

(1 Cor 11:25-26).

It is *that great Sacrifice* for the perpetual offering of which Christ is called “a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6).

The Mass, by reason of its infinite value, fully answers the four great Ends of Sacrifice.

Let’s review these four great Ends.

1. *For God’s honor and glory.* We owe to God supreme homage of adoration, whereby we are to testify that he has absolute dominion over us; that he is “the Lord our God”. But if (independently of Jesus) we were to offer to him our whole selves and all that belongs to us, it would not be a sacrifice worthy of his acceptance. In the Mass we have a victim who is in every way worthy of God, namely Jesus Christ, who offers himself in our behalf as a *Sacrifice of Adoration*. By uniting our intention with his, when we assist at Mass we are able to offer to God a worship which is *supreme* and perfectly pleasing to him.
2. *In thanksgiving for all his benefits.* We owe infinite thanks to God for all the blessings we have received from him. Of *ourselves* we have no return that we can make, which is worthy of God’s acceptance. In the Mass, Jesus Christ offers himself for us, as a *Sacrifice of Thanksgiving*; and thereby he enables us to return adequate thanks for all the blessings which God has bestowed upon us.
3. *For obtaining pardon for our sins.* We have frequently sinned against God and we owe him a *Sacrifice of Propitiation*, but all the repentance and penance *we* could offer would not be sufficient or available,

without the merits of Christ. In the Mass, Christ offers himself for us as a *Sacrifice of Propitiation*, and by offering the same in union with him; we are enabled to repent effectually, to appease the anger of God, and to satisfy his justice, for the Mass applies to our souls the merits of Christ for this purpose.

4. *For obtaining all graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ.* We need a constant supply of God’s graces and his other blessings, but we cannot obtain them except through the merits of Jesus. In the Mass Jesus offers himself for us as a *Sacrifice of Impetration*, to obtain for us all the graces and blessings we need.

Conclusion: From what has been said, you can see how the Mass answers the four Ends of Sacrifice; how it is the most sacred, solemn, and sublime act of religious worship that we can perform, the most pleasing to God, and the most advantageous to our souls. We should have the highest regard for this sacred Institution of God’s mercy; and with what reverence, attention, and devotion we should assist at it. Remember this Sacrifice is the means of applying the merits of the Cross to our souls. This application is more or less abundant according to our devotion, and the state of our souls.

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The Mass

The Mass is *the Sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, offered on our altars under the appearances of bread and wine, to commemorate and continue the Sacrifice of the Cross.*

The Holy Eucharist is not only a *Sacrament*, but also a *Sacrifice*, and this double mystery is accomplished in the Mass. The Mass is the most sacred, solemn, and sublime act of religious worship that can be performed. Of all the treasures which Jesus has left to his Church, this Institution is the richest and most precious. It is the greatest display of his love and bounty towards us. Unfortunately, it is little understood. How many do not know its value or how to apply its advantages to their souls? Pay attention, because it is important that you appreciate this subject. Each and every Catholic should have a thorough understanding of the Mass.

What is a Sacrifice in general?

A sacrifice is an *offering* of some external *sensible thing*, made *to God* by a *lawful minister* to acknowledge by its *destruction or change* God’s absolute dominion over us and our entire dependence on him and thereby to pay him the supreme homage of adoration. Hence, Sacrifice can only be offered to God.

To offer sacrifice, is to offer *to God* some *external thing* in testimony of his absolute dominion and our entire dependence. Cain offered his first-fruits and Abel the first-born of his flock. Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, etc., also offered

sacrifice. In the Mosaic Law, God appointed Aaron and his descendents to be the only lawful Ministers of Sacrifice (Exod. 28:1, 4) and Num 1:48-51). Korah, Dathan, Abiron, and Hen were punished most severely by Almighty God for conspiring against Moses and Aaron to usurp the priesthood. God, offended by their conduct, caused the earth to open and they, along with the 250 others, who joined in their schismatical worship “went down alive into Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly” (Num. 16:25-35).

In offering Sacrifice, the victim undergoes a real or mystical destruction to testify that we deserve destruction at the hands of God. In the Old Law, this was signified by the person, for whom the sacrifice was being offered, putting his hand upon his head.

The Four Great Ends

There are four great ends, which the servants of God have always had in view, in offering sacrifice. 1) to adore God by giving him supreme homage; 2) to thank him for his blessings; 3) to **appease his anger and satisfy his justice; and** 4) to obtain his graces, and all the blessings of which we stand in need.

But all the sacrifices of animals could never (of themselves) answer these ends, “For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Rom 10:4), nor render to God the homage worthy of his majesty.

In order that Sacrifice may be worthy of God’s acceptance, and capable of atoning for sin, the victim must have infinite value, because God, against whom sin has been

committed is infinite. Man had no such victim to offer, but God in his mercy, supplied the victim. The Son of God himself became our great High-priest and victim, by offering himself in sacrifice on the cross. In doing so, he made full atonement for sin and purchased redemption for *all* mankind in general.

To apply the merits of that general redemption to our souls *individually*, he left to the Church the institution of the Mass for this purpose.

What is the Mass

The Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus, offered on our altars under the appearance of bread and wine, to re-present and continue the sacrifice of the Cross.

The Mass re-presents the death of Christ, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). By the very act of the consecration of the bread and wine, Christ becomes present. Christ died by *really* shedding his blood and in doing so the Sacrifice of the Cross was accomplished. This shedding of his blood—this separation of his blood from his body is re-presented in the Mass by the act of separate consecration. The priest says in the name of Christ: “This is my body”, and by these words the bread is changed by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Again, he says, “This is the cup of my blood”, and there by the Holy Spirit changes the wine into the blood of Christ. The body and blood are re-presented, therefore as separate from each other and thus our Lord offers himself to his eternal

Father under the appearances of death or, “as though it had been slain” (Rev 5:6).

But the Mass is not a mere representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross; it is a *continuation* of the same Sacrifice. The priest and victim are the same; the only difference being in the manner of offering. On the Cross, Christ *really* shed his blood, and *really* died. In the Mass, he sheds his blood mystically and is “*as it were* slain.”

Proof of the Mass from Scripture

The Mass is that *perpetual Sacrifice* of which God (after having declared that he would *reject the Jewish Sacrifices*) says, “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts” (Mal 1:11).

It is *that Sacrifice* which Christ offered at the Last Supper: “And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup which is poured out for you’” (Lk 22:19), and “this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28).

It is *that Sacrifice* which he commanded and empowered his Apostles and their successors to offer till the end of the world, when he said “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”