

II

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY EUCHARIST

"For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (Mt. 6:21).

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament which contains truly and substantially the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus promised this sacrament the day after the multiplication of the loaves. He instituted it on Holy Thursday, the night before His death.

The other sacraments give us the grace of Christ. This one, however, which the Church calls the Most Blessed Sacrament, gives us Christ Himself.

The indifference that many persons manifest in their daily life toward Jesus in the Eucharist is a sign of little reflection and a lamentable lack of Faith, which deprives these souls of many graces. Let us renew our Faith and our Love toward the Heart of Jesus present in this Sacrament.

Our Eucharistic Devotion will manifest itself by:

1. **A greater participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass** (if possible, daily, using a good missal).
2. **A fervent preparation for Holy Communion** (at least weekly and if possible daily).
3. **The habit of visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with tender affection.**

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

Institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most important and the most solemn act of Divine worship. Our Lord Himself instituted the Mass on the eve of His Passion, when He changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood. At the same time, He gave to His Apostles, and in their persons, to the Church, the power and order to renew what He, Himself had just done, saying to them: *"Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me"* (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Sacrifice of the Mass is essentially the same as that of Calvary. At Calvary, Jesus was immolated in a bloody manner, whereas in the Mass, He is immolated in an unbloody and mystical manner. In both, it is the same Victim, and the same Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why at the moment of consecration, the celebrant does not say: "*This is the Body of Jesus Christ*", but "*This is my Body*".

"*Our God and Lord*", affirms the Council of Trent, "*at the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, so that He might leave to His beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands) whereby the bloody sacrifice once to be completed on the Cross might be represented, and the memory of it remain even to the end of the world, and its saving grace applied to the remission of those sins which we daily commit [...] offered to God the Father His own Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine...*"

The Sacrifice of Calvary was offered *only once* for our Redemption. The Sacrifice of the Mass is offered *every day* to apply to our souls the price of the redeeming Blood of Christ. When the priest pronounces the words of Consecration: "*This is my Body*" and "*This is the chalice of my Blood*" the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, a change which we call *Transubstantiation*.

To assist well at Holy Mass is the best way to honour God and obtain His blessings, because then Jesus Christ prays, not only with us and for us, but He offers Himself to His Father as a Victim for us.

Ends of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. 1) The Holy Sacrifice renders to God the supreme worship and adoration due to Him;
2) It offers to Him a worthy thanksgiving;
3) It obtains for us the remission of sins and the penalties due to sin;
4) It obtains for us many graces.

The first two ends of the Mass are always fulfilled perfectly; the two others are limited by the Will of God, and the dispositions of those for whom Mass is celebrated.

The Holy Sacrifice is offered for the living and the dead. Christian families are always careful to have Masses celebrated for the intention of the souls of their deceased relatives or friends.

St. Thomas distinguishes four parts in the Mass:

- 1) THE PREPARATION, which contains all that which precedes the Epistle.
- 2) THE INSTRUCTION, which is made up of the Epistle, the Gradual, the Gospel and the Creed.
- 3) THE CELEBRATION OF THE MYSTERY, which contains *the three principal parts of the Mass*: The Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion of the priest.
- 4) THE THANKSGIVING, which follows the Communion and brings to an end the Mass.

The Roman Mass. The Roman Mass, known as the Tridentine Mass, celebrated in Latin, enshrines all of these teachings of the Church. In the Latin Church it has always been a bulwark against heresy and a fruitful garden, producing saints. It was codified definitively by Pope St. Pius V, who gave every priest the right to celebrate it. Catholics, who understand the value of the Mass, seek out this Mass to attend it.

Obligation of assisting at Mass. The second Commandment of the Church ordains that the Faithful assist at Mass on **all Sundays and Holy Days** of obligation. The pre-Vatican II chart below indicates

<i>Days on which the faithful are bound to attend Mass, and rest from servile work. They include, firstly and everywhere all SUNDAYS in addition to the following Feasts in certain places.</i>	In the Universal Church	In England and Wales	In Scotland	In Ireland	In the U. S. of America	In Canada	In Australasia
Jan. 1. Octave of Christmas.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jan 6. Epiphany	•	•	•	•		•	•
(March 17. St. Patrick)				•			
March 19. St Joseph	•		•	•			
Ascension Day	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Corpus Christi	•	•	•	•			
June 29. Ss. Peter and Paul.	•	•	•	•			
Aug. 15. Assumption	•	•	•	•	•		•
Nov. 1. All Saints	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Dec. 8. Immac. Conception .	•		•	•	•	•	•
Dec. 25. Christmas	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

the traditional Holy Days kept in English speaking countries. Since Vatican II some of these Holy Days have been abolished by the Episcopal Conferences. For example, in Canada there remains only Christmas and the Circumcision (Jan. 1) in addition to the Sundays.

To miss Mass, *by one's fault*, on a Sunday or a Holy Day is a mortal sin. To miss or put oneself in danger of missing, the principal parts of the Mass or a considerable part of it, is equally a mortal sin. To wilfully arrive a little late for Mass, or to leave before the end, without sufficient reason, is a venial sin.

If one misses Mass for a *legitimate* reason: Sickness, care for the sick, care for children, etc., there is no sin. In this case, out of piety many pray at home the prayers of the Mass or other prayers.

The Way to assist at Holy Mass. The best way to assist at Mass is to follow as closely as possible the *liturgical prayers*, said by the priest, to unite one's intention to his, or better to that of Jesus Christ, who immolates Himself upon the altar, and of course to receive Holy Communion in a state of grace. In order to follow the Mass better it is recommended to have a Latin – English, Daily or Sunday Missal, to follow the prayers of the Mass. If one assists at a Sung Mass, he/she should take part in the responses and the singing of the *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the food for the soul: Our Lord Jesus Christ, in instituting the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, under the species of bread and wine, manifested His intention to make it the sustenance of our supernatural life. Bodily strength is restored by food; supernatural strength is restored by the infusion of divine life, given in Holy Communion.

Effects: An intimate union with Our Lord Jesus Christ, an increase in the life of grace, more strength to resist temptations, a weakening of disordered passions, remission of venial sins, a pledge of a glorious resurrection; such are the benefits of this Divine Food and this heavenly remedy.

Receive Holy Communion often: The commandment of the Church: "*Receive Communion during the Easter time*" obliges all the faithful with the age of reason, under pain of mortal sin, barring impossibility.

But the desire of the Church, like that of Our Lord, is that the faithful receive Communion more often and if they can, *every day*, since the Eucharist ought to be "*our daily bread*" for our daily weaknesses.

Dispositions: To receive Holy Communion fruitfully, even every day, the only required conditions are: To be in the state of grace; and to have a good and pious intention, that is, the desire to please God and become better; without forgetting however that the fruit obtained will be greater insomuch as our dispositions are more fervent.

We must also observe the Eucharistic Fast, which however does not oblige when Communion is received as the "*Holy Viaticum*".