

## The Mass as a Sacrifice

The Mass has always been regarded as a Holy Sacrifice, holy, primarily, because Jesus as the victim is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, and a sacrifice because Jesus had given up his life.



However, Jesus' death should not be understood as a sacrifice in the ordinary sense of that word. It was not a sacrifice like the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the kind of sacrifices the Jews made to God.

Jesus' death redefined what a true sacrifice is, and all other kinds of sacrifice are, in reality, imperfect versions of his death.

The nature of the Mass as sacrifice will be examined in more detail in a later talk.



## The Blessed Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian Life. When we receive Jesus at Holy Communion we come as close to God as we possibly can in our earthly existence. The few minutes after receiving the Eucharist are the most important minutes of that day. We become united to Jesus in a real albeit mystical way. Do we really appreciate the miracle that takes place within us?

This great mystery will also be highlighted in a later talk.

## The Eucharistic Prayers

The four Eucharistic Prayers are amongst the most beautiful prayers of the Church. They incorporate a summary of the great mysteries of our faith and reflect within them all the categories of prayer to God.

Later talks will look specifically at each of the Eucharistic Prayers, although how each reflects within it the four aspects of prayer will also be included in the talks on the Mass as a Prayer.

## The Mass

### “Do This In Memory of Me”

#### Reminding Ourselves of The Mass' Uniqueness and Beauty

I.

#### Overview of the Mass



#### The Mass is the Most Important Part of the Church's Liturgy

The Liturgy consists of those public acts of worship that unite all Catholics together, all those living everywhere in the world as well as those who have died, the angels, the saints and Our Blessed Lady, in a truly magnificent Communion of Saints and, in turn, this Church of Christ becomes united with the Blessed Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

In the Mass we are, therefore, in the greatest sense possible on this earth, part of the Mystical Body of Christ

The Paschal events of Jesus' Last Supper, his Death and Resurrection are re-presented, as if we were actually present at the time of their historical occurrence. That is why the Mass is regarded as being sacrificial.

In the Mass, there is the real presence of Jesus

As we go to receive Holy Communion, we go to receive Our Lord Jesus within us. Therefore, we must approach him with the humility of love and fear, as if we were walking towards God for our own judgment.

## The Miracle of the Mass

There are, in fact, **three miracles** that we all part of when we attend Mass. Did you realise that?

- All of Heaven and Earth become united together as part of Jesus' Mystical Body and are present at each Mass. As such, Christ is the real Presider at Mass, invisibly present, albeit represented by the priest 'in the person of Christ'
- The Paschal events of Jesus' Last Supper, his death and resurrection are re-presented as if we were actually present at the time of their historical occurrence. This why the Mass is regarded as a sacrifice, because it re-presents Jesus' sacrificial death.
- The real person of Jesus comes to be with us, body, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist.



Now, of course, as human beings, our senses may not make those acts as clear or as obvious to us as other things in our ordinary daily lives. It is primarily through our Faith that we come to accept their truth, although there may well be moments in life when God also chooses to bless us with a special spiritual and emotional awareness about their reality.

## The Formal Structure of the Mass and The Mass as Prayer

The Mass consists of two principal parts: The Liturgy of the Word and The Liturgy of the Eucharist:

**The Liturgy of the Word** emphasises the importance of Sacred Scripture. At Mass we are called to listen to God's Word, to passages from the New Testament and/or Old Testament and, of prime importance, the Gospels.

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist** recreates the historical Paschal events of Holy

Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This is the pinnacle of our worship at Mass and Jesus comes to us personally when we receive him in Holy Communion.



Structurally, the Mass is divided into five distinct sections.

These, in turn, can be associated with the four principal types of prayer: **Penance, Petition, Praise, and Thanksgiving**. This does not mean that these types of pray are not found anywhere else in the Mass and these occurrences shall also be highlighted systematically. However, seeing the Mass as four types of prayer is a useful way to direct our *personal prayers* within the single great prayer of the Mass. The following table summarises this structure.

<b>Introductory Rites</b>	Greeting Entrance Antiphon Penitential Rite Gloria Opening Prayer 'Collect'	<b>Prayer of Penance</b> Prepare to receive the Eucharist by asking forgiveness for our sins and by remembering we are nothing before God without his love for us. Yet, if we are in a state of grace, because of God's love for us, we become everything.
<b>Liturgy of the Word</b>	OT/ Psalm/ NT Gospel Homily Creed Prayers of Faithful	<b>Prayer of Petition</b> Scripture tells us to have faith in God and to pray to him in total confidence. This does not mean our prayers are guaranteed to be answered in the way we want, but if we pray in humility and are willing to accept God's Will, they will nevertheless be pleasing to him and a source of grace.
<b>Liturgy of the Eucharist</b>	Prayer over the Gifts Eucharistic Prayer Preface Eucharistic Prayer Consecration Eucharistic Prayer cont.	<b>Prayer of Praise</b> Our first duty is to praise God for himself, without any ulterior motive of gaining something in return. This is perfect love and praise of God.
<b>Communion Rite</b>	Lord's Prayer Sign of Peace Breaking of Bread Preparation for Communion Communion Antiphon Distribution of Communion Prayer after Communion	<b>Prayer of Thanksgiving</b> We must always thank God for what he has done for us, especially for the gift of himself in the Eucharist.
<b>Concluding Rite</b>	Blessing Dismissal	