

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

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The Mass is about being *made present* to the Sacrifice of the Cross

You have drawn near to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels in festal gathering, to the assembly of the first-born enrolled in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood which speaks more eloquently than that of Able.
Hebrews 12:22-24

In accord with the Scriptures, we believe that the earthly event of Jesus' sacrificial death, that happened 2000 years ago, *remains present* in eternity in a real and mysterious way before God the Father. Saint John sees this in his vision of Heaven:

*Between the throne (of God) and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...
Revelation 5:6-7*

In every celebration of the Mass, we on earth are lovingly permitted to become *present* to this sacrifice that remains always before God in eternity.

The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice, in the liturgy of the Church... (1362) In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real... (1363) The sacrifice Christ offered once and for all on the cross remains ever present... (1364) The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross... (1366)

The Mass is about *joining* Jesus in His Offering

We believe that this one *eternal offering* of one *eternal sacrifice* by one *eternal priest* is made present to us in the celebration of the Mass so that we might join Jesus in offering it before God. Jesus is the "Great High Priest". He alone has the right to offer sacrifice before

God. But the Bible tells us that Jesus has chosen to cleanse men and women of sin and join them to himself as members of his body:

The blood of his Son, Jesus, cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

If we acknowledge our sins, he who is just can be trusted

to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrong. 1 John 1:9

(Christ) gave himself up for (the Church) to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water by the power of the word, to present to himself a glorious church, holy and immaculate.

Ephesians 5:25-27

You, then, are the Body of Christ, every one of you is a member of it.
1 Corinthians 12:27

Do you not see that your bodies are members of Christ? ...

Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

1 Corinthians 6:15-17

In the Sacrifice of the Mass, we do not join Jesus as independent, autonomous co-officers of his sacrifice. It is out of gracious unmerited love, that Jesus has redeemed us, cleansed us of sin, and joined us to himself as members of his body. What Jesus does, he does as head of his body, the Church; and the members of his body, the Church, act "through him, with him, and in him".

Liturgy is an "action" of the *whole Christ (Christus totus)*... (1136)

It is the *whole community*, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates... (1140) The celebrating assembly is the community of the baptized who, "by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, that...they may offer spiritual sacrifices." This "common priesthood" is that of Christ the sole priest, in which all his members participate. (1141) The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him she herself is offered whole and entire.

She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men.

In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value. (1368) To the offering of Christ are united not only the members still here on earth, but also those already *in the glory of heaven*...(1370)