

## Presentation of the Mass



**Dear pilgrim friends, let us talk about the Mass! Why is it so important?**

- **First**, it is the **SUMMIT** of worship, where the Church gives God what is due to Him—its "vertical" activity between Heaven and Earth.
- But it is also the **SOURCE** of all the Church's life, especially its evangelizing mission. Every Mass offered is a treasure of grace communicated and spread for the good of all, in the communion of saints. Through it, we can radiate, be missionaries, and make Jesus Christ known as the Savior of mankind and the source of true happiness.
- It is also the **ONLY PLACE** where God gives Himself as food for us and becomes truly present. Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist means welcoming Him within us, both humanly and spiritually, to live more fully in His presence.
- The Mass is also the place of our **SALVATION**, as it is the renewal of Jesus' sacrifice. Indeed, *"Every time this sacrifice is offered, the work of our redemption is accomplished."* (Roman Missal, Secret of the 9th Sunday after Pentecost)

Finally, the Mass is repeated... every day! A necessary repetition. We breathe at every moment—an essential, vital act; we cannot live without it. Likewise, each Mass is like a breath for the Church and the world of souls. It is vital, every single time. This is why Masses are multiplied, celebrated frequently in the Church and in our own lives.

However, repetition can lead to habit—and even to indifference. This is a danger we must guard against. We do not merely **attend** Mass (as if it were an accident, a spectacle, or an ordinary scene of life); rather, we **participate** in it. It is powerful—we take part in it.

So let us rediscover this **treasure**!

### What is the Mass?

There is a precise, complete, and highly reliable reference concerning the Mass: the **dogma of the Church**. Here are its key affirmations:

- **The Eucharist renews Christ's total offering on Calvary**, applying to us His graces and merits. It is a **sacrifice**. The Mass is the **unbloody renewal of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross**.
- **The Eucharist is also a sacrament that contains the Lord Jesus**. He is truly present—whole, living, and glorious. He is there with **His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity**, under the appearances of bread and wine. This is the **Real Presence**.
- **This presence is made possible through the transformation of the substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord during the consecration**. This **miraculous change** is called **transubstantiation**.
- **Our Lord becomes present to be adored, to remain close to us, and to be received as spiritual nourishment**. This is **Eucharistic Communion**.

### Obligation to Attend Mass

- Every baptized person **must attend Mass at least on Sundays and holy days of obligation** (in France: All Saints, Christmas, Ascension, and the Assumption). This is a **grave obligation** that cannot be neglected without a serious reason (such as duty of state or real physical impossibility).
- Behind every precept, there is an important **good to be sought** or a **grave evil to be avoided**. Here, the grave evil is to *"live as a stranger to the things of God"* (Saint Thomas Aquinas).

### The Risk of Habit and Indifference

- *Assueta vilescent*—"Familiar things are depreciated," as the ancients said.
- The **Magisterium**, since the early 20th century, has spoken of *participatio actuosa*—the **active participation** of the faithful in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (*Saint Pius X, Motu Proprio Tra le Sollecitudini*; *Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium* No. 11; *Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis*, Nos. 52-55).
- **This participation is, above all, an interior disposition**—an attitude of **faith, conversion, and adoration** toward the Lord who comes.
- **External participation** (functions, roles, etc.) varies according to one's place in the Church—whether as a **baptized layperson, cleric, priest, or bishop**.

- As Saint Paul reminds us: **"Everything should be done in an orderly way."** (1 Corinthians 14:40).

### Christ Instituted the Eucharist and Entrusted It to the Church

*"Do this in memory of Me,"* Christ commands the Apostles, the first priests! It is the unique function and power of the priest to celebrate the Mass. This is the **ministerial priesthood**, received through the **Sacrament of Holy Orders**.

This is what the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** teaches:

*"Our Savior, at the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until He comes again, and to entrust to His beloved Bride, the Church, the memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet in which Christ is received as food, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us."* (CCC 1323)

### The Mass is a Sacrifice

Now, let us deepen our understanding of one of the most important aspects of the Mass: **it is truly and properly a sacrifice** (*Council of Trent*).

The word *sacrifice* comes from the Latin *sacrum-facere*, meaning **"to make sacred"**, to consecrate something—to transfer it from the human realm to the divine realm.

To better understand this, we can ask ourselves: **What role does sacrifice play in our relationship with God?**

God is **infinite, transcendent, and worthy of adoration**. He is the **Creator and Master of all things**. To recognize and proclaim **God's greatness and our total dependence on Him**, we have **adoration**.

Adoration is expressed through actions, and the highest and most powerful of these acts is **sacrifice**—the offering of something to God as a **perfect tribute**, expressing our complete dependence on Him. This duty to **offer sacrifice to God existed even before the fall into sin**. Offering sacrifice is an **essential duty of religion**, which binds us to God.

### A Perfect Sacrifice Must Please God

For a **sacrifice to be perfect**, it must achieve its purpose—it must reach its intended recipient and be **pleasing to God**. This is what we call **divine acceptance**.

However, **after original sin, man could no longer, by himself, offer a sacrifice that pleases God**, because he had become a sinner.

### And Yet...

Man is still bound to this duty towards God. In fact, **his highest destiny is to be a worshiper of God**. What is at stake here is **the Glory of God...** and therefore also **the salvation of man!** The solution comes from God Himself, through His Son.

The **sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross** is the **only perfect and fully acceptable sacrifice to God**. This is because of the **infinite charity** of the One who offers it: **Christ, true God and true Man**. This sacrifice **honors God, destroys sin, and restores communion between God and the one who offers it**.

Thus, by **uniting our small sacrifice with the immense sacrifice of Christ**, our worship is received and becomes **pleasing to God**. In short, **we are saved by offering, personally, the Sacrifice of Jesus**.

And this **union of our offering with that of Christ** happens **at the Mass**. As we say in the **Offertory prayer**:

*"Pray, my brothers and sisters, that MY sacrifice, which is also YOURS, may be ACCEPTABLE to God, the Almighty Father."*

- *"May the Lord receive this sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of His Name, for our good and the good of all His Holy Church."*

### **The Mass is the Unbloody Renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross**

*"The unbloody sacrifice of the Mass brings to us the bloody sacrifice of the Cross."* (9)

Between the Cross and the Mass:

- **It is the same victim**—Christ offering Himself to God the Father with His **Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity**, in an act of **divine-human love**.
- **It is the same priest**—Jesus, the **Supreme and Principal High Priest** (10), who offers Himself **on the Cross and on the altar**.

### **The Same Goals: The Four Purposes of the Sacrifice**

1. **To adore**
2. **To give thanks**
3. **To ask for forgiveness**
4. **To obtain graces** (11)

### **Differences Between the Cross and the Mass**

- **The manner of offering is different:**
  - On the Cross, Jesus offers Himself in a **bloody, painful, physical, and visible way**.
  - In the Mass, Jesus offers Himself in an **unbloody, sacramental, and invisible way**. He **no longer suffers and no longer dies**.
- **The sacrifice of Christ is unique**, whereas the Mass is **repeated and multiplied**—through **many priests, times, places, and altars**.
- **On the Cross, Jesus merits and obtains the salvation of the world**.

- On the altar, Jesus **no longer merits** but rather **communicates the infinite fruits of His sacrifice** to the Church and to souls.

### The Friends of God and the Mass

*"If you want to plow a straight furrow, hitch your plow to a star,"* says a famous saying.

Look at the saints—**see, listen, and imitate their love for the Mass!**

- **The Vendean priests** during the Reign of Terror, celebrating Mass in secret...
- **Saint Dominic Savio**, as a child, waiting every morning in the cold for the church doors to open for daily Mass...
- **Vietnamese Christians**, walking for three nights through a territory under communist surveillance just to attend the Easter Mass...
- **Cardinal Mindszenty**, a confessor of the faith under the Soviet regime, celebrating a single Mass in his prison in Hungary...
- **Our Christian brothers in Nigeria, Egypt, and Syria**, risking death every time they attend Mass...
- **And countless others throughout history!**

The **Holy Curé of Ars** said:

*"All the good works together do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass, because they are human works, and the Holy Mass is the work of God."*

Jesus told us: **"Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."**

Let us **thank God and the Church** for this **immeasurable gift**.

Being attached to the Mass **must not lead us to keep this treasure to ourselves**, but rather to **make it known and pass it on**.

*"To whom much is given, much will be required."* Every great gift brings **responsibility!**

### Live "in a State of Mass"

This is the challenge! **To know the Mass better, to love it more, to live by it, and to introduce others to it.**

Yes—become **true and devoted lovers of the Mass**, people who **live through it and transmit it whenever the opportunity arises**.

A great and ambitious mission!

So now, let us each make **a little spiritual self-examination...**

## QUIZ: THE MASS IN MY LIFE

- **How important is the Mass in my life?**
- **Organization:** Is it "my Sunday is planned around the Mass" or the other way around?
- **How regular am I?**
  - Do I attend **Sundays and holy days**?
  - Do I go on weekdays when possible?
  - Do I prioritize the Mass over other activities when needed?
  - Do I see **weekday Mass as an unnecessary pious excess**, or as **a good inspiration and a recommendation from the Church**—something I gladly practice and make room for in my schedule?
- **How is the quality of my participation?**
  - Am I prayerful and focused?
  - Do I take an active role in liturgical service according to my abilities (altar server, choir, material preparation, etc.)?
  - Or do I **rush in and out**, staying at the back of the church, half-asleep?
- **Punctuality:** Am I **often or habitually late** for this sacred appointment?
- **Do I use my missal as a personal guide**, or does it just sit on my bookshelf?
- **What have I read and studied about the Mass** (Catechism of the Catholic Church, conferences, good books...)?

## Some Reference Works...

- **Abbé Guillaume DETANOUARN**, *Meditations on the Mass*, Éd. Via Romana.
- **Abbé Daniel JOLY**, *The Mass Explained to the Faithful*, Éd. Clovis.
- **Mgr. SCHNEIDER**, *The Catholic Mass*, Éd. Contretemps.
- *The Mass Commented*, by a Benedictine monk, Notre-Dame de Fontgombault, 1992.
- **Dom Jean-Denis CHALUFOUR**, *The Holy Mass: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, Éd. Petrus a Stella.
- **Abbé Claude BARTHE**, *The Mass: A Forest of Symbols*, Éd. Via Romana.
- *Discovering the Mass*, by a Benedictine monk, Éd. Sainte-Madeleine (Le Barroux), 1996.

## Citations C – Presentation of the Mass

*"The tradition and millennia-old experience of the Church show us that it is Faith, celebrated and lived in the liturgy, that nourishes and strengthens the community of the Lord's disciples."*

— **John Paul II, May 11, 1991**

*"If we had to summarize all the benefits that daily participation in the public prayer of the Church brings us, we could reduce them to four essential points:*

1. *The constant reminder of divine transcendence,*

2. *The attractive power of the beauty of the liturgy,*
3. *The sense of the Church,*
4. *The education of the inner man."*

— **A Benedictine monk, in "The Four Benefits of the Liturgy"**

*"To adore God is, in absolute respect and submission, to recognize the 'nothingness of the creature' who exists only through God. To adore God is, like Mary in the Magnificat, to praise Him, to exalt Him, and to humble oneself, confessing with gratitude that He has done great things and that holy is His name. The adoration of the one true God frees man from self-absorption, from the slavery of sin, and from the idolatry of the world."*

— **Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 2097**

*"Of the virtue of religion, adoration is the first act. To adore God is to recognize Him as God, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of all that exists, the infinite and merciful Love. 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve,' says Jesus, quoting Deuteronomy."*

— **Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 2096**