

## You And Your Service Sheet

—*Second of a Series*—

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### 1. — YOUR PIETY (continued)

#### 3. — Your Mass

After having dedicated the day to God in the Morning Offering and thought about Him in his meditation, a cursillista goes to Mass.

Mass is sometimes a matter of routine. But it should not be so. Your Mass should always be a "unique" experience in your life, even if you hear Mass daily.

When on Good Friday you read the Passion of the Lord, your heart aches, you feel sorry for Christ, and you say: "If only I had been there! . . . I would have defended Him, I would have died with Him! . . ."

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of Calvary. Mass is Calvary! When you are with Christ at Mass, you are with Christ on Mount Calvary!

What happened on Mount Calvary? — Christ offered Himself to the Father as a sacrifice for the redemption of the world, in expiation for the sins of man. He was the victim offered, and the priest who offered it.

What happens at Mass? — Christ offers Himself to the Father as a victim for the redemption of mankind. It is the same victim, the same sacrifice, offered by the same priest (Christ) and for the same purpose. The priest at the altar is not there as a man, but as a representative of Christ. He does not speak in his own name, but in the name of Christ. He does not say: this is the Body of Christ. He says: "This is My Body; this is the Cup of My Blood" . . .

Christ died once. Mass is a memorial to His death. That is why Mass used to be called "Dominica Passio" (the Passion of the Lord).

The only real difference between the Sacrifice of Calvary and the Sacrifice of the Mass is that the former was a bloody sacrifice (blood was shed) while the latter is a bloodless one.

The Church celebrates the Sacrifice of the Altar because Christ instructed His apostles to do so. "Do this in memory of Me", He told them (Lk., 22, 19).

Mass is celebrated in the Church and by the Church. Not only by the priest, but by all those who belong to the Church: by Christ, by the priest, by the Congregation, by you . . . Mass — even if said in private and without a congregation — is not a private prayer, but the public and official Sacrifice of the Church, offered by the whole Church and beneficial to the whole Church.

People say "I am going to hear Mass". Actually, they should say "I am going to celebrate Mass". When you go to Mass, you do not go there as a witness, to watch, to see, to hear . . . You go there to participate, to offer, to celebrate . . .

Christ could have saved the world alone. But He did not want to do so. Certainly He was the only one to die for the whole of mankind; and His death was enough to save all men of all centuries until the end of time. But He wanted men to help Him carry out the Mission entrusted to Him by His Father. That is why He chose His apostles. He invited them to be His collaborators. Participants of His mission, they also participated of His fate and titles. They became co-victims with Christ. They worked, suffered and died for Him and for His Gospel. They also became co-priests with Him in the offering of His—and their—sacrifice to the Father. The apostles carried out their mission faithfully. After their death, they were succeeded by other apostles, by other priests. Thus Christ's redemptive work has been continued throughout the ages, until the present day.

However, when I speak of apostles, I do not speak of priests alone. Laymen are also apostles. Baptism made you an apostle of Christ. The Cursillo reminded you of your apostolic vocation.

As an apostle, you are called upon to help Christ save the world; to spread God's kingdom on earth.

You work and suffer for Christ; in other words, you are a co-victim with Him. You were not ordained priest; but as a Christian you participate of the priesthood of Christ, you are a co-priest with Him in the offering of Christ's — and your — Sacrifice to the Father, in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Your participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass has to be an active one. You have to become a part of the Mass you attend.

How are you going to do it? — Here is the best way.

You get a Missal and follow the Mass step by step. You will find the experience rewarding; and the Mass, — which otherwise may be meaningless and boring — will suddenly come to life.

You and the other members of the Congregation are in the Church. The priest comes to the altar. You greet each other; and, together, start the Mass.

First, **YOU PRAY**. — That is, you speak to the Lord. In a humble prayer the priest and the Congregation praise the goodness and mercy of the Lord and ask forgiveness for their sins. This prayer includes the Introit or entrance song, the Penitential Act, the Invocations or Kyrie, the Glory and the Collect.

Then **YOU HEAR**. — The Lord, pleased with the act of humility and worship of His people, answers their prayer. He speaks to His people through the Readings from the Bible. To help God's people understand God's Word, the Church, through the priest, often provides an explanation in the form of a homily. The Congregation listens to the Word of God with respect and interior assent to His teachings. On special occasions, this assent is made public and solemn by the recitation of the Creed.

Now **YOU OFFER**. — This part of the Mass is called the Offertory. Bread and Wine are brought to the altar and offered to God. These are the Bread and the Wine that later on will be converted into the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Offertory is a most important part of the Mass. The Bread and the Wine are fruits of the earth, of the work of man; and they are offered to God, the Creator of all things. The offering of material things — bread, wine, your monetary contribution — is a symbol of another offering: the personal, spiritual oblation of those who participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Place yourself on the altar and offer yourself (your life, your intellect, your will, your body, your soul, your problems, your ambitions, your successes, your failures... , everything...) to the Father in a complete act of surrender to His divine will. In this way you will identify yourself with Christ, and, as His co-victim, you will accompany Him to Mount Calvary...

And there YOU SACRIFICE. — The Consecration is the centre of the Mass, the sacrificial act itself. It is a reenactment of the sacrifice of Calvary. Christ is once more immolated for the redemption of the world.

Together with Christ, you are supposed to suffer, to be nailed to the Cross, to be immolated... On the altar there is no more bread, no more wine. There is Christ... Within you there should be no more selfishness, no more sin. There should be a new man, identified with Christ. There should be another Christ. And — being another Christ — your Sacrifice — like that of Christ — will be acceptable to the Father... And — participating of the infinite value of the death of Christ — your Sacrifice — also like Christ's — will bring about the salvation of many souls...

The Consecration is called *Transubstantiation*. Transubstantiation means change of substances: of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. In your case, it should be a change of the substance of sin into the substance of grace, of the substance of lukewarmness into the substance of spiritual fervor, of the substance of apathy in the Service of the Lord into the substance of apostolic zeal...

Finally, YOU RECEIVE. — Earlier you had made an Offering to God. He received it from you. Now He graciously returns it to you. But in a new form. What He offers you in His own Son, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Christ told us that if we want to have life everlasting we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. That is, we must receive Him in Holy Communion.

Christ died, and then rose from death. You also die and rise. At the Consecration you die to sin; in Communion you rise to the life of Grace, to eternal life! You surrender your humanity, and receive Christ's Divinity . . .

Communion is an essential part of the Mass. There must always be communion at Mass. Otherwise the Sacrifice remains incomplete. A Sacrificial Ritual means, not only the offering, but also the consumption of the thing offered. You have noticed that, even if no one from the congregation receives Communion, the priest always does. And should it happen that for some reason the priest be forced to leave the altar before Communion, another priest would have to finish the Mass. Since you have identified yourself with Christ and with His minister, you should partake of the Sacred Banquet that Communion is. Without Communion, your Mass, your sacrifice, your offering will remain incomplete.

The Post-Communion is a prayer in which the priest and the Congregation give thanks to God for having granted them the grace of receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

With this the Mass comes to an end. Before leaving the Church, God — through His minister — gives you His blessing, and tells you to "go in peace".

You certainly can go in peace; for you are at peace with God (to Whom you offered the Sacrifice); with yourself (whom you offered in sacrifice together with Christ) and with the world (for which you offered the Sacrifice) . . .

This is *your Mass*; this is *your best prayer*.

Novenas and other devotions are good. But they pale and lose importance in the presence of the Mass, which brings you into an intimate contact with the *real, living Christ*!

Say this prayer, celebrate your Mass as often as you can. Not only on Sundays; but — as your Service Sheet suggests — also on weekdays. Daily, if possible.