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- Why on Sundays?
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Why

ON SUNDAYS?

By John M. Scott, S. J.

Price Fifteen Cents

A GRAIL PUBLICATION

St. Meinrad

Indiana

For Review

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by John M. Scott, S.J.

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THE GRAIL

St. Meinrad, Indiana

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IF YOU WERE cruising down the Mississippi River on a steamboat in the days of Mark Twain, you would have been amazed as the stern wheeler approached St. Louis. You could stand on the deck of the steamboat and look out upon one of the most amazing sights in North America.

On the shores of Illinois and Missouri there rose to the sky huge mounds of dirt. So numerous were these mounds in the vicinity of St. Louis that the city was called the "Mound City." When St. Louis began to expand its building operations, the mounds on the Missouri side of the river were removed by steam shovels.

On the Illinois side there still remain a number of these mounds in the neighborhood of East St. Louis. According to historians, the tops of these mounds were much higher than they are now. It took the work of thousands of Indians over long periods of time to build these monuments, which were constructed by the laborious method of hauling mud and dirt from the surrounding area.

On the tops of some of these massive earthen structures, altars were erected. But with the passage of time, these altars disappeared.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

South of the border down Mexico way, tourists in the land of sunshine often include an excursion to the great Sun Pyramid twenty-five miles north-east of Mexico City. To stand at the foot of the Sun Pyramid and gaze up at its peak is an awe-some experience. The immensity of the Pyramid is overwhelming. Its four triangular sides swim up and away to merge and melt at infinity. On top of this pyramid once stood the Sun Temple, 212 feet above the basal platform. This great temple was once the center of Indian worship.¹

WHY

“Why did the ancient Indians build altars?”

For the same reason that should prompt you to come to Church on Sunday, and week days as well—to offer sacrifice to God.

“What is a sacrifice?”

A good pagan, be he ancient Roman, or Aztec Indian, could answer the question.

“The modern man,” remarks Father J. Putz, “finds the Mass difficult, because he has lost the notion of sacrifice. This is the real explanation of the wide-spread indifference towards so great an action. A pagan has some idea of what his offerings to the divinity mean; he is religious, God-conscious, though his religion may be mixed with

superstition. But modern man has lost the sense of God the Creator, Lord, and last End. The difficulty of explaining sacrifice is increased by the fact that in ordinary speech sacrifice is identified with something unpleasant, with the negative idea of giving up things we like. To get back to the true meaning of sacrifice, we must interpret it in terms of giving, which is something positive, and by itself delightful.”²

To understand the Mass, we must first understand what a sacrifice is. We must answer that question, “Why do men give gifts to God?”

Go back to the days of Aristotle when the ancient Greek walked noble and erect along the sandy shores of the blue Aegean and looked up into the vast dome of heaven with clear, searching eyes.

As he looked, the pagan realized that the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the sky declares the work of His hands. Day to day utters speech, and night to night shows knowledge.

The pagan listened to the wind among the trees playing celestial symphonies, and saw the branches downward bent like keys of some great instrument. Vast-heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime, the image of eternity, the throne of the Invisible, the sky became alive with things mysterious that spoke with the voice of thunder of the grandeur of God. The sky spoke of Him Who

“walks on the wings of the winds, and the clouds are His chariots.”

ONLY GOD CAN MAKE A TREE

The pagan witnessed the miracle of a tiny seed sprouting in the moist earth, and reaching green hands heavenwards towards the sun. He saw the seed grow into a giant tree that wrestled with Herculean winds, and slept in the mellow glow of moonlight on a midsummer night. The pagan realized that only God could make a tree.

SOURCE OF LIFE

The ancient pagan felt warm blood coursing through his veins, his heart beating fast with the wonder of it. The pagan could not define life, but he knew all life came from God—and he wanted to acknowledge that fact. He wanted to adore God as the Creator and Origin of life.

Modern man walks into the operating room of a metropolitan hospital and sees white gowned surgeons bending over a limp figure on the operating table. Feverishly they work to keep alive the fitful spark of life. But scalpels, oxygen tanks and the trained fingers of famous surgeons can't ensnare that evasive, fleeting spark called life. It belongs to God alone.

20th Century man claims to rule the seven seas. He builds B-52 Intercontinental Bombers that

leap across the oceans. He designs a F7U-3 Cutlass to slice the ozone up where the air is thin and crystal cold. He catapults a WAC Corporal rocket two hundred and fifty miles into the zenith. He dives in a benthoscope four thousand five hundred feet into the cold waters off a Santa Cruz dock, and descends two miles into the sunless sea. He makes sulfa drugs, tank-crashing bazookas, and TV color sets, but he cannot make a radish.

THEE, GOD, I COME FROM

Life, all life, comes from God, and modern man, as well as the ancient pagan, if he is honest, wants to acknowledge that fact. He wants to adore God as the Creator and Origin of life.

AMBASSADORS OF LIGHT

Alone in the night on a dark hill that runs down into deep bays of warm seas, a pagan stands and watches the army of the stars appear. White, and topaz, and misty red gleam sentinels in the sky. Lamp posts to light the night and guide the way of the traveller across the shifting sands of the Sahara, or the rolling waters of "Mare Nostrum."

From rim to rim, across the bowl of the sky glimmers the star-studded haze called the Milky Way, that ribbon of light woven of flaming suns. Far overhead the Great Bear dances around the polar star. There is bright Algol, beloved of camel

drivers; and blue Denebola, golden Dubhe, and Vega, the pale sapphire.

Up the dome of heaven, like a great hill, he sees them marching stately and still, and he knows that God Who made them deserves rich praise for lavishing His beauty and skill on the universe, to make this earth, our heritage, a pleasant and a cheerful place. The pagan realizes that stars are heralds from on high, ambassadors of light, to speak to us of God's beauty and power. The pagan wants to acknowledge this fact. He wants to praise God for His everlasting beauty and infinite skill.

THROUGH GIANT EYES

When twilight falls from the wings of night, and darkness wraps her mantle of mystery and silence around the shoulders of the world, modern man looks through giant eyes of massive telescopes to search the heavens, and is amazed. A floating universe of epic majesty swims into his ken. He sees the circling rings of Saturn, spreading their tremendous disks of light against the blackness of space, cutting circles of beauty, sky-like emblems of eternity.

Swinging out into distant space, he sees stars so vast that our sun, and all the planets in their turn could be poured into their center. Our sun is over one million times the size of the earth, yet he

is a mere welterweight in a universe of champions, a pygmy among his colossal companions. Many stars are hundreds of times as big as our sun and much brighter. The star Doradus quivers with a blinding light, the intensity of which is more than three hundred thousand times that of the sun.

SILVER ARROWS OF LIGHT

Prominent among our sky neighbors is Sirius, the brightest star in our northern sky. Like the sun, he too is an archer, shooting silver arrows of light—light that speeds through space at the maddening pace of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second. So distant is this gleaming giant that his arrows of light require nine years to race across the dark chasms that separate us.

ORPHANED NORTH STAR

Some stars are so distant, they could fall from the heavens tonight, and we would never be aware of it for hundreds of years. If the North Star should vanish tonight, neither we nor our great-great-great-grandchildren would ever know it. The North Star is over 300 light-years away. We would continue to see the orphaned rays of starlight for three centuries.

Beyond our galaxy, at a distance greater than the human mind can conceive, are millions and millions of other universes of stars. (Our own

Milky Way galaxy alone contains twenty billion stars.) Spinning in a great sea of space these galaxies are scattered out at an immense distance from each other. The cyclopean eye of the 200-inch Hale telescope on Palomar shows us many of these distant stellar systems. One such is a thousand billion years distance, if you travel with the speed of light. These universes are running away from us, and from each other, with the devastating speed of twenty-five thousand miles per second!

OUR SPACE SHIP

Our own earth is cruising through space thirteen times faster than a V-2 rocket. So faithful and accurate is our planet in keeping its schedule that not once in a thousand years are we behind time even as much as 1/100 of a second in keeping our rendezvous with the stars.

THE HEAVENS SHOW FORTH THE GLORY OF GOD

Tremendous as are the vast bulks of whirling suns that speed down the avenues of the sky they are but grains of sand to Him Who weighs them in the palm of His hand, poises them in their sweeping orbits, and balances their massive weight as easily as dust beams dancing in the sunlight. The modern man who is honest with himself,

wants to acknowledge this fact. He wants to praise God for His everlasting beauty and infinite skill.

GOLDEN RIPE

The ancient pagan walked into the wheat field, golden and ripe for the harvest. He strolled through mountain vineyards, and noticed the great, purple grapes ripening under the autumn sun. He knew these gifts were from God, and felt compelled to express his thanks.

TOMORROW'S FOOD IN TODAY'S SKY

In that hushed and breathless moment when day is almost done, and the trees of the forest are filled with colors that have no names, clouds descend the stairway of the sky to mingle with the mountain peaks. From the copper canyons of the west they steal the glowing embers of the dying sun, and scatter them in blazing climax to light the campfires in the sky. The pagan looked thereon, and wanted to thank God for the ever-redeemed promise of our daily bread.

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD

A business man travelling on the Union Pacific streamliner from Chicago to Denver, sits down in the dining car for a meal the whole world has prepared for him. Pungent, aromatic coffee from Brazil, tasty bananas from Panama, spices from India, pineapples from Hawaii, oranges from Cali-

fornia, wine from Italy, beefsteak from Wyoming, apples from Washington, and potatoes from the Red River Valley of North Dakota. As the streamliner flashes across the rails, the business man glances out the window and sees long fields of barley and of rye that clothe the world and meet the sky, and that tell us of Him Who listens to our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

THANKS

If a spark of gratitude quivers in his soul, he, too, wants to thank God for the ever-redeemed promise of our daily bread.

LOVE BLOOMS

When love flows like a mighty river into his soul, man wants to give his life, to spend himself, and to be spent, working for the wife he loves, and for the children with whom God has blest him. Man would like to build a castle wall secure and strong to protect his loved ones from the ravages of time and fortune. He would like to wave a magic wand and with a single, encircling gesture make all his dreams come true for those he loves. To give them all blessings possible, to fill their days with the sunshine of happiness.

STORM CLOUDS

But man looks up and finds dark clouds gathering on the horizon. Heavy skies throw shadows

dark as stone, and hide the future in misty uncertainty. Man feels the need of help above and beyond his own. Man feels the need to petition God, to ask God for the necessities of life, and for favors.

"MARCH OF TIME"

Modern man needs God's help more keenly than ever. At the turn of the half century, the "March Of Time" presented "Half A Century In Review" which emphasised the gulf existing between man's mechanical attainments, on the one hand, and his spiritual poverty on the other.

PHILOSOPHY OF DESPAIR

Never before have there been such technological advances. From stratoliners to cinemascope, from TV to power steering the world has become mechanically more wonderful. But despite the marvel of radio, Shooting Star jet planes, and sulfa drugs, man is unhappy and dissatisfied. "Pessimistic man today," remarks Bishop Sheen, "has given himself to a philosophy of despair."³

NEED OF GOD

Threatened with atomic extinction, caught in the backwash of war years, and seeking in vain among creatures for the peace of mind they cannot give, modern man is coming to realize the

need to petition God, to ask God for the necessities for both body and soul.

WEARY STEPS

Man, both ancient and modern, would like to walk erect and straight along the lofty road that leads up to the high mountain of God. But sometimes his steps grow weary, his pace slackens, he stumbles and falls into the brambles and briars, and is bruised on the sharp rocks of sin and disaster. Then he looks up with pleading eyes into the eyes of God, and seeks pardon. He wants to ask for forgiveness. He wants to propitiate God.

INTELLECTUALLY HONEST

Man, if he is intellectually honest, realizes his dependence on God, and feels inclined to adore God, to acknowledge God, that is, as the Lord and Giver of Life.

Man sees God's beauty and perfection everywhere, and feels compelled to praise God.

Man realizes that God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and wants to thank God.

Man realizes he needs God's help, and wants to petition God, to ask God, that is, for help. To ask favors for the future, and beg pardon for the past.

How can man perform this duty of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and petition?

MAN TO MAN

Look first, and see how man acts towards man. How does man show love, praise, thanks to his fellow men. How does he make requests and beg their pardon.

TWIN STARS FROM HEAVEN

A young man with love light shining in his eyes like twin stars from above, sometimes finds himself with nothing to say. When love reaches to heights that have no words, rhetoric is all a tangle in his throat. Love that is so bold stops on the edge of speech.

A GIFT SPEAKS OF LOVE

But beauty is looking into his soul with calm, sweet eyes that send armies with banners charging through his veins, and heat lightning quivering through his pulse. The young man must let the girl of his dreams know that she reigns supreme as queen of his heart. He gives a box of candy, a gift to speak of the love that is in his heart. A gift becomes an ambassador of good will to speak of that ecstatic love that makes each moment divine, each day a precious treasure. A gift speaks of love.

A GIFT SPEAKS OF PRAISE

During war years we praise our young men who distinguish themselves on the field of battle. We

give them a silver star, and we give medals of honor. Gifts speak our praise.

A GIFT SAYS "THANKS"

When the stars that oversprinkle all the heavens a-twinkle like a million silver jewels, and the deep quiet of the evergreen forest is broken by the music of sleigh bells and the warm laughter of children, we bring Christmas gifts to express our appreciation for favors received during the past twelve months. A gift expresses our thanks.

A GIFT BEGS PARDON

If we have been so unfortunate as to offend a friend by some unkind word or jarring deed, we hasten to make amends, and send a gift which will say we are sorry, and will silently plead for forgiveness. A gift pleads for us, asking pardon for the past, and seeking assurance for the future.

The way of men with men is to show their love, praise, thanks, and petition by means of gifts.

MEN TO GOD

The ways of men with God are similar.

A GIFT SAYS "WE ADORE YOU"

Man wanted to give God a gift that would say in effect, "We realize that all life comes from You, and so to You we give life back again." Man wanted to adore God.

A LIVING GIFT

Long before the arrival of the white man on the North American continent, Indians regarded Niagara Falls and its vicinity as sacred grounds of the Great Spirit. War was not permitted within sight and sound of the "Thunder of Waters." Once each year the tribe dwelling nearby offered its fairest maiden as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit. She was placed in a birch canoe loaded with flowers and fruit and sent over the crest into the thundering gorge below.⁴

CORTES

When Cortes made his entrance into Mexico, he expressed a desire to visit the great Sun Temple. Bernal Diaz, one of his soldiers who accompanied him, later wrote a history of that impressive visit. He wrote of the one hundred and fourteen broad steps leading up to the tremendous temple, and of the sacrificial altar on which human lives were offered to God.⁵

The Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians at one time offered human sacrifice to God, as did many other nations and tribes.^{5a}

CONCLUSION OVERLOOKED

The Jews were aware of a conclusion overlooked by some other nations. Since human life is sacred and belongs to God alone, it is not proper for man

to deprive a fellow being of life, even in recognition of God's dominion.

PRIZE CALF

The Jews offered up the life of a prize calf, or ox, or sheep. In the Book of Exodus we read that Moses rising in the morning built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He then sent young men of the children of Israel, and they offered holocausts, and sacrificed pacific victims of calves to the Lord.

The ancient Chinese made their chief sacrifice during the winter months on a high altar in the southern section of Peking. Like the Jews, their main offering was chosen from the animal kingdom—a prize ox being considered as the choicest gift.

A GIFT SAYS "WE PRAISE YOU"

Gifts offered to express praise of the divinity were numerous and varied as the tribes of men.

REGAL GIFT

Among the Hindus the horse was the "King of Sacrifices." In a land where ordinary people walked, or rode donkeys, the horse was an emblem of royalty. The offering of this regal creature was marked with solemnities that lasted for three days.

A SAFFRON ROBE

Along the blue waters of the Mediterranean, in

the great city of Athens, the ancient Greeks erected temples of beauty and symmetry that have charmed all ages, and reflected the perfection of the zenith of classical art.

High above the city stood the Acropolis like a royal diadem whose crowning jewel was the Parthenon, the temple of Pallas Athena which housed a gold and ivory statue of the virgin goddess sculptured by the great Phidias. For the Greeks, Pallas Athena was a divine revelation. She was considered the highest incorporation of divine wisdom, a pure and radiant apparition high above the cults of Aphrodite and Dionysus.

Every four years the great national feast was celebrated here with elaborate musical, and dramatic performances. The feast was climaxed by the people coming to the shrine of Pallas Athena and having a young woman offer to the goddess a rich saffron robe. This feast was celebrated for eleven hundred years, during which time the Parthenon remained dedicated to the virginal goddess, until it entered the service of the Virginal Mother of God.⁶

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD

In Ephesus, one of the three great holy cities of antiquity, the traveler could view the gigantic terrace upon which was built one of the seven

wonders of the world—the shrine of Diana. The great idol, carved from vinewood, like the black stone of Kaaba at Mecca, was believed to have fallen from heaven. Behind this statue, and under the protection of this goddess the entire treasury of the province of Asia had been deposited. Here, as in the Temple in Jerusalem, all the savings and endowments of the priests were placed for safe keeping. The temple itself, which had burned during the night when Alexander the Great was born, had been rebuilt, and was approximately the size of the present St. Peter's in Rome. For more than a thousand years Diana ruled from this great throne, and received the sacrifices of willing subjects.⁷

A GIFT SAYS "THANK YOU"

Gifts of thanksgiving are as old as history itself. In the Old Testament we read that the sons of Adam and Eve offered sacrifice to the Lord. To thank God for the bounty of the harvest, Cain, who tilled the soil, offered the first fruits of the earth to the Maker thereof. Abel, a shepherd by occupation, offered a choice lamb chosen from among the flocks he tended.⁸

NOAH

When Noah came out of the ark, his first act was to build an altar and to offer some animals on

it to God. A ritual and solemn way of saying "thank You" to the Almighty Who had saved him.⁹

MELCHISEDECH

The book of Genesis tells us that when Abraham was returning from a great victory in battle, he met Melchisedech, priest of the most high God. Melchisedech was an ancient priest who ruled in Salem, the old site of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that upon meeting Abraham, Melchisedech, the king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, blessed Abraham, and said, "Blessed be Abraham by the most high God, Who created heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God by whose protection the enemies of God are in thy hand."

PURPLE GRAPES

The Roman took the great purple grapes ripening under the autumn sun, selected the choicest clusters, pressed the wine from them, and then, to thank God for the bounty of the harvest, poured out a libation upon the earth.

So thoroughly was the idea of sacrifice interwoven into the Greek way of life, that no meal was partaken of until a libation of the wine about to be consumed was poured out to God. Even pastry, cakes, and fruits were offered as sacrifices.

A simple and heartfelt way to say "Thank You" to God.

TIGER TENZING

On the frigid, wind swept heights of the most massive mountain in the world, are two "Thank You" offerings to God. Two very different gifts offered on the peak of Mt. Everest to Him Whose fingers formed the towering heights, and balanced their awful weight.

Tenzing Sherpa, the most famous Nepali mountaineer, who together with Sir Edmund Hillary scaled the hitherto unconquered Mt. Everest, was interviewed by Father Vincent Gnanapragasm, Jesuit missionary in India.

"And, waiting for awhile on the top of Everest, what was the offering you made?" questioned Fr. Gnanapragasm.

"Oh! that," Tenzing replied with a smile, as a certain amount of shyness suffused his face, "Well, Father, I took whatever I could lay my hands upon at that moment—a few sweets and chocolate bars—and offered them to the God Who made that mountain."

TOP OF THE WORLD

"I remembered," continues Father Gnanapragasm, "that another offering had been made at that time on the top of the world's greatest peak, but it

had not received the publicity which the act of this simple sherpa did. Beside the offering made by Tenzing lies a crucifix. It was placed there by Sir Edmund Hillary at the request of Sir John Hunt, the expedition's leader, who had received it from an English priest. There is something symbolic in those two different offerings by a pagan and a Christian on the world's nearest point to heaven."¹⁰

THE MOUNTAIN IS HIS

Those offerings are a realization of the words of the Royal Psalmist, King David, "Come into the presence of God with thanksgiving; for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all. For in His hand are all the ends of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are His; . . . and His hands formed the dry land."

SUN DANCE

Sundance, Wyoming is more than the name of a western town. It is a vivid reminder of the sacrifice made by the Teton Sioux Indians to petition the blessing of the Great Spirit.

At the budding of the wild sage in the days of Sitting Bull, the Sioux gathered around the "wakan" or holy tree, and in the ordeal of the Sun Dance offered a heroic sacrifice. The self-sacrifice of the young men participating consisted in having their backs or chests slit open with knives.

Through these slits rawhide ropes were inserted, and the young men suspended from the "wakin" or holy tree until the flesh tore loose and they fell to the ground. If their own weight did not suffice to pull them loose, buffalo skulls were finally tied to their feet to give more weight. Rain-In-The-Face hung from the "wakan" for two days until at last buffalo skulls were tied to his feet and he fell to the ground.¹¹

SCAPEGOAT

The word "scapegoat" is common to all of us. But do you know that the scapegoat was a sacrifice to ask God's pardon for sin?

A GIFT BEGS PARDON

On the great day of Atonement, besides the other sacrifices, the Jews brought forward two goats, one upon which the high priest laid his hands while he confessed the sins of his people. Thus symbolically laden with the sins of the people, the goat was led into the desert and its life offered to God. The other goat was sacrificed and offered in atonement for sin.

LAMB OF GOD

Among the Jews and among the pagans the sacrifice of animals was merely an expression of man's quest for an adequate sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation. In the fullness of time such a

sacrifice came, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, "Who takes away the sins of the world." No animal can atone for man, but God Himself can make superabundant atonement.

OLD COVENANT ABROGATED

The sacrifices of the Jews and pagans were imperfect. After the duration of many centuries God announced by the voice of prophets that the Old Covenant was abrogated.

Sacrifice is the public rendering to God through the hands of a priest of some visible gift which symbolizes a giving of one's self to God.

NEW COVENANT ESTABLISHED

Jesus Christ as the representative of the whole human race, and in the full dignity of His calling, offered as a gift His own Blood, which would be shed by the executioners on Golgotha. The offering was made at the Last Supper; the saving Blood was poured out upon the cross. From creation onward, this was the single sacrificial Gift wholly pleasing to God, and, as we know, it brought about man's redemption.

The New Covenant was established on Holy Thursday night with the words of Christ, Who under the appearance of wine shed His own blood. "This is the chalice of the New Testament which is shed for you."

On Good Friday, when Christ swallowed down death that we might be the heirs of life everlasting—the veil of the Great Temple of Jerusalem was torn from top to bottom, as a sign that the sacrificial worship of Israel was now fulfilled on the cross.

NEW SACRIFICE

With the institution of the Sacrifice of the Cross, the sacrifices of the Old Law were supplanted at once, and abolished forever. In these old sacrifices oxen, and sheep had been offered as figures and symbols; In the New Sacrifice was offered the Flesh and Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.

THE MASS

The sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that sacrifice of the Cross. The Mass repeats the offering of the supper room as consummated on the Cross. In every Mass, Christ presents Himself once more to the Father. And since we are one with Christ, this gift of Himself to His Father, becomes ours. "The satisfaction of Christ," says St. Thomas, "belongs to all the faithful as to His members."

REAL SACRIFICE

The Mass is a real sacrifice. It is not a mere reminder of the crucifixion. It is an essential and

living renewal of the sacrifice of the cross. St. Gregory the Great says; "The Eucharistic sacrifice renews mystically the death of the only begotten Son of God."

Saint Peter Canisius, called the Watch Dog of Germany, because of his zeal in defending the faith in that country, writes as follows concerning the Mass; "The Sacrifice of the Mass, rightly understood, is both a representation, at once holy and living, and an offering, bloodless, yet actual, of the passion of the Lord, and of the blood-stained sacrifice which was offered for us on the cross." The Mass is not only a representation of the Sacrifice of the cross, it is the offering of the sacrifice of the cross. It is the offering of the immolated Christ as our sacrifice.

UNBLOODY SACRIFICE

The Baltimore Catechism tell us that the Mass is the UNBLOODY SACRIFICE of the body and blood of Christ. And the Mass is the SAME SACRIFICE AS THAT OF THE CROSS. The next question is: "Why is the Mass the same sacrifice as that of the cross?"

SAME AS CROSS

The answer: "The Mass is the SAME SACRIFICE AS THAT OF THE CROSS BECAUSE THE OFFERING (the victim) and the PRIEST

(the one making the sacrifice or the offering) are the SAME—CHRIST our Blessed Lord; and the ENDS for which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered are the same as those of the sacrifice of the cross.”

The Mass is the central act of worship of the Catholic Church. It is the very heart of the religion established by Jesus Christ.

Christ instituted the sacrifice of the Mass in order to enable mankind to worship God in the best possible manner. The Mass is a real sacrifice. It is the renewal of the sacrifice of the cross. The MASS is the CROSS ALL OVER AGAIN, only in an unbloody manner; on the cross our Redemption was accomplished, in the Mass the fruits are applied.

WHY SO SACRED?

What makes the Mass so sacred? Why is it such a privilege to attend Mass?

It is because Christ is at once the VICTIM OFFERED, and the PRIEST WHO OFFERS the victim. The victim on the cross, and the victim in the Mass is the same. It is Christ.

CHRIST IS THE PRIEST

The one who offers the sacrifice on the cross, and the one who offers the sacrifice in the Mass is the same. It is Christ. On the cross Christ was the

real priest, i.e., He was the one who made the offering. In the Mass Christ is the real priest, i.e., the one who really makes the offering, the sacrifice. The human priest is merely the agent of Christ, His instrument, acting in the name of Christ.

“The visible priest,” says the Imitation of Christ, “is but the minister (or agent) of Christ, using the words of Christ, by command and institution of Christ.” (Bk. IV, 5)

Hence it is well to remember that it is Christ Who is **AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME** the **PRIEST** Who **OFFERS** the Sacrifice, and **ALSO THE SACRIFICE ITSELF**.

CHRIST, the PRIEST, OFFERS the SACRIFICE, which is HIMSELF. The human priest you see standing at the altar is called a priest, only because he is a representative of Christ, and acts in the name of Christ, the real priest. At his ordination the human priest receives the power to act in the name of Christ, but it is always Christ Who offers Himself for us at each Mass.

EVERLASTING VICTIM

The same sacrifice that was offered on the Cross by the shedding of blood is offered on our altars in an unbloody manner. In everything except the manner of offering, the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross. Christ is the Lamb of God

Who was slain for the redemption of the world. He is the everlasting victim. Christ is offered daily at Mass throughout the world from the first crimson flush of dawn behind the eastern hills, until the scarlet climax to day's declining splendor. "From the rising of the sun to going down thereof, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation." (Malachias 1, 11)

YOU STAND AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Until the end of time Mass will be offered as an infinite oblation to the Divine Majesty. The Mass is the most sacred action that can be performed this side of heaven. When we assist at Mass, we stand once more at the foot of the Cross. The Blood of Jesus is as truly offered at Mass as it was when He was nailed to the cross; hence the Church treats everything which relates to the Holy Sacrifice of the altar with the same reverence as Mary and St. John showed to the body of Christ when they removed it from the cross.

We have mentioned that the Mass is the SAME SACRIFICE as that of the cross, since the OFFERING (Christ Himself) and the PRIEST (the one making the offering) are the same, namely, Christ.

You ask, "Is there any difference at all between

the Sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass?"

DIFFERENT MANNER

There is. The MANNER in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the cross Christ REAL-
LY SHED HIS BLOOD, and was REALLY
SLAIN.

In the Mass, there is NO real shedding of blood, NOR real death, because Christ can die no more; but the Sacrifice of the Mass through the SEPA-
RATE CONSECRATION of the bread and wine represents His death on the cross.

HOW?

"But," you may question, "how can Christ Who is now in glory be a sacrificial victim? Christ can die no more."

To answer this question, we must recall that the actual shedding of blood is not an essential part of sacrifice. The same blood, once previously offered up in sacrifice, may again be offered up to constitute a second distinct sacrifice. Thus the Jewish high priest, on the solemn festival of the expiation did not immolate a fresh victim within the Holy of Holies, but carried with him, the blood of the victim that had been previously shed on the altar of holocausts, and offered it up a second time to accomplish atonement.

This second offering constituted of itself a sacrifice, although not accompanied with the shedding of blood.

In like manner, Jesus does not die a second time on our altars, but the sacrifice which He made once for all on the cross, He continually renews upon the altar, by offering up again the victim slain once for all on the cross. This makes the Sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass the **SAME SACRIFICE**.

PURPOSE

The purposes for which the Sacrifice of the cross was offered, and for which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered are:—

1. To **ADORE GOD** as the Creator of life.
2. To **PRAISE GOD** for His wondrous beauty and perfection.
3. To **THANK GOD** for favors received.
4. To **PETITION GOD** and ask His blessing for the future, and seek pardon for the past.

YOUR GIFT

The sacrifice of the Mass is also **YOUR** offering. **YOUR** sacrifice.

“All men,” says Fr. Putz, S.J., “redeemed and sanctified by Christ form one body with Him. Being one with Him they necessarily share in all that He is and has. Christ is essentially the Son of

God; His members participate in His divine sonship as adopted children. Christ is essentially the Mediator, Priest and Victim; His members also will be priests and victims. "All are priests," St. Augustine says, "because members of the one Priest" (City of God, XX, 10). This is their vocation received in baptism and described in magnificent terms by holy Scripture;

"Jesus Christ . . . hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us a royal race of priests to God, His Father" (Apoc. 1:5; cf. 5:16; 20:6).

You are a "holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ . . . You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, God's own people, that ye may proclaim the perfections of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter, 2:5, 9).

"It is a marvellous invention of the Saviour's; by giving us Himself to offer, He makes us offer ourselves with Him and through Him, and in that act He unites our present offering with His past self-oblation." (My Mass, p. 103)

WE OFFER

The fact that the Mass is the offering of each and all of us is shown in the prayers of the Offer-

tory. As the priest raises the precious chalice containing the wine, he looks up to the cross, and says in the name of the Church, and hence as the representative of all the people; "We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty it may ascend with an aroma of sweetness, for our own salvation, and for that of the whole world. Amen."

Then, after lowering the chalice to the altar, the priest bows, and again says as our representative: "Grant that the sacrifice we offer in Thy sight this day may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God."

BE MINDFUL

The Sacrifice of the Mass is yours. That is why the priest says in the Canon of the Mass, "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids . . . who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise."

These words clearly show that the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered by all the faithful.

A KINGLY PEOPLE

We are a priestly family, a chosen generation, a kingly people, bound together by the mystic blood-relationship with Christ our High Priest, through the Sacraments. At no time is this special and general priesthood so perfectly exercised as in the Great Sacrifice of Christ in which He with

us, and we "through Him, with Him, and in Him" give all honor and glory to God.

MY LIFE DEPENDS ON YOU

When you come to Mass, you come to adore God. To offer a gift that says, "Dear God, I realize that each heart beat, every breath I draw is a new gift fresh from your hand. If you should withdraw your power from us, even for a second, we would vanish back into the blackness of space from which we came."

"The secret of life is a mystery old as the coursing of blood. Every second, 3,000,000 red blood cells in my body die and are replaced by fresh reserves from the bone marrow. Seventy times per minute my heart beats to pump fifteen pounds of life-giving fluid through miles of blood vessels. A total pay-load of five to ten tons per day."

"My life depends on You, My God, not only for its beginning, but for its continuance and endurance."

COSMIC ADVENTURE

"Even as I tell You this, dear Lord, I stand on the edge of vastness and partake of a cosmic adventure. The great planet earth, upon which I stand, is hurtling through space thirteen times faster than a V-2 Rocket. We circle the sun at the incredible speed of over 65,000 miles per hour.

At the same time our earth spins round and round like a top at the rate of 1,000 miles per hour. And our solar system as a whole is catapulting towards the star Vega at 43,000 miles per hour. Our Milky Way Galaxy is running away from its neighboring galaxies at the overwhelming speed of 25,000 miles per second!"

"It is You, my God, Who balances our space ship in the sky, and guides its whirling course. You keep us from colliding head on with a flaming star that would end all life and leave of our civilization only a memory."

A GIFT TO PRAISE GOD

When you come to Mass, you come to praise God. To offer a gift that says, "I praise You, my God, for your goodness, and lovableness, and beauty. Last night I looked up and saw the heavens ablaze with stars, myriads with beating hearts of fire that eons cannot quench or tire, a million diamonds in the night glittering against a background of eternal time and gliding like motes athwart the overflow of splendor from immortal tides of light."

KEEPER OF THE GOLDEN GALAXIES

"O God, Creator of the starry silence, I love You for each beam of starlight you speed my way.

I love You, Architect of the stars, for every grain of these massive suns that whirl in magic through the vast regions of chaos and immensity. I love You, Keeper of the golden galaxies, for every curve of light that marks the distant orbits of these orbéd galleons of the sky."

"I love You for Yourself, because You are so good and worthy of all my love. The star-studded pages of heaven compose a tremendous book in which I read suggestions of Your uncreated beauty and loveliness. O God, Beauty ever ancient and ever new, Lord of the million scintillating stars, Whose power and majesty are written in flaming glory in every midnight sky, I love You as Mary loved You, when she looked up from the cottage door at Nazareth and saw your love letter written in the sky."

A GIFT TO SAY "THANK YOU"

When you come to Mass, you come to thank God. To offer a gift that says, "I thank You, my God, for my friends and relatives loyal and true. They are life's true riches, and have filled my life with golden years. I value their love and devotion second only to that I have for You, my God. The wonderful, noble and inspiring people I meet are so many mirrors reflecting Your uncreated goodness and loveliness."

CARGOES OF SUNSHINE

"Thanks for the clouds that bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers, and water to keep us alive. Thanks for our nearest day-time star, the sun, that sends us cargoes of glittering sunshine ninety-three million miles through space that we may have bread for breakfast, and sunbeams to make bright our day."

FIRE IN THE RUBY

"Thanks for my eyes, more amazing than any Kodak. From morning to night they snap pictures and relay them to my brain faster than any telephoto news service. I saw sunlight breaking in galaxies of diamonds against the surging sea giving it the beauty of sapphire and aquamarine. It was sunlight that tipped the flaming fire in the ruby, and turned the summer sky into an immensity of baffling blue, a dome of azure crystal, luminous as a jewel."

OPALESCENT WINE

"No man can gaze steadfast into the sun. Its blinding radiance is too overpowering for our weak eyes. But we catch reflections of its beauty in the blossoms of the hawthorne white as snow, pear petals thick as rich cream, and sweet williams and violets running through a gamut of blues and purples; lilies with flame colored corollas and red and

glowing cups where the sunlight seems turned to opalescent wine. All these mirror back the majesty of the sun."

UNCREATED SUN

"You, my God, are the uncreated Sun of the universe. Your beauty, Your power, Your loveliness illuminate all creatures, giving them whatever charm they possess. My God I thank You that I am Your friend. I thank You for giving me Your love and friendship. Without You, my God, we would be like dumb, driven cattle, and sheep that nourish a blind life within the brain. You are the beginning and end of life. From You I come, to You go. I thank You that each day brings me twenty-four hours closer to that great day when I shall see You, and love You, even as I am loved."

TAKEN FOR GRANTED

"I thank You, my God, for the million and one blessings You shower upon me, which I hardly notice. I thank You most of all for giving me Yourself."

A GIFT THAT ASKS FOR FAVORS

When you come to Mass, you come to petition God. To offer a gift that pleads, "Please, God, give us all the things we need for body and soul."

"Give us, O God, a country strong and free

where men of good will may ever worship in lofty cathedrals and simple parish churches.”

TRUE LOVE

“Give me the courage always to be true to my friends, and to seek their good always. True love seeks ever the good of another, and tries to obtain for loved ones the greatest and most perfect gift—the love and blessing of Almighty God. Take care of us all until we meet again in our fatherland where You have prepared many mansions for those Who love You.”

COTTON FIELDS

“Make blossom, O Lord, the cotton fields of the south, and prosper the sheep on the Wyoming mountainside, that we may have clothing warm and fine to protect us against the icy blasts of winter.”

LIGHTNING BOLTS

“Protect our homes against the dragon tail of the tornado, and keep jagged bolts of lightning from our roof tops. Keep us from withering in dust bowl area of drought, and keep scourges of disease and pestilence far from our land.”

IN THE NOONDAY SUN

“Give us, O Lord, strength of body, that we may walk erect in the light of the noonday sun, and nobleness of soul that we may walk worthy of the

vocation to which we are called, for we are a chosen generation, a kingly people, and followers of Christ, our elder Brother.”

A GIFT TO ASK PARDON

When you come to Mass, you come to ask God's pardon. To offer a gift that says, "I beg Your pardon, my God, and ask You to forgive me. Last night I made the evening miserable for the entire family. Supper, instead of being a benediction to the day, was the inauguration of hostilities. Meal time was like eating off a drum-head, and sitting on a keg of TNT. The fuse of my temper suddenly burned short, and I exploded like a hand grenade. Flying angry words cut like shrapnel, and wounded those for whom I should have only love."

FORGIVE ME

"Forgive me also O Lord for all the times I complained. When I hid my eyes to your gifts that surround me on all sides like the air I breath. I complained I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet. Now I ask You to forgive my blindness and stubbornness. I envied my successful neighbor, and complained of his good luck, forgetting that my life is but a weaving between You, my God, and my soul. Unfortunately, I see often only the seamy side of the fabric that is life."

WISDOM TO KNOW

“Grant me, O God, the serenity to accept things I cannot change, courage to change things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Help me be noble, and the nobleness that lies in other men, sleeping, but never dead, will rise in majesty to meet my own.”

BURNED OUT FOR THEE

“Help me so to live, that when I am dying, how glad I shall be that the lamp of my life has burned out for Thee.”

WHY ON SUNDAY?

“Why on Sunday do you come to holy Mass?”

To adore God, to praise Him, to thank Him, and to ask for favors, and for forgiveness of sins.

YOU

Remember always—YOU take an ACTIVE part in the Holy sacrifice of the Mass. Pope Pius XI said: “The faithful come to Church in order to derive piety from its chief source BY TAKING AN ACTIVE PART in the venerated mysteries.”

You, along with Christ and the ordained priest at the altar, take part in the great function of the Mass. You, all together, along with Christ, take an active part in the greatest Act on earth. You worship along with Christ, and with each other.

CO-OFFER

"The laity," says Archbishop M. J. Curley, "are as co-offerers with the great High Priest whose members they are. The faithful partake vitally in the Mass; they offer a real and true Sacrifice together with Christ, their Chief; they give glory to the Holy Trinity, united as they are with the Son of God, their Elder Brother."

Bishop Schlarmann of Peoria says: "All the faithful, inasmuch as they are true members of the true mystical body of Christ, have a share in His sacerdotal dignity. The Spirit of the Lord adores and prays in them in a manner so exalted and so worthy that St. Paul is at a loss to explain this intimate relation of the soul with its Creator."

YOU ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

Not to the clergy, but to the laity St. Paul addressed the exhortation: "Let us show ourselves as the ministers of God." And to the laity St. Peter exclaimed: "You are a royal priesthood."

YOU STAND WITH MARY

When you assist at Mass, you stand with Mary and John and Magdalene at the foot of the Cross. The Blood of Jesus is as truly offered at Mass as it was when Christ was nailed to the Cross. Only the infinite wisdom of God Himself could de-

wise a way of perpetuating the Sacrifice of the Cross.

MOST BEAUTIFUL

Father Faber, a convert and one of the Oxford men who came into the Church in Newman's day, said of the Mass that it is "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven."

Cardinal Wiseman, describing the Mass, says of its prayers and liturgy that "no human genius can hope to attain their beauty and sublimity."

THE GREATEST ACTION

We conclude with the words of Cardinal Newman: "To me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming as the Mass. It is not a mere form of words—it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth."

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Altars were built by primitive people—for the same purpose you should come to Mass on Sunday—to offer sacrifice.

WHAT IS A SACRIFICE?

WHY OFFER A GIFT TO GOD?

Man, be he ancient or modern, if he is intellectually honest, realizes he should:—

1. ADORE GOD as the SOURCE OF LIFE
2. PRAISE GOD for His PERFECTIONS.
3. THANK GOD for His GIFTS.
4. PETITION GOD for favors for the future, and ask pardon for the past.

HOW SHALL MAN PERFORM THESE FOUR OBLIGATIONS?

THE WAY OF MEN WITH MEN

Is to show $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{LOVE} \\ \text{PRAISE} \\ \text{GRATITUDE} \end{array} \right\}$ through GIFTS
and make PETITION

*THE WAY OF MEN WITH GOD—is similar,
i.e.*

to show { ADORATION
 { PRAISE
 { GRATITUDE } through GIFTS
and make PETITION

But the Gifts of the Ancients and Jews were im-
perfect, so

*CHRIST GAVE us the PERFECT GIFT—HIM-
SELF—in the MASS.*

*WHEN YOU COME TO MASS, you come to
GIVE A GIFT*

to manifest your { Adoration
 { Praise
 { Gratitude
 { Petition

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