



TAKEN FROM THE SERVANT OF THE SACRED HEART

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## ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

(498-1502)

MORE honor is paid to God by a single Mass than by all other actions of Angels and men, even the most fervent or heroic. Yet how many are attracted to Mass by the intention of rendering to God an honor so extraordinary? Are there many who reflect with pleasure on the glory that the Almighty receives from this sacrifice, who rejoice at having it in their power to honor God according to His greatness and His deserts; who give thanks to our Divine Lord for having, while He abolished the ancient sacrifices, left us a Victim proportioned to the benefits we need, a Victim sufficient to efface all the sins of men?<sup>[1](#)</sup>

If my own good works are weak, imperfect, nay, sometimes stained with venial sin; still when I offer up the adorable sacrifice of the Mass, then, O my God, I can be full of courage and confidence, I can challenge heaven itself to perform any action more pleasing to Thee. Happy a thousand times are Christians, if they but knew how to make profit of their advantages! But must we not admit that we often do not even think of the good things we enjoy or might enjoy; we do not even deign to put our hand into the treasury that Jesus Christ has left open for us?

With what intentions do we come to Mass, with what fervor and recollection do we assist at it? Do you come through human respect, through custom, [just to avoid mortal sin on a Sunday or holiday, and not at all on other days, though you well might]? Do you allow yourself during Mass to be carried away by idle thoughts, keeping no control of your eyes and your attention?

Have you, then, nothing to thank God for? Have you continued to thank Him sufficiently, as warmly as He deserves? Take care lest by ingratitude you dry up the fountain of His beneficence towards you, lest He divert to some more grateful recipient the blessings He intended for you.

To occupy yourself during Mass, enumerate in your heart all the Divine benefits you have received; so many dangers averted, so many sins forgiven, so careful a Providence watching over you from birth to this day, securing you so many temporal and (still more) spiritual advantages; Baptism, the knowledge of God's law and God's will in your regard; so many graces drawing you away from evil, drawing you towards God. Even the benefits of one single day ---- do they not merit your undying gratitude, are they not enough to occupy you during the time of Mass? When you have dwelt on them, say boldly to the Eternal Father: "O Lord, I see how much I have received from Thy bounty; but look upon this Victim, this Divine Body, this precious Blood, this Sacrifice of infinite value; this is my offering in return for so many benefits. I feel confident that through it I am presenting a worthy return for Thy generosity. But again, O adorable Lord, what thanks can I render to Thee for having placed at my disposal so marvelous an offering?"

You say, dear Christian, that you find it hard to occupy yourself during Mass. Is there, then, nothing that you need? Is there nothing that tries your patience? Jesus Christ, during Mass, places Himself in our hands, as if a coin of infinite value that can purchase everything that is good and desirable, everything, no matter how precious, that we ask in His name.

Have you not offended God, do you not offend Him daily? Think of those faults, think of them sorrowfully, and ask of God to pardon them by the virtue of this all-holy Sacrifice. "Without the Sacrifice of the Mass", says a holy doctor, "the world would have been destroyed by the Divine justice many times; the Mass restrains the arm of the Divine vengeance." That is why the demon endeavors to deprive us of the Mass by the efforts of heretics [and of men who hate God]; for he sees that mankind would perish had it not this bulwark to oppose to the offended justice of God. It is foreshadowed by the prophet Daniel that Antichrist shall abolish the "perpetual sacrifice" at the end of the ages: *Et robur datum est ei contra iuge sacrificium propter peccata*. In accordance with this, the Martyr St. Hippolytus is quoted by St. Jerome as saying that in the last days the Church shall be in deepest mourning, because the Holy Sacrifice shall cease to be offered, the Body and Blood of Christ shall not be on the altars; then shall the world come to an end and its judgment begin. But the last calamities shall not occur so long as the spotless Lamb shall be offered on our altars.

## *Why do we Neglect the Mass?*

Strange, then, it is that the Lord cannot fill His temples without using a sort of violence, without issuing commands and precepts, as if the profit we can draw from the sacrifices offered up to Him were not enough to urge us to join in offering it. But men do not know of its priceless value and therefore neglect it; and can any ignorance be more deplorable? Or is it that the great number of Masses that are offered all over the world makes us think more lightly of this mystery, and that the very liberality of God has the effect of making us the more ungrateful?

In the Mass the Savior makes Himself not only our Intercessor with His Father, asking for us, through His merits, whatever is beneficial for us; but, furthermore, He offers His Blood and His Life as a payment for what we ask. What, then, can be so valuable as not to fall below the value of this price that You offer? Why, then, do men lament and complain --- - one, of his temporal miseries, another of his spiritual? Why do passions tyrannize over us, evil habits enchain us, evil imaginations lead us into sin? Whence the dominion exercised by anger, grief, despair? Whence our inability to cure the evil habits of others ---- those who are dear to us, those on whom our own happiness depends? Tell me, have you asked for that grace, that favor at Mass? How many times have you offered Mass for that intention? Can you persuade me that when you offered to God so noble a price, He has refused you a gift so much less valuable, that He has not judged the Blood and the Life of His Son worth the grace, the virtue, the temporal good that you longed to obtain, whether for yourself or for another? No; I cannot believe it, and it seems impossible that you should believe it. The real obstacle must be that you are not eager to assist frequently at Mass and that when that most precious opportunity is yours, you neglect to represent earnestly to God your miseries and needs and to beg earnestly of Him the mercies that you desire.

1. The Blessed Claude confines himself in the following remarks to the advantages to be gained from devout assistance at Mass. All that he says applies, often with stronger force, to the Masses that we cause to be offered up by a priest for our intentions.