses or deservedly withholds special and more abundant graces. For what St. Bernard says of ingratitude, that "it is like unto a scorching wind which dries up the fountain of divine mercy, the stream of grace, the dew of heaven,"<sup>2</sup> applies to all offences, especially to mortal sins: and these, being a neglect and abuse of grace, are acts of ingratitude towards God, and, therefore, check the more abundant flow of graces which God would otherwise grant to prayer. The refusal of this abundance of grace, so necessary for frail man tainted with sin to enable him to work out his salvation, is certainly a very fatal punishment. For without many and great graces, man will, alas! as is usually to be expected, remain in sin, will commit sin upon sin, and dying in sin, will thus fall into eternal perdition. In this respect the Sacrifice of the Mass exercises its propitiatory power, inasmuch as it reconciles the Divine justice and averts from sinful man the severe punishment of the withdrawal of the abundant helps of grace. — But if by means of the propitiatory power of the Mass, the demands of Divine justice are satisfied and the obstacle removed that prevented the free and full flow of graces from the fountains of the Saviour, then, furthermore, as a Sacrifice of petition the Mass can obtain from the Divine mercy and liberality powerful aids of grace, to enable sinful man to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, to be converted and restored to the life of grace. — The reconciliation, by virtue of the satisfaction of Christ, of the irritated and avenging justice of God must, therefore, precede, that is, previously remove the obstacles and prepare the way, so that the Divine goodness, through Christ's merits and mediation, may be moved to impart those graces which lead man again to the path of salvation and virtue. Accordingly, the Mass contributes indirectly as a propitiatory sacrifice, and directly as a sacrifice of petition, to the effectual acquirement of the implored grace of conversion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hujus sacrificii oblatione placatus Dominus gratiam et donum poenitentiae concedens, crimina et peccata, etiam ingentia, dimittit* (Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2).

<sup>2</sup> *Ingratitudo inimica est animae, exinanitio meritorum, virtutum dispersio, beneficiorum perditio. Ingratitudo ventus urens, siccans sibi fontem pietatis, rorem misericordiae, fluenta gratiae* (S. Bernard. In Cantica serm. 51, n. 6.)

<sup>3</sup> This conception of the subject finds also a support in the authority of the liturgical prayers; compare, for example, the Secret. Dom. XIII. post Pent.: *Pro-*

This atonement is produced *ex opere operato* by the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass, but only in a more or less limited measure, dependent chiefly on the will of God, but likewise on the disposition of the sinner. In how far God's justice is placated by a single Mass, and to what extent the punishment of the withdrawal of abundant graces is removed, we know not; for all this depends upon the free ordinance of God, as well as upon the number and gravity of the sins to be atoned for. — Hence it follows that it is not alone useful, but often necessary to offer Holy Mass repeatedly for the same intentions and for the same persons, in order that full satisfaction may be made to God, and that the unhallowed obstacle to the plentiful outpouring of the Divine goodness and liberality may be entirely removed. — When the Divine justice has been appeased by the Mass, then God is again disposed to impart abundant grace, which in punishment of sin He had previously withdrawn. In other words, there is no further obstacle to the impetratory power of the Mass of drawing down abundant graces of conversion into the soul that is in the state of mortal sin. These graces are not always immediately granted, but in God's own time and at His pleasure. However, the sinner must on his part dispose himself to receive them, and must freely co-operate with the graces bestowed. Should he neglect to do this, they remain without effect, and no real repentance and forgiveness of sin follow. Consequently, however capable and efficacious the Sacrifice of the Mass may be to move God to dispense greater and often extraordinary graces,<sup>1</sup> yet the actual conversion and restoration of the person to the state of grace may, through the fault of the individual, result in complete failure. Hence the Church teaches that "by the Sacrifice of the Mass we obtain mercy and grace in due time, when we draw near to God with a sincere heart and perfect faith, with fear and reverence, with compunction and repentance."<sup>2</sup>

b) By the Sacrifice of the Mass, the fruits of the death of Christ are also applied "unto the remission of those sins of which we are daily guilty,"<sup>3</sup> among which are chiefly to be understood venial sins. Only a few theologians have affirmed that the offering of the Sacrifice suffices of itself to efface directly smaller sins and transgressions; the common and correct opinion maintains that venial sins are also, like mortal sins, effaced only indirectly by the salutary efficacy of the Sacrifice;<sup>4</sup> for sentiments of sorrow and penance are

pitare, Domine, populo tuo, *propitiare* muneribus: ut hac oblatione *placatus* et indulgentiam nobis *tribuas* et postulata *concedas*.

<sup>1</sup> Oblationibus nostris, quaesumus Domine, placare susceptis: et ad te *nostras etiam rebelles compelle propitius voluntates* (Secreta in Sabb. post Dom. IV. Quadragesimae).

<sup>2</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dubitatur, an virtute hujus sacrificii possit *immediate* haberi remissio peccatorum venialium. Communis sententia *negat*, quam sequitur Suarez et Vasquez



required to effect the remission of venial sins. — Also smaller faults, infidelities and negligences displease God, excite His disfavor and prevent a more abundant bestowal of His grace. This obstacle must first be removed by the atoning efficacy of the Mass, that God may allow Himself to be moved to awaken in us by special graces that devout, contrite and penitential sentiment which — with or without the reception of the sacrament of penance — is required, and which suffices to efface venial sins. But we should here especially bear in mind, that even venial sins, if frequently and deliberately committed, besides other evil effects following them, prevent the reception of many favors and graces which God's bounty has in reserve for the just, who thereby become weaker and run great risk, during some violent temptation, of plunging into the abyss of mortal sin. Frail man, therefore, for this very reason, too, has great need of a perpetual propitiatory sacrifice, in order that God may not in just punishment for his venial sins refuse unto him the abundant graces he so much needs in order to be preserved from the greatest of all evils — mortal sin. To assist at Mass or to have it celebrated for our intention, is assuredly one of the most available means to obtain in plenteous measure the pardon of venial sins and imperfections.

c) As a Sacrifice of propitiation the Mass has especially the power of satisfying for those temporal punishments which, after the pardon of mortal or venial sins, would otherwise have to be undergone either in this world or in purgatory.<sup>1</sup> The Eucharistic Sacrifice is offered for the living as well as for the dead for the remission of the temporal punishment still due to sin. But while it effects the pardon of sin only indirectly, the Sacrifice directly cancels the temporal punishment of sin, and so cancels it by the vicarious payment (*per modum solutionis*) from out of the treasure of merit and satisfaction that Christ acquired for us upon the Cross.<sup>2</sup> By His infinitely bitter passion and death, our Saviour on Calvary cancelled the penal debts of all men; the ransom there paid He Himself now presents upon the altar to His Heavenly Father for the living and the dead, that they may be released from their justly merited punishment. For upon Golgotha Christ bore our sorrows and the chastisement of our peace was placed upon Him (Is. 53); there He was

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cum aliis recentioribus, quam ego etiam veram existimo (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 9, n. 152). This view must be adhered to, if we admit the more probable opinion, that in the present order of salvation no venial sin is pardoned to the just without a simultaneous increase of sanctifying grace; for the Mass cannot directly effect the infusion of sanctifying grace. (Cf. Suarez disp. 79, sect. 4—5.)

<sup>1</sup> Sacrificium Missae ex sua institutione habet valorem et vim satisfactivam ad remittendam ex opere operato aliquam poenam temporalem debitam pro peccatis mortalibus et venialibus jam remissis fidelium vivorum et defunctorum. Ita omnes orthodoxi (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).

<sup>2</sup> Immediate remittit sacrificium poenam peccatis debitam, nimirum *per modum solutionis* jam pro nobis factae in cruce et nobis per sacrificium applicatae, in subjecto tamen capaci, nimirum constituto in gratia (Sporer l. c.).

overwhelmed with shame and bitterness, bruised with pain and torture, that we guilty men might not be visited and humbled under the chastising rod of Divine Justice. This remission of punishment is imparted to us, inasmuch as Christ's passion is placed to our account and applied to us, that is, benefits us.

But the Holy Mass is offered not merely for the remission of punishment, but also as a satisfaction. Temporal punishment still due can be liquidated in a twofold manner: *a*) by real, personal satisfaction (*satisfactio*), that is, by the performance of good deeds, by works of penance, by the voluntary and patient endurance of suffering, all outweighing or equivalent to the punishment due, thus meriting its remission; *b*) by undergoing the punishment itself imposed by God (*satispassio*). The possibility of meriting and of satisfying in a strict sense ceases with death; hence the holy souls in purgatory can only suffer enough, that is, endure their punishment until the requirements of Divine Justice are satisfied and the last farthing has been paid. The living, on the contrary, when in the state of grace, can by prayer, fasting, alms and other penitential works satisfy the Divine justice, that is, merit the remission of those punishments which otherwise they would be obliged to undergo in purgatory. To this distinction Holy Church appears to allude, when she says that the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered "for punishments and satisfactions" (*pro poenis et satisfactionibus*): the propitiatory virtue of the Mass supplies for the punishment otherwise to be undergone by the departed (*poena-satispassio*); but for the living the propitiatory power of the Sacrifice supplies principally for the satisfaction to be rendered (*satisfactio*). For both it removes the last impediment to their entrance into heavenly glory.

If those for whom the Mass is celebrated are susceptible thereof, they always and infallibly receive the satisfactory fruit of the remission of punishment, and this applies not only to the living, but also to the dead.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, it is not known in what degree and measure this punishment is each time cancelled; but it is certain that the punishment due is not always entirely and completely removed by one Mass: for this complete remission not unfrequently the repeated offering of the Mass is required. — To participate in this effect of the Sacrifice, the state of grace and probably also the baptismal character of the recipient are necessarily presupposed. So long as one is in the state of mortal sin and an enemy to God, no punishment whatever, not even the least temporal punishment, can be remitted him. According to the common opinion of theologians, the baptismal character is not only an essential preliminary condition for the valid reception of the other Sacraments, but also for obtaining the remission of temporal punishment by means of the Eucharistic

<sup>1</sup> Sacrificium Missae remittit poenam peccatis debitam ex opere operato, lege infallibili, adeo, ut fructus hic satisfactorius de lege ordinaria sit infallibilis idque non tantum respectu vivorum capacium, in quo omnes Doctores consentiunt, sed etiam respectu defunctorum secundum communem Theologorum sententiam (Sporer, l. c.).



Sacrifice (*ex opere operato*). If this opinion be correct, then all the unbaptized, living or dead, are excluded from participation in the aforesaid satisfactory fruit of the Mass.<sup>1</sup> How much of the temporal punishment is remitted, rests wholly in the divine will and decree. According to the well grounded opinion of many theologians,<sup>2</sup> there is so much the more of their punishment remitted unto the living, as they are the better disposed, that is, the more fervently they, by acts of penance, contrition, humility, submission to God and other virtues, render themselves worthy of the divine clemency and compassion.<sup>3</sup> The holy souls are at all times disposed for the obtaining of this fruit; God's wisdom, justice and mercy, however, determine to what extent the Mass shall each time it is offered diminish or abridge their sufferings.

As a propitiatory Sacrifice the Mass has, therefore, the power and, in consequence of the ordinance of Christ, has for object directly and infallibly — that is, in the strictest sense *ex opere operato* — to cancel temporal punishment. But it can also as a Sacrifice of petition bring about the remission of this punishment. This is done, moreover, when by way of petition it obtains assistance and strength for performing penitential works, by which we can satisfy the Divine Majesty and merit the remission of punishment. — According to a tenable and pious opinion, the Mass can also by way of petition directly obtain from the Divine goodness and mercy a gracious remission of punishment.<sup>4</sup> At least the intention and practice of the Church seem to be in favor of this opinion, namely, that in this way we may by prayer and sacrifice implore and obtain the remission of merited punishment. Were this denied, it would be difficult to explain satisfactorily many prayers in the Breviary and in Masses for the dead.<sup>5</sup> Thus the Church implores that the suffering souls “may obtain by pious supplications (*p̄is supplicationibus*) the par-

<sup>1</sup> Quod fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato non communicetur ejusmodi personis (i. e. non baptizatis vel catechumenis), concors est theologorum sententia (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 10, n. 166),

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Lugo l. c. n. 200 sq. — Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Quamvis haec oblatio ex sui quantitate sufficiat ad satisfaciendum pro omni poena, tamen fit satisfactoria illis pro quibus offertur vel etiam offerentibus secundum *quantitatem suae devotionis* et non pro tota poena (S. Thom. 3, q. 79, a. 5).

<sup>4</sup> Hoc dubium tractat late Suarez; allegatis utrinque rationibus dicit posse pie sustineri partem *affirmantem*, quam ego etiam *veram* existimo (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 9, n. 158).

<sup>5</sup> Quaestio haec est generalis ad omnes orationes, utrum scilicet praeter satisfactionem ex se respondentem orationi, ut est bonum opus, aliquid etiam respondeat de remissione poenae, *eo quod a Deo petatur remissio*: de ea egi in materia de suffragiis et in affirmantem opinionem consensi illamque probavi, quia Ecclesia videtur id omnino supponere ut certum; ea enim ratione in Sacro pro defunctis habet speciales orationes petentes pro illis eam remissionem. Si autem oratio qua oratio non extingueret *immediate* poenam, sed quatenus est opus poenale et bonum, non essent illae orationes utiles ad effectum, quem Ecclesia intendit (Arriaga, De Euchar. disp. 51, sect. 3).

don which they have always desired." And she has recourse to the clemency of God, that they who have departed from this transitory life may, "by the intercession of the ever blessed Virgin and all His Saints (*beata Maria semper Virgine intercedente cum omnibus sanctis tuis*), arrive at the enjoyment of eternal beatitude."<sup>1</sup>

d) Finally, it is to be attributed to the continual celebration and propitiatory virtue of the Holy Sacrifice that so many well merited punishments of God are delayed or even averted from entire countries and peoples, yea, even from the whole world. — The multiplicity of sin and of enormous crimes frequently provokes the divine justice to mete out without delay extraordinary punishments on men, and to send fearful visitations on a godless and immoral world. But when the Lord is appeased, He withdraws His threatening or chastising hand. "The men of Nineve believed in God and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And God saw their works and had mercy with regard to the evil, which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not" (Jon. 3). When Solomon had built the Temple, the Lord said to him: "I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven, and there fall no rain, or if I give orders, and command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people, upon whom My name is called, being converted, shall make supplication to Me, and seek out My face, and do penance for their most wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land" (2 Paralip. 7, 12-14). The severity of the Divine Judge and Avenger has often been displayed in a terrible and frightful manner in the Old Law. If now the highly favored Christian peoples are, for the most part, spared such fearful visitations, is it perhaps because they do not commit such grievous crimes? Assuredly not! For behold how the world is inundated with works of darkness and of the flesh! With frightful fertility the poisonous weeds of sin sprout out and grow luxuriantly throughout the earth. Ever longer and darker does the night of unbelief and of error cast its dismal shadow. Incalculable is the number of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, who by wallowing in the mire of sensuality and lust, trample under foot the Precious Blood of their redemption. The anti-Christian host assail always more and more audaciously the rock of Peter: and in many ways the abomination of desolation dwells in the holy place. Is not the earth fairly crushed under the burthen of crime? Is not the measure of sin filled up? Is not the world fallen away and estranged from God ripe for judgment? Why does not the Almighty arm all creatures against those whose wickedness and arrogance has reached its climax, in order to destroy

<sup>1</sup> Oratio duobus modis juvat defunctorum animas: uno modo, ut est opus quoddam poenale et laboriosum . . . , alio modo ut est *impetratoria*, quod est ipsi orationi proprium, quomodo etiam Beatorum orationes prosunt nobis et animabus Purgatorii, licet satisfactoriae non sint (Bellarm. De Purgat. l. 2, c. 16).



them in His wrath? (Wisdom 5, 18; Ps. 93, 23.) How can the infinitely holy eye of God behold such godlessness, brook such immorality, without sending fire and sulphur from heaven, or opening the fountains of the abyss to destroy, from the face of the earth, man whom He created? (Gen. 6, 5-7.) Why does the Most High deal so leniently and so tenderly with a world steeped in sensuality, avarice and pride? Why are the riches of God's goodness and longanimity not exhausted, and why does He grant to the sinner so long a respite of grace for penance and amendment of life? For this favor the world is principally indebted to the propitiatory Sacrifice, which is offered daily and hourly upon thousands of altars for our salvation and for that of the whole world (*pro nostra totiusque mundi salute*). The voice of the Blood of Jesus offered in sacrifice cries without intermission loudly and powerfully to Heaven — not for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel, but for pardon, grace and mercy in behalf of sinful man. — "Look upon the rainbow, and bless Him that formed it; it is very beautiful in its brightness. It encompasseth the heaven about with the circle of its glory; the hands of the Most High have displayed it" (Ecclus. 43, 12-13). This magnificent vari-colored arch, which unites heaven and earth, is a sign and pledge of the eternal covenant of peace that God formed with man. "When I" — thus saith the Lord — "shall cover the sky with clouds, my bow shall appear in the clouds, and I shall see it, and shall remember the everlasting covenant, that was made between God and every living soul of all flesh which is upon the earth" (Gen. 9, 14, 16). The rainbow symbolizes the Incarnate Son of God who, as Mediator between Heaven and earth, established peace. When the Heavenly Father beholds the Blood of His well-beloved Son which, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, sparkles and glistens in a thousand chalices, then all the dark clouds of His threatening judgments vanish, and the serene rays of His gracious countenance shine out again on the world. Therefore, it is by Christ's Blood in the Mass that the anger of God is daily placated, the vengeance of the Divine Judge disarmed, that He no more curses the earth on account of man, whose mind and thoughts are prone to evil from his youth (Gen. 8, 21). When "this Sacrifice for sins" shall be no longer celebrated, then "there remains but a certain dreadful expectation of judgement and the rage of a fire which shall consume the adversaries" (Heb. 10, 26-27).

3. The atoning virtue and fruit of the Sacrifice of the Mass is essentially necessary for us, as in many things we all offend (James 3, 2), and, consequently, we must at all times pray for the pardon of our offences (Matt. 6, 12). — Before we venture, by means of the Mass as a Sacrifice of petition, to present our desires and concerns before the throne of God, we should strive, by means of the Mass as a Sacrifice of propitiation, to appease God's just anger for our sins, and to disperse the dark threatening clouds of His countenance, so that He turn to us again His looks of clemency and let the sun of

His love again shine upon us. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears are inclined unto their prayers; whilst His angry look is upon them that do evil. The just cry, and the Lord hears them and delivers them out of all their troubles (Ps. 33, 16—18). If we bear this in mind, we shall understand why the Church in the celebration of Mass, and especially in the secret collects, so frequently implores the Lord for reconciliation.<sup>1</sup> She does not weary, in the course of this holy action, of repeating this cry for reconciliation, and she places it in advance of the petitions for the grace of God. Thus prays the Church, because she well knows and wishes to impress upon her children, that we poor men laden with sins must, before all things, be reconciled to God, and, by turning away the scourges of His anger, be made worthy to participate in His manifold blessings.

How necessary for us is a perpetual Sacrifice of propitiation! Upon Golgotha the fountain of atonement was opened; on the altar it continues to flow; therefrom we can and should draw its waters, so that God may be gracious and merciful unto us, that He may remit our debt and punishment. Is there a greater evil than sin and its fearful punishments? From this evil we can free ourselves by means of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; “for God’s grace in Jesus’s Blood repairs every injury.” Precious is the fruit of the Eucharistic propitiatory Sacrifice. Let us remember that God’s holiness and justice are equally as infinite and unfathomable as His goodness and mercy; let us reflect how wicked and deserving of punishment is every sin, even the least; let us represent to ourselves how long and severe are the pains of purgatory; let us be thoroughly penetrated with the greatness of our misery and weakness, which causes us to fall so easily into venial sin, thereby burdening ourselves with new debts; let us consider the mystery of the passion and the propitiatory death which Christ endured out of love for us: then our flesh shall be penetrated with a salutary fear of God’s inviolable majesty, and we shall tremble at the severity of His judgments; then we shall be cautious and always upon our guard to avoid even slight faults; then, filled with the spirit and fervor of penance, we shall seek ever more and more to purify and sanctify ourselves; then we shall spend carefully and gratefully the blessed time of the Holy Sacrifice, that we may ever wash again our garment white in the Blood of the Lamb. How immeasurably great is the goodness and kindness of God, in making it so easy for us here below to be delivered from sin and its punishment, to the end that after death we may speedily be with Christ!

<sup>1</sup> Oblatis *placare* muneribus; *placare* humilitatis nostrae precibus et hostiis; concede *propitius*; sacrificiis praesentibus *placatus* intende; Ecclesiae dona *propitius* intueri; hostias *placationis* offerimus; *propitius* averte; esto *propitius* plebi tuae; tua *propitius* dona sanctifica; a cunctis nos reatibus et periculis *propitiatus* absolve; respice *propitius* ad munera; haec hostia salutaris fiat tuae *propitiatio* majestatis; custodi Ecclesiam tuam *propitiatione* perpetua (Missale Roman.).



Let us daily seek at the altar the efficacious grace of an earnest and sincere spirit of penance. Let us faithfully make use of the great Sacrifice of propitiation, that we may obtain clear light to comprehend how hateful, hideous and ruinous sin is, and that we may possess a more resolute will, in order entirely to break off sinning and wholly to rid ourselves of sin. As often as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, is offered in our presence "for the remission of sin", we should in all humility acknowledge ourselves guilty and deserving of punishment; then we ought ardently to implore that God may, out of regard to this propitiatory Sacrifice, fill us more and more with a tranquil, tender and permanent sorrow for sin, with a holy and wholesome fear of sin, with great delicacy of conscience, with an ineffable uprightness and purity of heart. By means of works of penance, we should again enkindle the ardor of our first fervor in the divine service. For does not this severe admonition of the Lord apply to each one of us: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and do penance and do the first works" (Apoc. 2, 4—5). For this reason, in the Mass, let us daily mingle our tears of sorrow, join our penance and mortifications with the Blood of Jesus in the chalice, in order to make them worthy of God's acceptance and to impart to them full value in the sight of God.

## 21. The Holy Mass — a Sacrifice of Petition.

Finally, that the Mass is also the most powerful and efficacious Sacrifice of impetration, is incontestably clear from the doctrine and practice of the Church. She has declared that the Holy Mass may not only be offered for the remission of sins and their punishment, of satisfaction due, "but moreover for all other necessities," that is, to obtain whatever we require in the order of grace and salvation. A rapid glance at the various liturgies suffices to convince us that the Holy Mass has always and everywhere been regarded as the most efficacious means to obtain assistance in all the necessities and concerns of life. It now but remains for us to explain in what manner the Holy Mass acts and what it effects as a Sacrifice of petition.

I. As a Sacrifice of petition the Holy Mass produces its effects by way of prayer (*per modum orationis vel impetrationis*);<sup>1</sup> the offering of Mass is, namely, essentially prayer or actual petition, and, therefore, proper to incline the heart of the Heavenly Father to impart to us the riches of His graces and blessings. On the altar Jesus Christ as High Priest offers Himself and intercedes in our behalf, by presenting and offering to the Eternal Father His painful death and all its merits, in order to induce Him to impart His gifts to us. From this aspect, the impetratory fruit of the Eucharistic

<sup>1</sup> Sicut oratio ex se et ex proprio officio impetratoria est, sic etiam sacrificium, quod est *quaedam oratio*, ut sic dicam, *realis*, non verbalis, proprie impetratorium est (Bellarm. De Missa l. 2, c. 4).

Sacrifice originates *ex opere operato*; for it has its foundation in the celebration of the Sacrifice, in the acts and merits of Jesus Christ, and not in the devotion of the priest celebrating nor of the faithful for whom it is offered.

Do the impetratory effects follow infallibly, or not? This question is answered in various ways, but the difference lies more in the expression than in the matter itself. The propitiatory efficacy of the Mass is indeed more certain than the impetratory; but the latter also can be called infallible — namely, when all the requisite conditions exist. In case that one or the other of the conditions is wanting, we do not obtain the favors desired. — Above all, it is requisite that the object of our petition be conformable to the will of God, that is, that it should harmonize with the divine economy and the supernatural order of salvation.<sup>1</sup> And frequently this is not the case, inasmuch as the faithful endeavor to obtain special fruits from the Mass; “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8, 26).<sup>2</sup> But those graces which our Saviour wills to bestow and apply to us, we always infallibly obtain, provided we place no obstacle in the way: for He wills to procure only such favors for us, as God is disposed to grant us.<sup>3</sup> What Christ asks in our behalf, He always obtains: His will can never be unfulfilled. If He lives always in the glory of the Father, to intercede for us: how much more will He, in His character and office of “merciful and faithful High Priest of God,” employ in our behalf His all-powerful aid at that time and hour when He is mystically immolated as a victim upon the altar! Then will He, as “in the days of His flesh,” send forth prayer and supplication to God, and “because of His reverence and dignity He shall be heard” (Heb. 5, 7). Yea, the Father always hears Him (John 11, 42); for in the Mass Christ always offers anew to Him the price of His divine-human life, His Blood, His wounds, His love, His obedience, His humility, — in brief, the whole immeasurable treasure of His merits, which He accumulated from the crib to the Cross: should not the Heavenly Father, on beholding the face of His Christ (Ps. 83, 10), for His sake grant us favors and bless us with every heavenly blessing? The Lord does not pray for graces, as we do; He has full claim to them, since He has merited them. For these graces are so much the more the outpouring of the purest goodness and mercy of the Lord, the higher and the more painful the price wherewith He purchased them for us so undeserving of favor.

<sup>1</sup> Non habemus de ejusmodi impetratione promissionem absolutam Dei, sed tantum conditionatam, *si nobis, quod recte petimus, secundum divinæ providentiæ ordinationem, dari expediat* (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 1, § 2, n. 238).

<sup>2</sup> Hence the Church prays God: *Ut petentibus desiderata concedas, fac eos quæ tibi sunt placita, postulare* (Orat. Dom. IX. post Pent.).

<sup>3</sup> Christus non offert semper in ordine ad illos effectus, quos nos desideramus obtinere, sed solum in ordine ad illos, quos Deus decrevit concedere (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 133, n. 20).



In order to obtain a superabundance of grace from God through the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Church, the priest and the faithful offer the Mass, joining their petitions to it. Without doubt the result of the petitions which are borne and supported by virtue of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is less deceptive than that of a simple prayer.<sup>1</sup> For at the altar it is not we alone who cry from the depths of our misery and poverty to the throne of God, but it is Christ, our Head and Mediator, who prays and offers with us and for us. Yea, we do not merely implore, but at the same time we offer to the Eternal Father the most precious of gifts — the Body and Blood of His well-beloved Son, to move Him, by this offering, to impart to us, according to the extent of His mercies, all manner of blessings. Notwithstanding all this, the grace implored is sometimes denied. But even in this case, we may be confident that the Mass has not been altogether without fruit and effect; in place of the gift desired, we receive another which is better and more profitable for us. Though even we be not heard according to our desire, yet this will conduce to our salvation. "The Lord either gives us that which we ask, or He bestows something else which He knows will be more advantageous to us."<sup>2</sup> — For the sacrificial fruit which, according to our narrow-minded views, we expect, is not always granted, but another more suitable is given to us; thus God does not always give the graces of the Mass at the time we desire them, but at another and better moment, when it pleases Him.<sup>3</sup> "Some gifts are not refused us, but granted later at a more proper time."<sup>4</sup> If, therefore, we place no obstacle in the way, but prepare ourselves worthily, we at all times obtain some salutary fruit by reason of the impetratory power of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

2. In general, it may be said that the Mass as a Sacrifice of petition has precisely the same effects as prayer:<sup>5</sup> both prayer and

<sup>1</sup> *Orationes muneribus conjunctae multo pluris valent ad impetrandum quam solitariae et sine oblatione. Cum ergo per sacrificium offeratur Deo munus acceptissimum et hostia gratissima, consequenter orationes sacrificio innixae multo pluris valent ad impetrandum. Confirmatur, quia hoc sacrificium vim habet placandi Deum: ergo remoto obice divinae indignationis certum est, orationes reddi majoris efficaciae. Requiritur tamen ad hunc impetrationis effectum oratio seu petitio expressa vel tacita ipsius offerentis seu celebrantis, quia non dicimus impetrare nisi quod petimus (Quarti, De sacrific. Miss. quaest. 2, punct. 6).*

<sup>2</sup> *Aut dabit quod petimus aut quod nobis noverit esse utilius (S. Bernardus, In Quadrag. serm. 5).*

<sup>3</sup> *Quamvis non semper obtineatur id, quod petitur, semper tamen obtinetur aliquid vel idem alio tempore opportuno vel aliud quid et prout Deo melius visum fuerit. Ut notant P. P. et D. D. communiter (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 2, § 2).*

<sup>4</sup> *Quaedam non negantur, sed ut congruo dentur tempore differuntur (S. August. In Joann. tr. 102).*

<sup>5</sup> *Hoc sacrificium per modum impetrationis potest habere eosdem effectus, qui habentur per orationem. Quidquid enim Sacerdos potest pro se vel aliis impetrare per orationem extra sacrificium Missae, potest facilius multo impetrare*

Sacrifice can obtain all gifts for us and avert from us every evil. — The object of a prayer of petition may also be the fruit of the petition of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, provided it directly or indirectly promotes God's honor and is beneficial to our salvation. It is chiefly through the channel of the Mass, that there flow to us supernatural or spiritual gifts, appertaining to the order of grace; natural and temporal gifts, whether something spiritual for the soul or something material for the body, can be petitioned for and obtained only relatively to eternal salvation and subordinately to our final end.<sup>1</sup>

The Sacrifice of the Mass draws down upon the soul the light and the dew of Heaven, so that all the fruits of the Holy Ghost — "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity" (Gal. 5, 22—23) therein attain their most beautiful bloom and ripeness. The Mass obtains grace, strength and courage to perform good works, to overcome the flesh and its concupiscence, to despise the world with its allurements and threats, to resist the attacks of Satan, to endure not only patiently, but with joy and thanksgiving to God, the hardships and troubles, the sufferings and evils of this life, to fight the good fight, to finish our course and to persevere in the way salvation unto the end, and thus to bear off the crown of life and of eternal glory.<sup>2</sup>

But not only treasures of grace, not only supernatural and imperishable riches, but temporal benefits and blessings also flow unto us from the Holy Mass. But as we know not which may the more surely lead to the possession of heaven, fortune or misfortune, joy or sorrow, health or sickness, a long or a short life, we ought to address such petitions to God only conditionally, submitting our will to His paternal wisdom and goodness. "Commit thy way to the

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per orationem conjunctam cum sacrificio Missae (Becanus, Summ. theol. schol., p. 3, tr. 2, c. 25, q. 13).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *Orationes diversae* in the Missal; e. g., Da nobis, quaesumus Domine, piae supplicationis effectum, et famem propitiatus averte: ut mortalium corda cognoscant, et te indignante talia flagella prodire, et te miserante cessare. — Deus in quo vivimus, movemur et sumus: *pluviam* nobis tribue *congruentem*; ut praesentibus subsidiis sufficienter adjuti *sempiterna fiducialius appelamus*.

<sup>2</sup> Alter hujus sacrificii pretiosissimus effectus est, gratiae omniumque virtutum infusarum in iis, pro quibus offertur, augmentum, non quod homine nihil operante, dum Sacrum pro ipso fiat, gratia eidem augeatur (hic enim sacramentorum digne perceptorum proprius effectus est), sed quod per illud Deus magna auxilia communicet et sanctas potentesque det inspirationes animabus, pro quibus id offertur, per quas inspirationes et auxilia excitantur et animantur ad resistendum temptationibus, ad exercendas virtutes et ad facienda poenitentiae, misericordiae humilitatisque opera, et ad vitae hujus calamitates ac misérias, hominum persecutiones, morbos et dolores, quos Deus immittit, majore cum resignatione, patientia ac conformitate cum divina voluntate tolerandos. Et sic homo mirabiles in gratia, virtutibus infusus et donis Spiritus Sancti progressus facit atque etiam pretiosissimum perseverantiae donum acquirit, qui alius divinissimus est effectus, quem hoc dignissimum sacrificium operatur in iis, qui diligenter ac devote favoribus per id communicari solitis utuntur (Arias, Thesaur. inexhaust. I, tr. 4, cap. 8).



Lord and trust in Him, and He will do it" (Ps. 36, 5). You desire by means of the Mass to obtain restoration to health, but instead our Lord gives you the gift of patience and detachment from what is earthly; is not this a more precious gift? In the Missal we find different prayers, prayers for assistance, for safety in dangers, for deliverance from suffering and tribulation; in these prayers, the Church reveals at the same time the spirit in which she prays, subordinating the temporal and earthly to the eternal and heavenly.<sup>1</sup>

These impetratory fruits of the Mass are the more bountifully imparted to us, the more our hearts are open to them, the more worthy they are disposed to receive them;<sup>2</sup> therefore we should prepare our hearts to receive them by a purification of our interior by penance, by withdrawing our affections from earthly things and by inflaming our desires for heavenly goods.

3. The dangers and conflicts of our earthly pilgrimage are manifold. Man's needs are many, his poverty is great. Yet, behold! all they that are weary and heavily laden find at the altar refreshment, security and assistance in all the necessities of soul and body. The Holy Mass is an ocean of all grace: why, then, should any one go from it in want? It is an inexhaustible fountain of blessings, from whose fulness we may, as much as we can and according to our need, draw grace upon grace. By means of this Sacrifice we have become rich in all things, so that no grace is wanting to us (1 Cor. 1, 4—7). Therefore, ought we in all thankfulness and with holy joy make use of the inexhaustible riches of divine mercy, presented to us on the altar and placed at our disposal. But not merely earthly and perishable goods, not merely "the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and abundance of corn and wine" (Gen. 27, 28) should we endeavor to acquire, but, above all, we should strive to satisfy the thirst and the desire for supernatural and eternal goods, to enrich ourselves with treasures which "neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal" (Matt. 6, 20). Let us pray for that which truly conduces to our salvation and happiness, for that which may advance the kingdom of God

<sup>1</sup> Deus, qui in omni re bonum nostrum vult, virtute hujus sacrificii liberat eos, pro quibus offertur, a multis malis poenae, quae ipsorum animabus obsessent, et saepe iisdem temporalia bona tuendae vitae statuique christiano necessaria concedit, quando scit ea ipsis ad bene vivendum Deoque cum majore quiete ac stabilitate serviendum profutura. Atque in hoc sensu Ecclesia in communibus suis orationibus, in quibus a Deo per hujus sacrificii virtutem pro ipsis fidelibus petit spirituum donorum ac divinarum gratiarum abundantiam, postulat etiam, ut eos liberet a temporalibus periculis et damnis et a persecutionibus et adversitatibus utque illis det salutem et fructus terrae. Et in earum multis se declarat, in quo sensu haec temporalia petat, dicens: Da, Domine, famulis tuis salutem mentis et corporis, ut te tota virtute diligant et quae tibi placita sunt, tota dilectione perficiant (Arias 1. c.)

<sup>2</sup> Dicendum est, impetrationem sacrificii esse magis vel minus efficacem juxta majorem vel minorem dispositionem illius, cui impetratur (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. I, q. 87, n. 5).

within and around us. "It is" — as St. Gregory says — "the Lord's will, that we love Him above all that which He has created, and that we implore Him to grant us eternal, preferably to earthly, goods."<sup>1</sup>

Never should we "separate our prayers from Jesus Christ, who prays for and in us, and unto whom we pray; He prays for us as our High Priest; He prays in us as our Head; we pray to Him as our God."<sup>2</sup> This is done in a perfect manner during the celebration of Holy Mass. Let us, therefore, unite our petitions and supplications with the Sacrifice and the mediation of Jesus Christ. For, supported by His immolation and merits, our prayers will be more availing and efficacious, they will be more speedily and perfectly answered. But our prayer must be properly made; it must be made with faith and confidence, with humility and perseverance, that it may pierce the clouds and, in union with the Eucharistic Sacrifice, ascend to the throne of the Most High. "Reflect how God more readily hears the prayers of the priest during Holy Mass than at any other time. He does indeed at all times impart His graces, as often as they are asked of Him through the merits of Jesus Christ, but during Mass He dispenses them in more abundant measure; for our prayers are then accompanied and supported by the prayers of Jesus Christ, and they acquire through His intercession an incomparably greater efficacy, because Jesus is the High Priest who offers Himself in the Mass to obtain grace for us. The time of the celebration of Mass is the hour in which our Lord sits upon that throne of grace to which, according to the counsel of the Apostle, we should draw near to find mercy and help in all our necessities. The angels too look forward to the time of Holy Mass, in order that the intercession they then make for us may be more availing and acceptable before God; and what we do not obtain during Holy Mass, we can scarcely expect to be granted us at another time" (St. Alphonsus Liguori).

4. Thus the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most profound and significant expression of all our petitions and intercessions in spiritual and temporal concerns. We offer it when weighed down by adversity of all kinds, imploring therein consolation and assistance from Him who for our sake underwent so much sorrow and pain. We offer it when the Lord in His just anger, provoked by our sins, visits us with His chastisements, strikes our fields with drouth, destroys our crops by rain and flood, and we implore from His paternal Goodness that He would in due season give to our lands needed sunshine and rain. When the Angel of Death moves amongst us in times of contagion, we offer the Holy Mass, imploring therein of the Lord of life and death that He would stay the horrors of death. In behalf of the faithful who in the presence of God and of the

<sup>1</sup> De magis Dominus quam ea quae condidit, vult amari, aeterna potius quam terrena postulari (Moral. 1. 15, c. 20).

<sup>2</sup> Orat *pro nobis* ut sacerdos noster; orat *in nobis* ut caput nostrum; oratur *a nobis* ut Deus noster (S. Aug. Enarrat. in Ps. 85 n. 1).



Church engage in the sacred bond of matrimony, we offer the Holy Sacrifice, therein imploring for them the grace of fidelity and love and all the blessings of a Christian union throughout life and until death shall part them. We offer it when our young Levites are chosen for the service of the altar of the Lord by the imposition of hands; and when those selected from among the priests are consecrated to the office of chief shepherd, we therein implore for them the assistance of the great Shepherd of souls (1 Peter 2, 25), that in word and deed they may be good shepherds and worthy dispensers of the mysteries of God, and be able to stand in judgment on the day of reckoning. We offer it for our brethren whom our Lord has called from this world, imploring therein from the Judge of the living and the dead, that He may be merciful to their souls and grant them eternal rest. We offer it for all the faithful, that God may impart to them grace and blessing and admit them to the eternal kingdom of heaven. (Cf. Geissel I, p. 460 et seqq.)

## 22. The Participants of the Fruits of the Mass.

The principal purpose of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is to render to God due worship of adoration and thanksgiving, of propitiation and petition;<sup>1</sup> at the same time, it is also offered for men and it benefits them. Among the effects flowing from the Mass, those graces, those spiritual advantages and blessings, those temporal gifts and favors which God bestows by reason of the Sacrifice offered, are in a more restricted sense called sacrificial fruits.<sup>2</sup> As a rule, the application of the fruit is meant, when it is said that the Mass is offered for some particular person. It is evident that herein the propitiatory and supplicatory character of the Mass is to be chiefly considered, since, as a Sacrifice of petition and propitiation, it procures for man the fulness of blessings; considered, therefore, in this twofold character, the Sacrifice of the Mass is in a strict sense offered

<sup>1</sup> *Sacrificium Missae principaliter et universaliter semper offerendum est ad finem colendi Deum: non quidem semper ad solum finem latreuticum, sistendo solum in intentione colendi Deum in recognitionem supremi ejus dominii, in actu signato, absit; sed simul etiam ad finem eucharisticum, impetratorium et satisfactorium. Quemcunque enim ex his finem expresse intendas, eo ipso etiam implicite, imo in ipso actu exercito etiam intendis et exerces cultum divinum soli Deo debitum. An non etiam, si sacrificio tuo Deo gratias agis pro beneficiis acceptis, supplicas pro nobis accipiendis, deprecaris remissionem peccatorum: in actu exercito et ipso facto Deo divinum cultum exhibes, ejus supremum in te dominium, potestatem, eminentiam tuamque humillimam submissionem, dependentiam, indigentiam contestaris? Quis enim peccata remittit nisi solus Deus? Quis beneficia et bona salutaria ad ultimum finem aeternae beatitudinis conferre potest efficienter nisi solus Deus? Laudandus esses et laudabilis valde, mi sacerdos, si praedictos fines omnes semper explicite et expresse intenderes et bene applicares tanquam fidelis dispensator* (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 5, sect. 3, § 1).

<sup>2</sup> *Fructus sacrificii sunt ipsa bona, quae sacrificium oblatum vel potius ratione et intuitu sacrificii oblato motus ipse Deus confert offerenti et iis pro quibus offertur* (Sporer, Theol. sacram. P. 2, cap. 4, sect. 2, § 1).

for the needy.<sup>1</sup> — To offer Mass for some one may be understood also to mean, but rarely, to offer it in the name and in the place of another. In this sense, the Mass may likewise, in so far as it is a Sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving, be offered for, i. e., in the place of others, without any sacrificial fruits being especially applied to them or falling to their share. The adoration and thanksgiving offered to God by Christ in the Mass is, indeed, beneficial to men also, but only in as far as the adoration and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic Sacrifice supplies for the defects that invariably accompany their imperfect adoration and thanksgiving. On the contrary, as a Sacrifice of propitiation and petition, the Mass tends in quite a different manner to the benefit and advantage of persons for whom it is offered; for by its propitiatory and impetratory efficacy it procures for them benefits and graces of all kinds. These blessings accruing to man we have in view, when treating of participation in the fruits of the Sacrifice and of its participants.

We have previously mentioned the different sources whence the fruits of the Mass flow and descend upon man. Here we shall chiefly treat of the participation in the essential sacrificial fruit (*ex opere operato*), which has its source directly from Christ as the Chief Priest. This principal fruit of the Sacrifice is shared in by different participants and is gained by them in different ways. Among the complicated questions which have been discussed on this subject, the following one occupies the first place. On what does the participation in the designated sacrificial fruit depend — and who then participates therein? Some<sup>2</sup> hold that all have a share in this sacrificial fruit who in any manner co-operate in the Sacrifice of the Mass — whether or not the Mass be offered for them; others,<sup>3</sup> on the contrary, are of opinion, and justly, that the Sacrifice (*ex opere operato*) benefits persons only in so far as it is offered for them.<sup>4</sup> In reality both conditions usually concur, that is, it is always at least in a general way offered for those who themselves offer it or who offer it along with them; thus far both requisite conditions, therefore, may conduce to secure said sacrificial fruit. In this fruit there share the entire Church, the faithful who actually take part in the Mass, the celebrating priest, and they to whom the priest especially applies the fruit of the Mass.

1. The sacrificial fruit, which falls to the share of the whole Church, is called the general fruit (*fructus generalis vel generalissimus*). It has a twofold source: first, the offering of Christ, inasmuch as He offers Himself for the Church; and then the offering of

<sup>1</sup> Sacrificium sub hac duplici ratione — quatenus propitiatorium et impetratorium est — fructum aliquem seu effectum habere potest praeter ipsum cultum, et ideo sub his rationibus *proprie* offertur pro aliquo (Suarez disp. 78, sect. 1, n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Suarez disp. 79, sect. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L., q. 57. — Stentrup, Soteriologia, th. 101.

<sup>4</sup> Eucharistia effectum sacramenti habet in eo qui sumit, effectum autem sacrificii in eo qui *offert* vel in his pro quibus *offertur* (S. Thom. 3, q. 79, a. 5).



the Church, inasmuch as she also offers the Mass herself through the priest for her own welfare. Both sources flow into each other and pour out a stream of blessings throughout the Church and unto all her children.

a) Every holy Sacrifice of the Mass has its efficacy and advantage for the whole Church — for all that are incorporated in the mystical Body of Christ and still need to be assisted by grace, whether they be numbered among the living or the dead. And, indeed, in a less degree, and indirectly at least, this general fruit is diffused even among those without the pale of the Church, who, though out of it, are called and required to enter or return into its bosom. The chalice of the Precious Blood rises daily from the altar heavenward, in order that all men may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (1 Tim. 2, 1—4). Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world (John 3, 17); for He shed His Blood and underwent the torments of the Cross, to obtain for all men without exception the forgiveness of sin, grace and eternal happiness. Without intermission and in all places there gushes forth and flows this universal well-spring of grace and of salvation of the Sacrifice of the Cross in the Mass, whose blessings benefit the entire world. It is, moreover, to this Holy Sacrifice, as a very sun of grace, that these words of the Psalmist are applicable: “His going out is from the end of heaven — and his circuit even to the end thereof, and there is no one that can hide himself from the heat” (Ps. 18, 7). Yea, unto thousands of hearts, that are unaware of it, there radiate from the altar rays of supernal light, to enlighten and to lead back the stray sheep to Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls (1 Peter 2, 25), into His sheepfold, to the maternal home of the one true Church, in which the treasures of all the ways of grace and its gifts are unfolded to them and placed at their disposal.

Far more abundantly and more richly still, certainly, is the blessing of the Mass poured out over the Church militant on earth and suffering in purgatory; for the Mass is, by the will and institution of Christ, the property of the Church. It is for the welfare and benefit of the Church that the daily Sacrifice was instituted, and for this end it is principally offered. The general fruit accruing from the Mass is applied, in the first place, for the common welfare of the Church, that is, it is bestowed on the Church in its entirety, inasmuch as the Church is a divine work and institution, the kingdom and Spouse of Christ. With His heart's blood Christ acquired the Church (Apoc. 20, 28); upon the altar He continually renews, in an unbloody manner, the bloody Sacrifice of Golgotha for His Church, so as always gloriously to present her — without spot or wrinkle, holy and immaculate (Eph. 5, 25—27). By virtue of the Blood of the Lamb (Apoc. 12, 11), that daily flows in the chalice, the Church gains the victory over her enemies, and invariably comes forth triumphant from her combat with the gates of hell and the anti-Christian powers of the world. In the Sacrifice of the Altar, Christ comes

forward as mediator and advocate with God in behalf of the Church, to sustain and exalt her in all her necessities and tribulations, to humble her enemies and put them to confusion. From this we may conclude, that those members of the mystical body of Christ have a particularly large share in this universal sacrificial fruit, who chiefly contribute to the common weal of the Church — namely, the pastors and teachers of the Church (Pope, bishops and priests). It behooves them principally to promote the glory and holiness of the Church; they stand in great need of supernatural light, of strength and endurance, courageously to persevere in the distressing combats which they are almost constantly obliged to wage in behalf of the flock of Christ which is confided to them, for the unity and freedom, for the treasures of faith and grace of the Catholic Church. The guardians and protectors of the Spouse of Christ, therefore, experience, in the first place, the salutary influence and the beneficent effects of the Eucharistic Sacrifice bestowed on them in order that they may ever prove themselves servants of God by much patience in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in watchings, in weariness . . . in the word of truth, through the power of God, by the armor of justice (2 Cor. 6, 4—13).

In what this fruit of the Sacrifice actually consists, and whether it extends to each individual member of the Church, cannot be positively determined. Some theologians<sup>1</sup> are of opinion that the general sacrificial fruit includes not only those blessings obtained by way of petition, but also a satisfactory effect, namely, the remission of temporal punishment due to sin — and, moreover, a remission more or less abundantly imparted to all the members of the Church who are disposed to receive it.

b) Christ, the invisible Priest, therefore, continually offers Himself for the entire Church by the hands and through the ministry of the visible priest. The latter, at the same time, stands at the altar in the name and by the commission of the Church. The Church offers and prays by the lips of the priest who, in every Mass, is her delegate and mediator with God for all her children upon earth and in purgatory. As she, the holy and well-beloved Spouse of Christ, is ever acceptable to God, her petitions, especially when united to the Mass, are always answered; hence, in consideration of the Sacrifice and prayer of the Church, the Most High day after day pours out the richest blessings upon her needy children. In the liturgical prayers of the Mass, mention is usually made of those gifts and graces which the Church desires to obtain, by means of the Mass, for herself in general or for individual members in particular. Thus, for example, she implores the Almighty during the celebration of Mass for the grace "that, after overcoming all attacks and errors,

<sup>1</sup> Valentia, *Comment. theol.* IV, disp. 6, quaest. 11, punct. 1. — Vasquez, *In III*, disp. 231, cap. 6. — Gotti, *Theol. schol. dogm. tr. 8 de Euch.*, quaest. 2, dub. 1, § 3. — Tanner, *Theol. schol.* IV, disp. 5, quaest. 9, dub. 4, n. 98. — Cf. in particular Stentrup, *1. c. thes.* 112.



she may serve God with perfect liberty" and "be able to enjoy undisturbed devotion."

c) Christ and the Church offer the Mass continually for the body of the faithful. Therefore, the general fruit of the Sacrifice benefits the Catholic people simply because the priest exercises his ministry at the altar as prescribed; for this a special and express application on his part is not required. — Excommunicated persons who are excluded from the Church, do not share in the general sacrificial fruit; those of the faithful who are in the state of mortal sin, participate proportionately in a much less degree than do persons in the state of grace, who are more intimately incorporated in the mystical body of Christ. The better the faithful dispose themselves by virtue and piety, the more closely they unite themselves to the Mass and the more perfectly they co-operate in its offering, the more abundant will be their share in the general sacrificial fruit of the Church. — For this reason, it is a pious custom and a very salutary practice of many Christians each morning in spirit to commend themselves to and to include themselves in all the Masses that may be celebrated at all hours of the day throughout the world; for they thereby draw upon themselves in greater abundance the blessing and fruit of the Holy Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

How great and inestimable in this respect also is the happiness of being of the household of Christ and one of the fellow-citizens of the Saints (Eph. 2, 19), that is, a believing, faithful and obedient child of the Catholic Church, in the communication of grace with Christ! Whoever remains a spiritually living member of God's great family, spread all over the earth, can draw his full share of the stream of blessings and mercies that is daily poured out over the Church from Masses innumerable. Again, how consoling to the heart is the thought: Even were I to die on the most isolated spot of the earth, forgotten by everybody, — Holy Church, my spiritual Mother, forgets me not; for upon thousands of altars, she prays and offers for my poor soul also Christ's Precious Reconciling Blood, let-

<sup>1</sup> Die quadam, cum (sancta Mechtildis) prae debilitate longius ire non valens, Missam in ambitu audiret, ingemuit, conquerendo se Deo esse remotam. Cui Dominus statim respondit: "Ubique tu es, ego sum." Tunc illa requisivit, si aliquid obesset quod homines de longe Missam audirent. Cui Dominus: "Bonum est ut homo praesens sit; quod dum nullo modo potest, sic tamen prope sit, ut verba valeat audire, quia secundum quod Apostolus dicit: Sermo Dei vivus est et efficax et penetrabilis (Hebr. 4, 12). Verbum enim Dei animam vivificat, infundens ei spirituale gaudium, sicut etiam apparet in hominibus laicis et idiotis, qui licet non intelligant quae leguntur, sentiunt tamen gaudium Spiritus, et inde ad poenitentiam animantur. Verbum etiam Dei efficacem reddit animam ad virtutes et quaeque bona, et penetrat eam, omnia ejus interiora illustrando. Sed cum infirmitate vel obedientia vel alia rationabili de causa praepeditur, ubicunque tunc homo est, ibi eidem praesens et cum illo sum. . . dico tibi: qui Missam devote et studiose audierit, in extremis ejus tot nobiles Sanctorum meorum personas in ejus consolationem et defensionem, ad animam ejus cum honore deducendam, sibi transmittam, quot Missas in terris audivit" (S. Mechtild., Lib. special. grat. p. 3, c. 19).

ting it trickle down into the flames of purgatory in order to relieve or abridge my painful banishment in that abode of suffering.

2. All the members of the Church do not gain in the same manner and measure this general sacrificial fruit. Those of the faithful who personally co-operate in the celebration of Mass, who share in the offering of the Sacrifice and who thus, in a certain sense, appear as joint celebrants (*co-offerentes*), obtain without doubt a greater share of heavenly blessings, and this not only *ex opere operantis*, but even *ex opere operato*.<sup>1</sup> These graces, imparted to the faithful who co-operate in the Sacrifice, are termed the special fruit (*fructus specialis*). — Among the various ways of participating by personal co-operation in the offering of the Sacrifice, is chiefly to be mentioned the assisting at Holy Mass. Whoever assists at Mass with reverence and devotion, enters into the closest and most intimate connection with the Sacrifice, because as the priest prays and offers the Mass, such a one joins his prayers, praying and offering with the priest — and because in addition to this, the Church also prays and offers for all there present. The faithful who worthily assist at Mass, gain thereby a special sacrificial fruit, more or less abundant according to the measure of their co-operation, their worthiness and devotion. Justly, therefore, is the devout attendance at Mass regarded as one of the most efficacious means to draw on ourselves and others the fulness of spiritual and temporal blessings.<sup>2</sup> The Mass is a spiritual mine of gold, where we may dig and enrich

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<sup>1</sup> That on all the faithful who, through and with the priest, actually offer the Sacrifice, an impetratory and satisfactory fruit *ex opere operato* from the Sacrifice is bestowed, Suarez holds (Disp. 79, sect. 8, n. 5) as a "devout and reliable opinion." Lugo remarks thereon: *Haec sententia probabilis est et deservit ad commendandam magis utilitatem audiendi Missam*, — but adds: *sed non video firmum fundamentum ad eam persuadendam*. — He believes that there is no well founded reason for the assertion, that to them who assist at Mass is granted a *remissio poenae residuae ex opere operato*; on the contrary, he regards it as established, that the assistants receive a fruit *ex opere operato, quatenus per modum saltem impetrationis sacerdos offert specialiter pro circumstantibus* (Disp. 19, sect. 11, n. 230—238). — Cf. on this also Arriaga tom. VII, disp. 53, sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Magna dignitas est, quam Deus homini christiano Missam cum spiritu devotioneque audientii impertit, et magna valdeque mira sunt bona, quae is sic illam audiens lucratur. Quantae dignitatis, gloriae utilitatisque homini christiano est, quod Deo Patri donum offert ac munus infiniti valoris, et quod illi infinite gratum est, et quo ipsum placat propitiumque reddit, si peccatis iratus est, voluntatem ejus conciliat, summamque ei voluptatem affert et in ejus amore ac gratia crescit, familiarior eidem Domino fit, majorem cum ipso amicitiam contrahit, novos ab illius liberalitate favores, dona et gratias percipit, et ab eodem suorum bonorum desideriorum complementum consequitur, quoque non soli sibi tantum bonum procurat, sed etiam a Deo ingentia bona ac misericordias pro omnibus illis impetrare potest, pro quibus idem sacrificium vult offerre? Nam Missam audiendo, quemadmodum offert sacrificium corporis et sanguinis Christi pro seipso, sic etiam potest illud offerre pro omnibus iis, quibus bene vult, et omnibus magno adiumento erit pro anima proque salute ac vita temporali, quae animae bono conducit* (Arias, Thesaur. inexhaust. II, tr. 7, cap. 7).



ourselves with little labor; it is a treasure-house inexhaustible in its riches, that is ever open to us and to which we can always gain admittance. But where are our faith and love? Do we esteem and make use of this overflowing fountain of heavenly blessings? Is the holy hour of Mass, so full of graces, what is dearest to us and the most precious portion of the day? Do we consider the celebration of the Holy Mass, or assisting thereat, as the highest and most important action of our daily duty? We have in this certainly much to lament, much to atone for. Holy Mass should be the treasure, the joy and comfort of our life.

3. While the whole Church receives the general fruit of the Mass, and the assisting faithful the particular fruit, the very special or personal fruit (*fructus specialissimus vel individualis*) is imparted to the celebrant.<sup>1</sup> This is easy to understand. The priest has the closest and most prominent part in the celebration of Mass. By virtue of his ordination, he is empowered and called to celebrate, in the name of Christ and of the Church, the holy Sacrifice. He is not only the real offerer, but according to the will of Christ and in the name of the Church he also expressly offers the Sacrifice for himself: should not then the Mass, as a Sacrifice of propitiation and petition, be rich in graces and blessings for him? It is a never-failing fountain of salvation, open more especially to the celebrant than to any one else. Therefore, he cannot fail to be enriched in quite a signal manner with the blessings of Heaven, if, besides approaching the altar in the state of grace, he, moreover, celebrates with attention and devotion.<sup>2</sup> This personal sacerdotal fruit the celebrant receives by simply performing his sacrificial duty in the proper manner. No special application or wish to gain this fruit of the Sacrifice is required, its source is not in the priest's devout sentiments, which are only a necessary condition to gain this fruit in a more plentiful measure. — For this reason also, it is of vital importance that the

<sup>1</sup> The worthy celebration of Mass is, indeed, in the highest degree meritorious, satisfactory and impetratory for the priest *ex opere operantis*. The fructus specialissimus, on the contrary, of which there is question here, is *ex opere operato*. — Some theologians (for example, Suarez, Henriquez, Amicus, Laymann) assert, that the priest has also the fruit *ex opere operato*, inasmuch as he offers the Sacrifice (*quatenus offert*); others more correctly affirm (for instance, Vasquez, Coninck, Isambert, Pasqualigo), that it is granted to him because the Mass also is specially offered for him (*quatenus pro ipso offertur*). — The opinion that the fructus specialissimus of the celebrant and the fructus specialis of the assisting faithful cannot be applied to others, is better founded than the contrary view. Cf. Pasqualigo, De sacrific. N. L. tr. 1, q. 99, 115. — Stentrup l. c. thes. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Nemo plus utilitatis recipit ex sanctissimo Missae sacrificio, quam sacerdos ipse qui offert; nemo enim tam est propinquus, intimus et, ut sic loquar, practicus et totalis executor tanti operis, tam Deo placiti, tam ex sese naturaque sua fructiferi, tam ad miserationes liberalitatesque divinas evocandas ac emungendas instituti; nemo tam illimitatus et arbitrarius dispensator atque arbiter tanti thesauri fructuumque ac effectuum ejus quam sacerdos* (Druzicki, Tract. de effect. fruct. et applicat. ss. Missae sacrific. cap. 8).

priest do his utmost to prepare well for the daily celebration of Mass. If he wishes to obtain at the altar the many and great graces of which he stands in need for the discharge of his responsible office in an edifying manner, he must endeavor to lead a spotless life and ever celebrate the Divine Mysteries with ardent love. The Church admonishes him to use every exertion and care always to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with the utmost purity and devotion. Before approaching the altar, let him ask himself the following questions<sup>1</sup>: How sinful, how full of imperfection, how slothful am I in the service of God, I who venture to offer the Holy Sacrifice? How unspeakably exalted, glorious and precious is the Divine Victim, who is about to rest in my hands and in my heart? How inconceivably sublime the greatness and the majesty of the Most High, whom I am expected to honor and glorify by the celebration of Mass? How manifold, how weighty are the cares and tribulations of the Church and of her children, for which they expect help and assistance by the power of the Eucharistic Sacrifice? — Such reflections will inflame the soul with love and devotion.

4. Finally, there proceeds moreover from the Mass a propitiatory and impetratory fruit (*ex opere operato*), which is imparted to those for whom the priest, in a special manner, celebrates Holy Mass — and this fruit is called the ministerial or mediatorial fruit (*fructus ministerialis vel medius*). Inasmuch as the priest is a servant of Christ and a dispenser of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4, 1), he has not only the power to offer the Sacrifice, but also to determine to whom the fruit of the Sacrifice should be applied. With regard to the ministerial fruit of the Sacrifice, the priest can freely dispose of it in his own favor or in favor of others, but to the celebrant and to him only does it appertain to make the special application of the

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<sup>1</sup> In omni sacrificio *quatuor* sunt pensanda, ut puta *quis, quid, cui et quare*. Ideo antequam celebremus aut communicemus, perpendamus haec omnia. Imprimis unusquisque attendat, *quis* sit, i. e. quam fragilis, defectuosus, indignus et reus: ac per hoc indignissimum se recognoscat sicque pro viribus ad communionem seu celebrationem se praeparet ac suo modo se dignificare Deo auxiliante conetur. Secundo consideret *quid*, i. e. quale et quantum sit sacrificium istud, in quo Christus Deus et homo offertur; et ita cum ingenti humilitate, filiali amore, reverentia praecordiali, puritate praecipua, charitateque fervida progrediatur ad Sancta sanctorum. Tertio penset, *cui* fit ista oblatio, ut puta Deo Patri, Regi ac Domino majestatis immensae, cui cum omni sinceritate, humilitate, attentione, diligentia adstare et immolare oportet. Nam et oblatio sacrificii hujus opus est valde privilegiatum, ad cujus dignam executionem devotio requiritur actualis et esse in charitate, quam qui habuerit, ceteris non carebit virtutibus. Quarto advertat, *quare*, i. e. propter quas causas institutum sit et immoletur sacrificium istud, videlicet pro communi bono totius Ecclesiae, pro vivis et mortuis, pro ereptione ab omni periculo et peccato, pro virtutum et gratiae incremento, pro pace patriae et omni rationabili causa. Idcirco cum pro tot tantisque causis nequaquam sit segnitè predecandum nec tepide offerendum, satagamus cum grandi instantia integroque affectu sancti fervoris celebrare ac celebrando aut communicando orare (Dion. Carthus. in hymn. "Verbum supernum" enarrat.).



Mass.<sup>1</sup> — The power and the right of especially offering the Holy Sacrifice for others, of applying its fruits in their behalf by special intention, is inviolably imparted to the priest at his ordination. And the obligation of celebrating the Mass for such special obligation can arise from various causes. It arises in general from the order of ecclesiastical authority, or the free consent of the priest, who, on receiving an alms or some stipend (*eleemosyna vel stipendium*), obliges himself thereto.<sup>2</sup> That such a special application of the sacrificial fruit is lawful, useful and salutary, is manifest not only from the nature of the Sacrifice considered in itself, but also from the constant practice from ancient times and the explicit teaching of the Church. From the very beginning it has always been the practice of the Church to offer Holy Mass for individual persons and for certain intentions. Thus pastors are strictly obliged on Sundays and holidays to celebrate Holy Mass for the flock committed to their care. The assertion that the special application of the Mass for certain persons or certain classes of people is of no special advantage to them, has been condemned by the Church.<sup>3</sup>

As this application of the sacrificial fruit is exclusively an act of the power received at the ordination of the priest, it can always be validly (*valide*) made for all that are capable or in need of the effects of the Mass; but in order that it may be lawfully (*licite*) done, no prohibition of the Church must intervene or be opposed to the application. By the will of Christ, the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the property of the Church; He has commanded it to be celebrated by her and in her. The highest ecclesiastical authority, consequently, has the power to limit and regulate more definitely the right of application. Therefore the question still remains to be considered, namely, in behalf of what persons may the priest celebrate Holy Mass with a special intention, that is, to whom especially may he apply the ministerial sacrificial fruit? To answer this question, we must distinguish several classes of persons, among the living as well as among the departed.

a) The living are either members of the Catholic Church or outside of her communion.

a) The members of the Church are either in the state of grace or in the state of sin: for either class the Holy Mass may be offered. The just members of the Church, animated by an active charity, are alone disposed to gain in their fulness the fruits of the Mass; for the participation in the Mass is so much the greater, the more in-

<sup>1</sup> Dicendum est, sacrificium determinari, ut huic potius prosit speciali modo quam illi, ab ipso offerente, quatenus determinat offerre pro hoc vel pro illo, et in hoc consistere *applicationem*, qua dicitur *applicari* (Pasqualigo, De sacrif. N. L. tr. 1, q. 161, n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Sacerdos non accipit pecuniam quasi pretium consecrationis Eucharistiae aut Missae decantandae (hoc enim esset simoniacum), sed quasi stipendium (gift, alms) suae sustentationis (S. Thom. 2, 2, q. 100, a. 2 ad 2.)

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Prop. 30 of the Constitution Auctorem fidei of Aug. 28, 1794.

timate is one's communion with Christ and the Church. — To the dead members of the Church, that is, to those of the faithful who are deprived of the life of grace, who are spiritually dead through mortal sin, not all the fruits of the Sacrifice can be applied; for as long as they are enemies of God, no temporal punishment can be remitted them. The chief and the weightiest need they have, and which oppresses them and from which they should be freed by the propitiatory virtue of the Mass, is the need entailed by sin. The Sacrifice of the Mass will, above all, obtain for them the mercy and reconciliation of God, light and strength from on high, so that with a resolute will they may be enabled to abandon the path of sin, sincerely turn to God and be restored to the life of grace. — Moreover, for baptized children who have not as yet attained the use of reason, the Mass can be celebrated, but only as a Sacrifice of petition, and not of propitiation.

b) If we pass over to those persons who are outside of the Church and are separated from her visible communion, there is no doubt that, at least indirectly and in a general way, they are included in the Sacrifice, since the Mass is celebrated for the conversion of Jews and pagans, the extirpation of heresy and schism, to obtain and promote the increase and exaltation of the kingdom of God. The first object in this is, indeed, the welfare of the Church; while, at the same time, the greatest benefit and advantage accrues from the Mass to those who receive the grace of becoming children of the true Church. — On the contrary, according to the positive definitions of the Church, the direct and special application of the Mass is not permitted so unconditionally to all classes of persons. Thus it is strictly forbidden to offer the Holy Sacrifice for those excommunicated persons who are not tolerated, but are to be avoided (*excommunicati vitandi*), and this prohibition holds good so long as the ban of excommunication has not been removed by absolution. According to some theologians, on the contrary, such an application for the excommunicated who are tolerated is regarded not only as valid, but also as permitted. — The Holy Sacrifice may be lawfully offered, but only under certain restrictions, for schismatics and heretics, as well as for the unbaptized or unbelievers (Jews, Turks, heathens). And in so doing everything is to be avoided that would cause scandal or offence to the Christian people. The Holy Mass may be offered for schismatics and heretics first and chiefly to obtain their conversion, that is, with the intention of appeasing the anger of God in their regard, as well as of obtaining for them from the goodness of God various graces and benefits, whereby they may the more easily work out their salvation, be brought to the knowledge of the true faith and into communion with the Church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Proposito dubio: Utrum possit aut debeat celebrari Missa ac percipi elemosyna pro Graeco-schismatico, qui enixe oret atque instet, ut Missa applicetur pro se sive in ecclesia adstante sive extra ecclesiam manente? S. Congr. Officii die 19. April. 1837 respondit: Juxta exposita non licet, nisi constet expresse, eleemo-*



b) The salutary and saving influence of the Holy Sacrifice extends even beyond the tomb. Can and may the Holy Mass be offered for all the departed ?

They who have departed out of this world have either entered heaven, where they rejoice in happiness and reign in glory — or they are buried in the abyss of hell, whence there is no redemption ; or they sojourn in the abode of purification until they are purified in the pain of fire and in the fire of pains, until cleansed from all defilement and found worthy to appear before the face of God.

a) It is for the last only of these three classes of deceased persons that the Mass can strictly be offered and according to apostolical tradition<sup>1</sup> is truly offered.<sup>2</sup> The Syriac Bishop Balæus, who lived toward the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, proves that prayer and sacrifice are useful to the departed. "It is evident to all reasonable minds, that the faithful departed have the benefit of the Church vigils and of the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the incense of propitiation, when the priest is mindful of them at the altar. Then the citizens of heaven rejoice, and they that live upon earth are gladdened, and the departed, too, exult, for they are summoned in order to be refreshed by the heavenly Sacrifice." The suffering souls, who are helplessly suffering and enduring pains in purgatory, stand in great need of the propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass, that the divine justice may be induced to abridge their tedious punishment, or alleviate their intense sufferings. The Church has declared, that the Mass most especially (*potissimum*) procures help and relief for the faithful departed.<sup>3</sup> The Sacrifice of the Altar, accordingly, is the most effectual, all-sufficient and sure means of obtaining for the suffering souls in purgatory comfort and refreshment ; for it helps them more than prayers and indulgences, more than fasting, alms and night-vigils, more than works of charity, mercy and piety which the living may offer for the departed. As these suffering souls are always in the best dispositions, the Holy

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*synam a schismatico praeberi ad impetrandam conversionem ad veram fidem. Quam resolutionem P. M. Gregorius XVI. approbavit.*

Proposito dubio: *Utrum liceat sacerdotibus Missam celebrare pro Turcarum aliorumque infidelium intentione*, et ab iis eleemosynam pro Missae applicatione accipere? S. Congr. Officii die 12. Julii 1865 respondit: *Affirmative, dummodo non adsit scandalum, ac nihil in Missa specialiter addatur, et quoad intentionem constet, nihil mali aut erroris aut superstitionis in infidelibus eleemosynam offerentibus subesse.*

<sup>1</sup> Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cum alia sacramenta non prosint post mortem, unde est, quod hoc sacramentum altaris prodest? — Dicendum, quod aliorum sacramentorum dispensatio respicit actum *in persona* vel *circa personam*, sicut patet in baptismo, et ideo non potest baptizari, nisi qui praesto est in aquam mergi; sed *sacrificium* est actus *pro persona*. Et quoniam actus *in personam* requirit personam actu existentem, sed *pro persona* non; sicut Christus obtulit se Patri pro illis, qui fuerunt et qui futuri sunt, sic sacrificium prodest *his qui finierunt vitam* (S. Bonav. IV, dist. 45, dub. 3).

<sup>3</sup> Trident. sess. 25 de Purgat.

Mass, in all probability, is never without effect when said for them. This is all we know, the rest is entirely enveloped in great darkness, for it is hidden from us, in what measure and to what extent the Holy Sacrifice each time abridges or relieves the sufferings of a poor soul. How soon such a soul may be released from purgatory depends upon the will of God, whose justice is equally as infinite and impenetrable as His mercy. Therefore it is not useless, but rather necessary, to have the Holy Sacrifice repeatedly offered for one and the same soul, to assist it all the more speedily and surely to enter into possession of heaven. This is true also of the so-called privileged Mass, in which, by virtue of the privileged altar, there is added a plenary indulgence to the fruit of the Sacrifice for the benefit of the soul in behalf of whom the Mass is celebrated; for the real effect of such an indulgence, which can be applied to the departed only by way of petition, remains yet subject to the merciful acceptance of God.

Of the different effects of the Mass, the faithful departed can receive but a single one, namely, the remission of the temporal punishment by satisfying the Divine Justice. — These punishments are the last impediments which withhold them from entering into the longed-for rest and joy of their Lord. As a Sacrifice of propitiation, the Mass disarms God's justice, resting heavily upon these souls, and cancels the punishments to be undergone by them. — As a Sacrifice of petition, the Mass may also contribute to the alleviation and deliverance of the suffering souls: on the one hand, by procuring for them from the goodness of God a gracious release from punishment; on the other, by obtaining many graces, whereby the living are incited and animated to offer constantly for the departed penitential works, indulgences and prayers.<sup>1</sup>

In a general way, the Church in her liturgy offers and prays for "all the faithful departed" and for "all resting in Christ" — and, therefore, in behalf of all the souls suffering in purgatory. For important reasons the special or direct application of the Mass is far more limited in regard to the departed than to the living. It depends on whether the person died in or out of the communion of the Church. All who in life and at death were in visible communion with the Church, are after death considered as connected in a living manner with the Church, that is, if not already in heaven, at least

<sup>1</sup> Constat inter omnes doctores catholicos, sacrificium Missae vere prodesse defunctis, nedum quatenus satisfactorium, sed etiam ut est impetratorium, ut colligitur ex Trident. sess. 22, cap. 2, et ex praxi Ecclesiae, quae orat in sacrificio pro defunctis, etiam pro illis, quibus non applicatur fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato, et quia praescribit, ut oretur pro illis in secundo *Memento* post consecrationem, propter solum fructum impetrationis, quia tunc facta est jam applicatio et distributio fructus satisfactionis ex opere operato (Quarti, In Rubr. Missal. p. 1, tit. 5, dub. 6). — According to the opinion of this author, the Mass as a Sacrifice of petition can benefit the departed only indirectly, quia per orationes sacrificio innixas impetramus a Deo, ut excitet fideles ad offerenda sacrificia et suffragia pro defunctis vel indulgentias, quibus immediate liberantur a poenis.



as being on the sure way to eternal blessedness, namely, in the place of purification. Therefore, she allows the Holy Sacrifice to be celebrated for all that have died in her fold. — The case is quite different with respect to those who have departed not as members of the Catholic Church. It is, indeed, possible that they were separated without fault of their own from the visible communion of the Church, that they died in the state of grace and, consequently, were saved; the judgment of this the Church leaves to God. As a visible society, she judges according to external facts; outwardly they did not belong to her — the only true and saving Church. The Church cannot, then, recognize and treat as her own those who previous to their death were not in a visible manner her children. Such would be the case if she permitted them to share in her public prayers and sacrifices, in her ceremonies and marks of honor. To these common spiritual treasures they only have a claim who were and who remained children of the Church until death, and that not merely in the sight of God, but also before man. In all justice, therefore, the Church forbids every kind of funeral celebration, foundation Masses and application of Mass for those who have died outside of her visible communion — that is, for all deceased non-Catholics, whether members of sects or unbelievers. Were she to act otherwise, she would endanger the dogma of her exclusive truth and authority, and open both door and gate to indifference in matters of faith.<sup>1</sup> — As long as heretics and unbelievers are alive, the Sacrifice of the Mass may be offered for them, to obtain in their behalf the grace of conversion. With their death their conversion ceases to be possible: hence the difference in the ecclesiastical regulation which permits the celebrant's application of the fruit of the Mass, on the one hand, for living non-Catholics and, on the other, forbids it to deceased non-Catholics. Recently it was attempted to make a distinction between public and private application for departed non-Catholics, and to represent the latter application as permissible. But this distinction has no foundation in the law and, therefore, appears unreliable (*Ubi lex non distinguit, neque nos distinguere debemus* — Where the law makes no distinction, neither ought we). The opinion of the lawfulness of applying the Mass in this case is, therefore, at least insecure and doubtful.<sup>2</sup> The Church has prohibited every special application of the Mass and its celebration for deceased non-Catholics for weighty reasons; therefore, she is not responsible for the injury

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Brief of Gregory XVI. of Feb. 16, 1842, to the Bishop of Augsburg, and that of July 9, 1842, to the Benedictine Abbot of the Bavarian Monastery of Scheyern. — To the question: An liceat in die anniversarii obitus principissae ad Protestantium sectam pertinentis celebrare Missam in levamen defunctorum regiae familiae? was replied by the S. R. C. of May 23, 1859: Non licere, et detur exemplum epistolae in forma Brevis die 9. Julii 1842 s. m. Gregorii XVI.

<sup>2</sup> For such as die in manifest heresy (*in manifesta haeresi*) Mass may not be said, even if the application were known only to the priest and the giver of the stipend (C. S. O. April 7, 1875).

that the separation from her visible communion may have entailed even beyond the tomb. As to the rest, deceased non-Catholics are not totally deprived of the blessed influence of the Mass; for prayers and the Mass also are offered in general for them, and when Mass is celebrated for all the suffering souls, they also derive advantage therefrom.

None the less true is it, that the children of the Catholic Church in life and after death enjoy many graces and special advantages, from which non-Catholics are excluded. This is an unmerited blessing and an inappreciable privilege for which we should be most grateful to God. At the same time we ought to "praise and magnify His infinite goodness and benignity, by which we are enabled to make satisfaction for one another," — and for the reason that in the Sacrifice of the Mass principally He has given us such an excellent and efficacious means of procuring untold comfort, relief and solace in behalf of the suffering souls in their painful banishment. The ingenious love of the Church has appointed a special solemnity for the comfort and peace of these souls. For centuries on All-Souls' Day she stands in robes of mourning at the altar and at the tomb. It is a mournful day; but one on which Masses for the dead are multiplied, when prayers and sighs are more fervent, the faithful more recollected and better disposed, when streams of grace descend to the sufferers in purgatory, when heaven throws open its gates to them, and signs of peace hover over the abyss. Oh, that is a blessed day! Though the darkness that envelops us be ever so dense and to us impenetrable, yet from thousands of altars shines the light of the glorified Body of Christ, casting its rays into heaven, into the very face of the infinitely just Father, causing it to be lit up in friendly and gracious clemency, and, from the throne of God, it reflects its rays downward into the darkness of the subterranean prison, in order that the perpetual light of the heavenly home may shine upon them.<sup>1</sup>

b) For the reprobate the Holy Sacrifice cannot and may not in any manner whatever be offered: for them there is neither redemption (*in inferno nulla est redemptio*) nor alleviation of their torments.<sup>2</sup> As withered branches they are completely severed from the true vine, Jesus Christ; for all eternity they are excluded from the communion of the Saints. Their torments in the ocean of fire and brimstone are not alleviated, even by a drop of cold water; no single ray of light or of hope ever penetrates the dark abode of hell.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Keel, *Die jenseitige Welt*, 1. Buch (Das Fegfeuer), p. 156 &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Mitigatio poenae damnatorum dupliciter potest intelligi: aut quantum ad taxationem et inflictionem poenae et sic absque dubio est ibi mitigatio, quia divina justitia non totum exigit, pro eo quod, ejus pietate interveniente, aliquam partem poenae infligendo remittit. — Alio modo potest intelligi mitigatio post poenae taxationem et inflictionem, et hoc modo nulla cadit mitigatio a divina misericordia, quia ex tunc claudit eis Dominus viscera pietatis* (S. Bonav. IV, dist. 46, a. 1, q. 2).



Equally unlawful is it to celebrate Mass for children who have not reached the age of reason and who have died without baptism. Whatever their eternal destiny may be, this much is certain that they are irrevocably excluded, not only from the bliss of heaven, but in general from all participation in the supernatural goods which Christ acquired for the human race, and which are applied to individual men mainly through the Sacrifice of the Mass.

c) In contrast with the reprobate, whom, in their eternal separation from Christ, grace can neither reach nor influence, "the spirits of the just made perfect" in heaven are most intimately united to Him and, consequently, stand in no need of the help of grace. The blessed dwell in the land of the living, where they are free from all evil and in full possession of all the riches of the Lord. From this the reason is clear, why the Sacrifice of the Mass can never properly (*proprie*) be offered for them.<sup>1</sup> They are free from all guilt of sin and its punishment; therefore, the Mass as a sacrifice of propitiation cannot be offered for them. Moreover, since their essential glory cannot be increased, for it remains unchangeably the same, Mass cannot be celebrated even as a sacrifice of petition for them in this respect, that is, to obtain for them an increase of their essential glory. Now, although the Mass may not be offered to the Saints, or in reality for them, still the celebration of it conduces in various ways to their honor and glory.

Inasmuch as the Mass is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, it may in a certain sense be celebrated or heard for the blessed, that is, in their name for the purpose of praising and thanking God for the gifts of grace and glory which He has bountifully bestowed upon them.<sup>2</sup> For this the blessed rejoice; for the Mass is a more glorious homage of praise and of thanksgiving to the Lord than that which the combined choirs of the blessed and of the angels could render

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<sup>1</sup> *Pro Beatis* sacrificium non dicitur offerri nisi *improprie*. Potest quidem offerri in gratiarum actionem pro beneficiis in Sanctos collatis; potest etiam offerri ad impetrandam gloriam et venerationem alicujus Sancti in terra: hoc tamen non sufficit ut dicamus offerri Missam pro tali Sancto, quia hoc videtur significare imperfectionem et indigentiam in illo, pro quo offertur. . . . Quando ergo apud aliquos antiquos reperitur ille modus loquendi, quod offerimus *pro* Sanctis, explicandus est in sensu *minus proprio*, quod vel offerimus loco illorum, h. e. ad agendas gratias pro beneficiis a Deo in eos collatis, quas gratias ipsi libenter agent; vel quod offerimus, ut redundet in eorum honorem, quem sensum significant illa verba Missae: ut illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem; vel denique quod illos invocamus in oblatione sacrificii, ut ipsi pro nobis intercedant, quem etiam sensum significat Ecclesia in verbis sequentibus: et illi pro nobis intercedere dignentur in coelis, quorum memoriam agimus in terris; et eundem sensum expressit Concil. Trident. sess. 22, cap. 3 (Lugo disp. 19, sect. 10, n. 192). — Cfr. Ejus auxilio tua beneficia capiamus, *pro quo* tibi laudis hostias immolamus (Secr. in festo s. Barthol. Apost.).

<sup>2</sup> Laudis hostia, Domine, *quam pro sancto Ignatio gratias agentes obtulimus*, ad perpetuam nos majestatis tuae laudationem, ejus intercessione, perducat (Post-comm. in festo s. Ignatii Conf.).

Him, and it is, therefore, a means of responding to their ardent desires of ever more and more glorifying God. — The blessed also rejoice that their graces and virtues, their actions and miracles, their combats and victories, their power and greatness afford us an opportunity and give us matter worthily to praise and honor God, the bestower of all holiness, by the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

As a Sacrifice of petition, the Mass may also be celebrated with the intention of promoting on earth the greater glory of the blessed. But offered in this way, the Mass is not so much for the advantage of the Saints, to whom the increase of external glory brings no real profit, but rather for us men, for we are thereby enriched with spiritual favors. The fruit that God in this case imparts by reason of the Sacrifice offered by way of petition, consists of graces by which the faithful are animated and spurred on to honor, invoke and imitate the Saints. The diffusion of the veneration of the Saints on earth brings great blessings to man, and to the blessed in heaven new joy, since thereby the Most Blessed Trinity is glorified, the communion of Saints made active, the life of the Church enhanced and the salvation of the faithful promoted.

These effects, which the Mass produces with regard to the blessed in heaven, that is, for their honor and joy, proceed simply from the celebration of the Mass offered with an appropriate intention. The Church has connected with the Divine Sacrifice a copious rite, in which the veneration of the Saints finds manifold expression. The liturgy of the Divine Sacrifice, in which their names occur, their intercession is invoked and the example of their virtues is set forth to us, already in itself sheds great glory on the blessed friends of God and children of the Church — the Saints of heaven.<sup>2</sup> This is especially the case with regard to the festal and votive Masses, composed expressly to honor individual Saints or whole classes of them. In the collects of these Masses, the intercession of the Saints holds a prominent place; in the *Secreta* and Post-Communion prayers, it is brought in the closest connection with the Sacrifice. Very frequently the petition is addressed directly to God, as follows, that He may through the intercession, by the merits, through the merits and intercession, through the intercessory merits of the Saints,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ad sacra mysteria celebranda trahat te *laus Dei* et *Sanctorum*, cum non habeamus, quo possimus Deum et Sanctos pro sua dignitate laudare quam Christum sacramentaliter Deo Patri offerre et immolare (S. Bonav. tr. de praep. ad Miss. c. 1, § 4, n. 15).

<sup>2</sup> In manibus est hostia (*hostia*) et omnia parata prostant: adsunt angeli, archangeli, adest Filius Dei: cum tanto horrore adstant omnes, adstant illi clamantes omnibus silentibus. . . . Quid putas, pro martyribus offerri, quod nominentur in illa hora? Licet martyres sint, etiam pro martyribus *magnus honos nominari* Domino praesente, dum mors perficitur illa, horrendum sacrificium, ineffabilia mysteria (S. Chrysost. Homil. 21 in Act. Apost., n. 4).

<sup>3</sup> Ejus meritis et precibus; ejus suffragantibus meritis; ejus exemplo et intercessione; ejus patrocinio; ejus interventione; intercessionis ejus auxilio; ejus



whom we honor and whose feast we celebrate, take us under His merciful protection, or favorably receive the Sacrifice of the Church and of the faithful, and abundantly grant them its fruits. — Often the petition addressed directly to God runs thus, that He grant that this or another particular Saint may be our constant intercessor, obtain pardon for us, assist us by his prayers, that we may partake of his assistance, be supported by his intercession and be defended by his protection. — In these liturgical prayers the intercession of the Saints is placed in a dual relation to the Eucharistic Sacrifice. On the one hand, the petition is frequently repeated, that the Sacrifice, inasmuch as it is offered by us sinful men, may, through the merits and intercession of the Saints, be more pleasing to the Divine Majesty and more advantageous to us;<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, the intercession of the Saints is again implored after a manner more intimately connected with the Holy Sacrifice offered in their honor and to their memory<sup>2</sup> — or to speak more correctly, the intercession of the Saints is invoked because of the efficacy of the Holy Sacrifice; and this is but proper, since the Saints possess and exercise the right of intercession in our favor only by the power of Christ and of His Sacrifice. For whatever the Saints are and can do, they hold and accomplish in virtue of the Sacrifice of Christ, renewed upon the altar in an unbloody manner. By virtue of this Sacrifice they became holy and persevered in holiness until the end of their life; by its virtue they overcame themselves, the world and the devil; by its virtue they entered, rich in merits, into the glory of heaven, where they have become intercessors in our behalf; by its virtue God listens to their petitions, hence the confidence which we have in the merits and intercession of the Saints and with which we invoke their intercession, is based upon the efficacy of this Sacrifice. It is but proper then, indeed, that in offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice unto the honor of God and His Saints and for our own salvation, we acknowledge and confess this; and this we do by beseeching the Heavenly Father, unto whom the Mass is offered, that

meritis et intercessione; ejus intercedentibus meritis: ejus interventu; intercedentibus sanctis Martyribus; ejus supplicatione; ejus suffragiis &c.

<sup>1</sup> Oblationes populi tui, quaesumus Domine, beati Jacobi Apostoli passio beata conciliet: et quae nostris non aptae sunt meritis, fiant tibi placitae ejus deprecatione (Secr. in festo s. Jacobi Apost.). — Munera, quae conscientiae nostrae prae-  
pediuntur obstaculis, sanctorum Apostolorum meritis grata reddantur (Secr. in Vigilia ss. Ap. Sim. et Jud.). — Sanctifica, quaesumus Domine, oblata libamina; et beatæ Dei genitricis Mariæ saluberrima intercessione, nobis salutaria fore concede (Secr. in festo B. M. V. de Monte Carmelo). — Ut nobis, Domine, tua sacrificia dent salutem: beatus Confessor tuus Augustinus et Pontifex, quaesumus, precator accedat (Postcomm. in festo s. August.).

<sup>2</sup> Dum eorum merita recolimus, patrocinia sentiamus; quorum solemniam celebramus, eorum orationibus adjuvemur; cujus natalitia colimus, de ejusdem etiam protectione gaudeamus; quorum gloriamur triumphis, protegamur auxiliis; quae pro illorum veneranda gerimus passione, nobis proficiat ad medelam; quorum festa solemniter celebramus, continuis foveamur auxiliis etc.

He would deign, by virtue of this Sacrifice, to make us share in the intercession of the Saints, and, in view of the merits they have acquired by their union with the self-same Sacrifice and through their intercession, the efficacy of which is derived from this Sacrifice, to grant us His powerful protection. Want of confidence in the Divine Mercy cannot be associated with such a petition, based as it is upon the Sacrifice of His infinite love and goodness. On the contrary: such a petition serves to promote the honor of Christ, since we thereby acknowledge and confess that it is Himself who has glorified the Saints by the power of His Sacrifice; yet more, this petition conduces to the praise of the Saints, who, by the grace of the Sacrifice of Christ, have offered themselves for Christ and, consequently, now reign with Him and are our intercessors.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while the celebration of Mass covers the Saints of heaven with honor and glory, it confers on us men, in need of assistance, every spiritual advantage.<sup>2</sup>

## ARTICLE THE THIRD.

**What Place the Eucharistic Sacrifice Holds in the Organization of the Church;  
Its Meaning There and Purport.**

**23. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—The Centre of Catholic Worship.**

It yet remains for us to explain at least briefly the central position and fundamental signification pertaining to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Catholic Church, instituted for the salvation of souls.<sup>3</sup> Thence it will be seen that it is of vital importance for the very life and operation of the Church.

1. The Catholic Church is the great institute of salvation, founded by Christ for the entire world and for all time: as such she has the sublime mission and task to continue and accomplish throughout all ages the work of Christ's redemption by the conversion and salvation of all nations. God wills that all men by means of the Church and in the Church should receive heavenly light and life, and come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (I Tim. 2, 4.). For this purpose the Lord is and remains with His Church; in her He lives and acts all days until the end of the world. In sacramental truth and reality the God-man continues always His mediatorship on earth by the ministry of His Church. As He redeemed mankind especially by the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross, so He carries out the work of redemption in His Church chiefly by the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar, since it is the essential representation and mystical

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Augsburg Pastorallblatt 1876, p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> Illis proficiat ad honorem, nobis autem ad salutem; quod pro illius gloria celebramus, nobis prosit ad veniam; quae pro illius celebrata sunt gloria, nobis proficiat ad medelam etc.

<sup>3</sup> Tolle hoc sacramentum de Ecclesia, et quid erit in mundo nisi error et infidelitas? Sed per hoc sacramentum stat Ecclesia, roboratur fides, viget christiana religio et divinus cultus (S. Bonav. tr. de praepar. ad Miss. c. 1, § 1, n. 3).