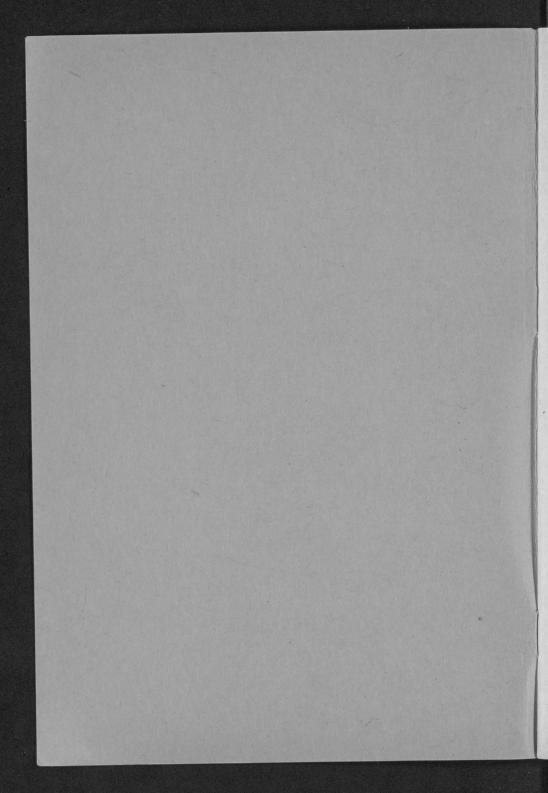
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The purposes of our Eucharistic Sacrifice



Gerald T. Baskfield The Catholic Hour



THE PURPOSES OF OUR EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

By

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Four addresses delivered in the nationwide Catholic Hour (produced by the National Council of Catholic Men, in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company) on Sundays from June 1 to June 22, 1941.

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THE EUCHARIST: OUR SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

Address delivered on June 1, 1941

During the days from June the twenty-third through June the twenty-sixth the Ninth National Eucharistic Congress will be held in the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, under the patronage and direction of the Most Reverend John

Gregory Murray, Archbishop of St. Paul.

So rare are the occasions of this kind that the faith and devotion of most Catholics will prompt them to do all they can by way of remote preparation to honor God more perfectly and to gain greater spiritual enrichment during the time of this national testimonial to the reality of God's Eucharistic presence among us. Thousands will come from all corners of our country to participate personally in the Congress. Others, unable to attend, will nevertheless desire to profit spiritually from this national manifestation of our sacrificial worship of God. And hundreds of thousands of non-Catholics will take a friendly interest in what we are doing, and hence desire to know more about the purposes of our Eucharistic sacrifice. It is with this thought in mind that these words are addressed to all Catholic Hour listeners. Catholic and non-Catholic.

Our Catholic belief in the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist may be stated simply by saying that in the Mass there is offered up to God the Body and Blood of Christ as a sacrifice. The reasons for our offering may be stated quite as simply. We offer to adore God, to thank Him for His gifts, to make propitiation for our sins, and to beg His blessings.

Our knowledge of sacrifice in general we get from both the history of religions and divine Revelation. Sacrifice is a fact as spontaneous and universal in the life of man as religion itself. It has varied at different times in some aspects as religion has varied: but, like religion, sacrifice presents an essential sameness in all ages. It consists in the offering of a visible gift to indicate in a symbolic way the interior homage of the worshipper to God as his Lord and Creator. Man offers his gift and in that gift he wishes to offer himself in acknowledgment of his dependence on God. To this natural impulse to pay homage to God as his Sovereign Lord the other motives of sacrifice are attached. For man's recognition of his dependence on God leads him to express his gratitude and his needs; his consciousness of sin against God prompts his acts of propitiation. Since these motives are reducible to the motive of homage, we express the deepest significance of sacrifice when we say that it is essentially a dedication of man to God in recognition of God's supreme dominion over him. The visible and symbolical rendering of this homage, with the prayer that accompanies it, is the highest manifestation of religious life.

In the beginning we said that in the Mass the Body and Blood of Christ are offered up to God as a sacrifice. And we may truly say that we offer the Body and Blood of Christ. Obviously we could not do this if Christ had not offered Himself, and if He had not given us the Eucharist to be our true sacrifice commemorating His sacrifice on the Cross.

But Christ did offer Himself, in His passion and death, to the Father as a sacrifice for us. The truth shines forth clearly in the inspired words of St. Paul: "Christ... delivered himself for us, an

oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness" (Ephesians 5:2). As God there could be no necessity in Christ for sacrifice; but Christ was also man. By the perfect assumption of our human nature He became the Head and Mediator of our race. As the God-Man, as sharing our human nature in everything save sin, Christ could and did offer sacrifice in our behalf. In the inspired Epistle to the Hebrews He is pictured by St. Paul as the spotless Victim and High-Priest of infinite excellence who needed not purification. By the perfection of His Priesthood and by the infinite worth of His Offering, undertaken out of love and obedience, He rendered perfect homage to the Father and gained salvation for the race.

This sacrifice, which Christ offered on Calvary in a natural way, with the real shedding of His Blood and real death, He committed to His Church in the Eucharist in order that the Church might have a true and lasting sacrifice and make applicable in the souls of individual men the fruits of the Passion.

At the Last Supper, in anticipation of His death on the Cross, our Saviour changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood and offered them as a real but sacramental sacrifice. The setting of the Paschal sacrifice, the words reminiscent of the pouring out of blood on the altar by Moses as a sign of the covenant, the literal character of the words of institution themselves—all indicate a new sacrifice, a "new testament" in His blood. This new sacrifice, which Christ instituted, He bade his Apostles to continue in memory of His Passion: "... This is my body, which is given for you ... This is the chalice, the

new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you . . . Do this for a commemoration of me . . . " (*Luke* 22:19-20).

It is our faith that in these words Christ instituted and committed to His Church a true sacrifice in which, by the sacramental offering of His Body and Blood. His Passion and death are recalled. This faith is the continuity of the faith of the Apostolic Church; for St. Paul, in a context which clearly expresses the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, tells the Corinthians: "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come" (I Corinthians 11:26). At Christ's bidding the Church, through the ministry of an official priesthood, instituted by Christ and signifying Christ, consecrates His Body and Blood. And, in union with Him, the Church offers, in a sacramental and unbloody manner, the same Victim which Christ offered in the full natural reality of blood and death on the Cross. And she offers for the same purpose for which Christ offered.

Now one of the ends for which Christ offered the sacrifice of Calvary was something absolute; it was something done for God and complete in itself without reference to the enrichment of man. His sacrifice was truly a cultus or worship of God. As Head of the race He acknowledged the homage that was due God as Lord of all creation; He rendered glory to the Father. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him" (John 13:31). Man by his sin had failed to manifest God's glory. In this condition of sin his sacrifices, even the sacrifices under the Law, were not acceptable to God save in view of the Sacrifice to come; nor could they render

perfect homage to God. Only the spotless Victim offered by a perfect Priest could accomplish this as it was due to God in justice. So Christ came and by His sacrifice gave to the Father the honor and praise which sinful nature could not of itself give.

By giving us the Eucharist as our sacrifice He has made it possible for us to offer with Him perfect homage to the Father in acknowledgment of His dominion over all creation. Incorporated into Christ and signed with the character of His priesthood, we, as members of His Mystical Body, offer Christ and ourselves with all that we have and do, in unceasing praise to the Father.

How beautifully and clearly the Church, in the prayers of the Mass, expresses this purpose and joint-offering of our Eucharistic sacrifice. As we prepare our gifts we pray, in answer to the priest's plea for our prayers, that God may receive the sacrifice ". . . to the praise and glory of His own name." Immediately before the Consecration, and looking forward to that hallowed moment, we offer ourselves in Christ and beg God ". . . graciously to accept this oblation of our bounded duty and service . . . through Christ our Lord." And, when the consecratory power has wrought the "mystery of faith," when our sacred Victim is present, we offer " . . . through Him and with Him and in Him . . . unto God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory" (Canon of the Mass).

As often as man has offered sacrifice to God he has done it to render homage to Him as Lord of all creation. The Catholic stands before the Christian altar with the same purpose in his heart and with a Gift at hand more precious than the gifts of ages.

In the Eucharistic sacrifice Christ has empowered him to offer "... through Him and with Him and in Him..." the perfect Victim to pay homage to the Father in whom "... we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28).

THE EUCHARIST: OUR SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Address delivered on June 8, 1941

Gratitude is a motive which has prompted man in every age to offer sacrifice to God. As often as man has recognized God as the Author of his being and gifts he has felt the obligation of thanking God for them. And, just as he has offered visible gifts in sacrifice to express externally his interior adoration of God's infinite excellence, so too he has offered these gifts to indicate his interior sentiments of gratitude to his Supreme Benefactor. These sacrifices were a manifestation in a visible way of man's complete dependence on God, and an expression of thanksgiving for all that man had received from God's bounty.

The obligation of giving thanks to God was one that could be known by man's reason unaided by Revelation. But God also made it clear by Revelation that man was to render thanksgiving and render it in a sacrificial way.

The peace-offerings under the Mosaic Law were sacrifices of thanksgiving. They were real sacrifices intended to symbolize man's indebtedness to God and his gratefulness for God's goodness towards him.

These sacrifices were good inasmuch as they were a recognition on man's part of God's munificence and the consequent obligation of rendering thanks. But, because of the handwriting of sin which stood against man, God willed to accept them only in virtue of the typical character by which they signified a belief in a Redeemer to come, who would

render perfect thanksgiving to the Father. If that faith disappeared the sacrifices became, by reason of man's sin, only material things neither pleasing nor salutary in the sight of God.

Christ, our Saviour, did not come to destroy the ancient law of sacrificial thanksgiving but to complete it. In this sense we may understand the words which St. Paul applies to Christ, "Therefore in coming into the world, he says, Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me: In holocausts and sin-offerings thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, 'Behold, I come (in the head of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God'" (Hebrews 10:5-7).

During His whole life, and, particularly, by His sacrificial death on the Cross, Christ offered thanksgiving to the Father. Out of love and obedience He offered His death to God to fulfill in our behalf the obligations which sin made it impossible for us to fulfill ourselves. One of these obligations was the debt of thanksgiving by which we were bound to acknowledge God as our Supreme Benefactor. So great was the grace in Christ, and so perfectly did He assume our human nature, that God, in view of His suffering and death as our Head, accepted His sacrifice in behalf of mankind.

However, the atonement which Christ made and the salvation which He gained were made and gained for the race. It is necessary for us to be personally associated with Christ by a union of faith and grace before the fruits of His Passion become effective in our individual lives.

Every sacrament, validly and worthily received, associates us with Christ's Passion by either bringing about our bond of union with Him or strengthening

that bond. The Eucharist does so in a singular and sacrificial way because Christ gave us the Eucharist to be our ritual sacrifice with Him of His own Body and Blood for the purpose for which He offered them on Calvary.

The particular purpose which we are considering is that of thanksgiving. St. Paul makes clear our general obligation of thanking God through Christ when he says we ought to give " . . . thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Ephesians 5:20). Our Saviour decreed that this obligation should be fulfilled in a special way when, in giving us the Eucharist. He enjoined us to offer, with Him and through Him, His Body and Blood as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father. This does not mean only that we are witnesses of the sacrifice of the Church and that we receive Communion and offer a thanksgiving after Communion. It means that we, a "kingly priesthood" and a "holy people" by virtue of our sharing to some degree in Christ's Priesthood, actively offer, through our association with Christ and His official priests, Christ Himself as our pleasing Peace-Offering in thanksgiving to God for all that we have received from Him. We take an active part in the whole sacrifice as a work done for the purpose of thanking God; we do not stand before the altar for the sole purpose of seeking God's gifts.

If we were to think of the Eucharist exclusively as the reception of Christ's Body and Blood for our sanctification, we would fall short of the Church's full thought concerning the Eucharist. In the oldest descriptions which we have of the Mass by the witnesses of Tradition, it is pictured as an action of thanksgiving in which we thank God through

Christ our Lord for all His benefits (Justin, First Apology, cps. 65, 66; Didache, 9, 1). The very word, eucharist, means thanksgiving or an action of thanksgiving. When St. John Chrysostom, to whom the title of Eucharistic Doctor is given, explains the meaning of the word and its application to the Mass he writes: "The best custody of a benefit is a memory of the benefit and an intense act of thanksgiving. And so the awe-inspiring, salutary mysteries, which we celebrate in every assembly, are called eucharistia, because they are a commemoration of many benefits, and . . . prepare us in every way to give thanks" (Hom. in Matt., cited from R. de Journal, Enchiridion Patristicum, No. 1173).

The Eucharist is, indeed, a remembrance of many benefits; for we offer the sacrifice to God recalling that He is the Creator of our being and powers, our grace and virtues. It prepares us in every way to give thanks; for, as the Christ-given sacrifice of the Church, it both signifies and perfects our union with Christ in virtue of which we, as members of His Mystical Body, may offer Him in thanksgiving to God.

The Church never lets us forget that the Eucharist is our sacrifice of thanksgiving. Before each Consecration, in what is substantially one of the oldest of Christian prayers, she urges us "... to lift up your hearts..." and "... give thanks to the Lord our God...", for "... it is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should always and in all places give thanks unto thee, Holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God: through Christ our Lord" (Preface of the Mass).

The Catholic, then, who wishes to honor God more perfectly and gain greater spiritual enrich-

ment, will approach the sacrificial altar-as thousands will do at the Ninth National Eucharistic Congress here in St. Paul during the week of June 22deeply conscious of the mind of the Church. He seeks not only to gain spiritual blessings, but to pay a debt of gratitude to God by offering sacrifice in the way prescribed by Christ. With profound humility of heart he knows that: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights . . . " (James 1:17). He is willing to offer to God his life, his actions, and all his possessions; but he knows that they are not in themselves an adequate recompense for all that God has given him. Truly, when he considers the poverty of his own being as it is in itself, he must cry with the Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?" (Psalms 115:12). But he is not without hope of thanking God adequately. For through his faith he knows that God has given him one infinitely precious Gift-a Victim through whom and with whom his own gifts are enhanced beyond measure and thus made pleasing to God. He has " . . . confidence to enter the Holies in virtue of the blood of Christ, a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil (that is, his flesh)" (Hebrews 10: 19-20). So, joyfully, he offers the "Bread of Heaven" and the "Chalice of salvation" in grateful thanksgiving to God through Christ our Lord.

THE EUCHARIST: OUR SACRIFICE OF PETITION

Address delivered on June 15, 1941

We have spoken, in the preceding addresses, of the Eucharist as a sacrifice given to us by Christ in order that we might render with Him perfect praise and thanksgiving to the Father. For these reasons Christ came into the world, and offered His own sacrifice and left us the Eucharist as a memorial of it.

He also came as the Good Shepherd to lay down His life that His sheep might live. And we are the flock of which He said: "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Christ gained this life for mankind by offering His death, in loving obedience to the Father, as satisfaction for the sins of the race, whose Head He was. During His public ministry He spoke of the Eucharist as a condition and means of gaining this life: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:54:55). And, when He instituted the Eucharist in memory of His Passion, He gave us a sacrifice which would be a wonderfully efficacious means of gaining the life of grace and everlasting life.

Because the Eucharist is a memorial of the Cross we shall understand the full power of the Mass as a petition of grace and life only when we consider it in relation to the Cross. There a perfect Victim was offered as an oblation to God by a perfect Priest in supplication for abundant graces for man.

The impetratory value of this sacrifice could be marred in no way; for it was Christ, the "lamb unspotted and undefiled," who offered and was offered. Hence Christ's offering on the Cross was of infinite value and infallibly efficacious in gaining abundant graces and life for mankind.

In the language of the Fathers and the liturgies of the Church the Mass is a "renewal of the death of Christ," a "renewal and continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross." It is a renewal of Christ's death in a mystical way by a real sacrifice in which Christ renews, through the ministry of His priests, the offering of His Body and Blood as a petition of grace and divine life for individuals who are united with Him through faith. So the value of the Mass lies in the immeasurable dignity and worth of the sacrifice of the Cross and in the substantial identity of the Mass with that sacrifice. In this sense the value of the Mass as a petition of grace and eternal life is infinite and can suffer no diminution from the unworthiness of any member of the Church. It is the renewal of Christ's clean oblation to gain infallibly for the members of His Church superabundant graces and every good conducive to our supernatural destiny. It cannot fail because it is the plea of the immaculate Lamb, who has entered into heaven ". . . to appear now before the face of God on our behalf" (Hebrews 9:24).

There is another sense in which the Mass cannot fail to gain abundant graces for us as members of the Church. The Mass is the public sacrifice which the Church offers through her priests; it is the sacrifice of the people of God, one in their visible head and faith and communion of worship. Here we are viewing the sacrifice as a work done by the members

of the Church, and in this sense its efficacious power is proportionate to the holiness of the Church. While this may diminish relatively in the number and quality of the members, it can never fail altogether. Holiness is, and will always be, an essential quality of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the Mass, as the Church's sacrifice, always gains graces for the members of His Body.

The Mass also has a very special effect and fruit for those who attend it and offer it as their individual sacrifice of petition to God. Here its effect is not viewed as the work done by Christ or the Church but precisely as the work of an individual seeking to merit grace, according to the promises of Christ, by the performance of a good work. The fruit for the individual in this case is consequent on and dependent on his personal devotion and holiness. These will vary at different times and sometimes fail altogether. When they fail the individual gains no merit from his individual offering of the Mass; and he will gain those very special actual graces only in proportion to his devotion and holiness. This is why the Church urges us to assist at Mass with devotion and to join ourselves with Christ offering in a union of charity.

We cannot overlook, either, certain other conditions which must be fulfilled before the effects of the Mass, as the sacrificial petition of Christ and the Church, bear their general fruit in our individual lives. Although a petition of unfailing power, the Mass, as a sacrifice of impetration, follows the general laws of all prayer. These require that the one offering have certain dispositions of soul, that those for whom the graces are sought be well-disposed, and

that the object of the petition be good in the sight of God.

When we consider the principal Offerer of the Mass there can be no condition lacking. For, as the offering of Christ, it is completely perfect in every sense and gains infallibly superabundant graces.

God pledges Himself, in view of Christ's offering on the Cross and the re-enactment of it in the Mass, to give us these graces according to His divine wisdom. They will be given to us proportionately to our needs and when God sees that we need them. In this sense every Mass offered disposes God, in view of the sufferings and merits of Christ, to put actual graces at the disposal of every member of the Church. This, however, does not mean that we, or the one for whom the Mass is offered in a special way, cannot resist these graces. For God's grace is given to us in accordance with our nature as free beings. We can and often do resist this grace, and thus do we impede the effects of Christ's sacrifice. infinite and infallibly efficacious in themselves, from working divine life in our souls.

The remaining condition, touching the efficacy of our petition, pertains to what we ask for. We seek grace and temporal benefits through the offering of the Mass with the understanding that the wisdom of God will prevail over human knowledge. When we offer for temporal benefits and blessings, our sacrificial petition will secure these, if they are conducive to our salvation, or, we shall receive other benefits more conducive to it in the mind of God. Such petitions, as they are voiced in the prayers of the Church, are always directed to God with either implicit or explicit reference to the life of grace and eternal salvation. And the mind of the Church, as

reflected in these prayers, is the mind of Christ. He was thoughtful of the temporal needs of men and their afflictions; He prayed and offered His sacrifice for these needs of His flock; He left us the Eucharist to offer for these needs; but He also said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be given you besides" (Matthew 6:33).

Our thought of the Eucharist, as a sacrificial petition of divine life, would be inadequate if we failed to consider our Communion in the Mass. In all sacrifices man has sought to enter into union with God, to partake of goods that are divine gifts. In many sacrifices man offered his gift to God and, if it was edible, partook of it in a sacrificial meal to symbolize his union with God. The Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which we have from the sacrifice, both signifies and accomplishes our union with Christ our Head through whom we offer sacrifice. We receive it as the Body and Blood, soul and divinity, of Christ Himself under the outward forms of bread and wine. Our faith here is the faith of the Apostolic Church as voiced by St. Paul: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ? And the bread that we break. is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (I Corinthians 10:16). Through this reception of Christ's Body and Blood the divine life of grace and charity is infused into our souls making us one with Christ, and, through Him, one with all who have this life. ". . . we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" (I Corinthians 10:17).

We regard the Eucharist, then, as the fulfillment here on earth of Christ's promise of union

with Him through supernatural life: "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:57). It is also our pledge of eternal life in God with Him: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:55).

It is this divine life which we seek, primarily, in offering the sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood as our petition to God. We want to secure, ultimately, the life of bliss in heaven, which God has promised us through Christ, and, here and now, graces and temporal goods which lead to that life. This purpose of our sacrificial petition is stated beautifully in the closing words of the sequence of the Mass, which was offered this morning in thousands of churches for the public observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi. May its thought be ours always when we offer our sacrifice of petition; and may it be ours, particularly, when we join with thousands of our brothers in Christ at the Ninth National Eucharistic Congress to beg God's blessings through the Mass:

"Jesu, Shepherd of Thy sheep, Thou Thy flock in safety keep. Living Bread, Thy life, supply; Strengthen us, or else we die; Fill us with celestial grace.

"Thou, Who feedest us below, Source of all we have or know, Grant that with Thy saints above, Sitting at the feast of love, We may see Thee face to face." (Tr. from the St. Andrew Daily Missal)

THE EUCHARIST: OUR SACRIFICE OF PROPITIATION

Address delivered on June 22, 1941

A sacrifice is termed propitiatory when it is offered to God to obtain forgiveness of sins and avert punishment from the sinner. Whenever man has been conscious of offense against God, he has sought to propitiate God's justice and regain His friendship by offering sacrifice. This was especially true during the period of the Mosaic Law. The sacrifices for sin offered then were not efficacious in themselves to forgive sin but foreshadowed in imperfect ways the propitiatory and sacrificial death of Christ. Such was the nature of the paschal sacrifice; the lamb offered was regarded in Apostolic times and subsequent Christian ages as a figure of Christ.

The propitiatory character of our Lord's own sacrifice is clearly revealed in Sacred Scripture. In the beginning of His public life, St. John the Baptist greets Him in words that refer back to the imperfect types and are prophetic of the propitiatory character of Christ's mission. "Behold the Lamb of God," John cries, "who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The comparison of Christ to the paschal lamb is employed, too, by St. Peter, who makes the propitiatory character of Christ's death clear by saying that we are redeemed "... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:19). St. Paul makes it clear in terms of the Priesthood of Christ. For him, guided by divine inspiration, Christ is the merciful High Priest, who, by the clean oblation of

His blood and death, is a "... propitiation for the sins of the people" (*Hebrews* 2:17). By His one redemptive act on the Cross, undertaken out of love and obedience, He released man from the thralldom of sin and restored divine life. Christ thus fulfilled the plan of the Father for man's salvation; and God was pleased "... through him he should reconcile to himself all things ... making peace through the blood of his cross" (*Colossians* 1:20).

In His promise of the Eucharist our Lord Himself indicated its sacrificial character when He said "... the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John 6:52). And, later, when He instituted the Eucharist and gave it to His chosen followers as a sacrifice to be re-enacted in memory of His death, His words expressed clearly its purpose of propitiation. "... This is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

Because of these words of Christ and divine Tradition, Catholics have always regarded the Eucharist as a propitiatory sacrifice. It is the gift of Christ to His Church enabling the members of the Church to offer with Him His Body and Blood, sacramentally, in order to propitiate God so that He will remit punishment due to their sins, and not withhold graces from them because of their guilt of sin. We do not understand by this that Christ satisfies again for sin or merits again. But Christ's Body and Blood are really offered again by the Church in union with Christ, and Christ offers Himself anew, in the status of Victim, to represent to the Father His consummated merits of Calvary in behalf of individual sinners who are joined to Him by faith and

sacrifice. In view of these consummated merits, now

represented by the same Victim who offered on Calvary, God's justice is appeased in behalf of all the members of the Church in general and those for whom the sacrifice is offered in a special way.

Since the Mass is the renewal of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, and consequently of infinite worth, Catholics have always thought of it as an extraordinarily efficacious work of satisfaction for the punishment due to sins that are forgiven but not sufficiently atoned for by penance.

For this reason the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice for the souls of those who died with faith in Christ and repentant for their sins, but before having completely satisfied God's justice by penitential practices. A host of writers of Christian antiquity attest this faith and practice of the Church. It is not possible to quote them all here; but these words of St. John Chrysostom have power to console the Catholic who mourns his departed loved ones. "Not in vain," he writes, "are sacrifices offered for the dead. For the Spirit has disposed all things with a will that we help one another . . . Not in vain does the deacon cry: 'Let us pray for those who have died in Christ.' The victim is at hand and all things are ready; the angels . . . are present, and the Son of God. Do you think that this is futile?" (Hom. 21 in Act., n.4). The Catholic adheres to this belief and practice which St. Chrysostom elsewhere calls apostolic (in Phil., hom. 3, n. 4). He offers the Mass with the Church, as Christians of old have always offered it, for the souls of his departed brothers in Christ that God may grant them peace and the light of His countenance.

The Church also regards the Eucharistic sacrifice as a power of propitiation for her living mem-

bers. Frequently we sin and frequently we need to be cleansed from sin and the remains of sin. For this purpose Christ left us the sacrifice of His Body and Blood. Just as the offering of His death in sacrifice was a redemption and cleansing of mankind, so too the offering of His real Body and Blood, with the mystical representation of His death, is a redemption and cleansing of those who now offer in union with Him.

As a sacrifice the Eucharist appeases God's justice in behalf of all the members of the Church so that He directly remits punishments due to their sins that are forgiven, but for which they have not satisfied fully by works of penance. The condition for their participating in this effect of the sacrifice is that they be in the state of grace and place no further obstacle in the way of the working of God's grace.

Indirectly the Eucharist is a propitiatory sacrifice for the guilt of sinners. In view of the consummated merits of Calvary, represented by the renewed offering of Christ in the Mass in behalf of individual sinners, God's justice is placated, and He gives the sinners graces, which, with their own cooperation. dispose them to sorrow and justification through the use of other Sacraments. This propitiation of God's justice may be more or less dependent upon the number and gravity of sins and the varying dispositions of sinners. Such graces are not granted continuously, but at an opportune time according to the wisdom of God's providence. They are never granted so that they can not be frustrated by the sinner; he can not be purely passive but must cooperate willingly in the work of his redemption.

The Eucharistic sacrifice, then, in all its aspects

of praise, thanksgiving, petition and propitiation, is our cooperation in a sacrificial way with the redemptive work of Christ. Redemption is not something which is accomplished once and for all in individual souls. We do, indeed, say truly that Christ redeemed us by His one oblation on the Cross. And we mean by this that Christ's sacrificial death freed us from the slavery of sin, and merited superabundant graces for us so that we may now live by His life of grace, and have hope for the heritage of the life of glory with God. This life of glory is made possible for us through the everlasting testament of Christ's blood. But we are heirs of this will and testament only when we become co-heirs with Christ by our incorporation into Him through faith and charity. Hence Christianity is not merely the following of an ethical system or an example set in the past; but it is a "new and living way" of entering into glory through the faithful worship of God here on earth with Christ. It is the active life of human souls dedicated to Christ and striving towards their supernatural destiny through the life of grace which He imparts to all who will have it. Only when the glory of life with God is attained may we say in the full sense that our redemption is accomplished. Here and now we press towards the mark by our union of charity with Christ.

Christ's own sacrifice was acceptable to the Father by reason of the fullness of His charity in acknowledging the rights of God and offering Himself in behalf of the human race. And, when the work of His Passion was accomplished, the glory of divinity that was His as God from all eternity and never separated from His human soul, was communicated to His body in the Resurrection. The

glory withheld in divine wisdom for the mystery of the Redemption is made manifest to the eyes of the world. In this sense, the Resurrection is Christ glorified through sacrifice. Christ prayed to the Father for this glory and for our glory through Him. So the glorified Christ is a pledge of our glory in body and soul. And the destiny of all human life. after it has completed its time of serving God worthily on earth, is to share in a created way in this divine life of glory, which God communicates to us through the risen Christ. We are to live and worship God now so that we may inherit that glory. This is the ultimate end of human life; there is no other in the design of God. It must return to God from whence it came, out of the vastness of His love in a free creation, to give honor and praise to Him through Christ our King of glory.

It is to this end that we as Catholics join in dedicating our lives to God through Christ in the sacrificial worship of the Eucharist. Christ has left us this memorial of His death that we may now adequately praise, thank, petition and propitiate God through union in His sacrifice. Through faithful service to God in this way we have the hope of being

glorified with Christ our Eucharistic King.

And so tomorrow, here in St. Paul, Minnesota, we begin the Ninth National Eucharistic Congress to worship God in a national way, and to keep our minds alive to our supernatural destiny and our need of participating in Christ's Eucharistic sacrifice so that "... in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, to whom are glory and the dominion forever" (I Peter 4:11).

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