



THE Journey Home

The celebration of the Mass

“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

John 6: 50-51

Every truth, every hope, healing and consolation are to be found in these words of Christ. They are why, for over two thousand years, Catholics have faithfully obeyed Christ’s command at the Last Supper, “Do this in memory of me”.

The sacrifice of the Mass is the answer to everything

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life”. Everything we are as Christians flows from the celebration of Mass and everything we do finds its ultimate meaning and fulfilment in the Eucharist.

We recognise Christ’s real presence in the breaking of the living bread and the outpoured blood of salvation. He feeds us with His own divine life, and makes His one sacrificial self-offering on Calvary present on our altars.

A famous hymn asks, “Were you there when they crucified our Lord?” Participating in the sacrifice of the Mass allows us to answer with complete confidence, “Yes, we are there!”. We tremble before the mystery of love that forgives the sins of the world and defeats our great enemy, death.

The Mass is the crucified and risen Christ’s real presence

Repeating the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper, the priest consecrates the bread and wine and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they are totally changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. This change is called transubstantiation.

In this change, the crucified and risen Lord is truly present to His Church and He calls us to share in His divine life. Our minds can never fully grasp what is taking place before us. Instead, we come to the celebration of Mass with a sense of holy awe and a willingness to humble ourselves before the embrace of this Mystery.

In Holy Communion, it is nothing less than Christ’s Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity that we receive. We are drawn into communion with God, the All-Holy One. Through Christ’s indwelling and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we give all glory and honour to our heavenly Father. We live in the life of the Blessed Trinity.



The Mass as the source of true freedom and witness

Although no one is worthy to receive this gift, Christ desires to make his home within us. In turn, we are to open our hearts to Him in order that we “may be filled with the Holy Spirit and become one body, one spirit in Christ”. As individuals and as a community we make an offering of ourselves to God. At the same time, we are given the grace to live the sacrificial love that we have received for the sake of the world. In his first letter, St John writes

“We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” (1 John 3:16-18)

St Mother Teresa of Calcutta reminds us that “if we can see Jesus under the form of the bread, we can also see him in the mutilated bodies of the poor. We need the poor to see him.” The Eucharist opens our hearts to God and unlocks our hearts to all those whom Jesus calls “the least of my brothers and sisters” (Matt 25:40): the hungry and thirsty, the stranger and prisoner, the sick and those who have been stripped naked.

The Mass as the source of Christian life and witness

Holy Communion also provides us with a foretaste of the glory that awaits us. It is spiritual food during our earthly lives, nourishing our souls and preparing them for eternity. Christ promises us that “whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him” (Jn 6:54, 56). Even now, we experience something of the new creation that we will become in the eternal life of God.



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