

## The Order of Mass

**Priest:** In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit [. . . *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . . (Matthew 28:19)*]

**People:** Amen. [*Let all the people say, Amen! (1 Chronicles 16:36)*]

### Greeting (3 forms)

*The priest expresses the presence of the Lord to the community.*

**A Priest:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. [*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (2 Corinthians 13:13)*]

**People:** And also with you. [*The Lord be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22)*]

**B Priest:** The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. [*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:2)*]

**People:** And also with you. [*The Lord be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22)*]

*OR:*

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. [*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . (1 Peter 1:3)*]

**C Priest:** The Lord be with you. [*The LORD be with you! (Ruth 2:4)*]

**People:** And also with you. [*The Lord be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22)*]

## Penitential Rite

### **Priest and People:**

I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault. *[Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:16)]*

In my thoughts and in my words, *[. . . do not be haughty . . . wise in your own estimation. (Romans 12:16)]* **and** *[The tongue . . . exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body . . . . (James 3:6)]*

in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do; *[So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, it is a sin. (James 4:17)]*

and I ask Blessed Mary *[Yes, from this day forward all generations shall call me blessed (Luke 1:48)].*

ever virgin *[Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)].*

all the angels and saints *[And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God (Revelation 8:3-4)].*

and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. *[Brothers, pray for us [too]. (1 Thessalonians 5:25)]*

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. *[If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing. (1 John 1:9)]*

**People:** Amen. *[Let all the people say, Amen! (1 Chronicles 16:36)]*

## Kyrie

**A** Lord, have mercy. *[Let us pray and beg our LORD to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance. (Tobit 8:4)]*

Christ, have mercy. *[. . . grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (1 Timothy 1:2)]*

Lord, have mercy. *[Let us pray and beg our LORD to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance. (Tobit 8:4)]*

**B** Lord, we have sinned against you. [*Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight--- . . . (Psalm 51:6)*]

**C** Lord, show us your mercy and love. [*Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy. (Daniel 3:42)*]

And grant us your salvation. [*Show us, O LORD, your kindness, and grant us your salvation. (Psalm 85:8)*]

## **Gloria**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. [*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests. (Luke 2:14)*]

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, [*Alleluia! The Lord has established his reign, [our] God, the almighty. (Revelation 19:6)*]

we worship you, [*Worship God. (Revelation 22:9)*]

we give you thanks, [*. . . giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. (Ephesians 5:20)*]

we praise you for your glory. [*Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 7:12)*]

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, [*Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son in truth and love. (2 John 3)*]

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; [*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)*]

you are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer. [*It is Christ (Jesus) who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34)*]

For you alone are the Holy One, [*I know who you are - the Holy One of God! (Luke 4:34)*]

you alone are the Lord, [*Who will not fear you, Lord, or glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you, . . . (Revelation 15:4)*]

you are the Most High, Jesus Christ, [*He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, . . . (Luke 1:32)*]

with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen. *[The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name --- . . . (John 14:26)]*

**[The Liturgy of the Word consists of four readings from Scripture: the first is typically from the Old Testament, the second a psalm, followed by a reading from one of the epistles. Finally, the Gospel is proclaimed during which the people stand out of respect for the Word.]**

**A homily on the readings follows** *[I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus . . . proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. (2 Tim 4:1-2)]*

**Intercessions.** *[I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, (Philippians 1:3-4)]*

## **Profession of Faith**

**Priest and People:** We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, *[ . . . God most High, the creator of heaven and earth. (Genesis 14:19)]*

of all that is seen and unseen. *[For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, . . . (Colossians 1:16)]*

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, *[Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)]*

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. *[ . . . who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being . . . (Hebrews 1:3)]*

Through him all things were made. *[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race. (John 1:1-4)]*

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: *[No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man. (John 3:13)]*

by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. *[When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)]*

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; *[Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:16)]*

he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; *[For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. [1 Corinthians 15:3-4]]*

he ascended into heaven *[As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. (Luke 24:51)]*

and is seated at the right hand of the Father. *[ . . . seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. (Colossians 3:1)]*

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, *[I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, (2 Timothy 4:1)]*

and his kingdom will have no end. *[ . . . and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:33)]*

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, *["It will come to pass in the last days, " God says, "that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. (Acts 2:17)]*

who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. *[And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always. (John 14:16)]*

He has spoken through the Prophets. *[Concerning this salvation, prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and investigated it, investigating the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them. (1 Peter 1:10-11)]*

We believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. . . . *so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. (Romans 12:5)]*

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. . . . *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; . . . (Acts 2:38)]*

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. *[For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. (Romans 6:5)]*

# Liturgy of the Eucharist

## Preparation of the Gifts

**Gifts brought to the altar** *[Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift (Matthew 5:23-24)]*  
**and** *[(Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the LORD of hosts: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure? (Malachi 3:10)]*

**Priest:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. *[For everyman, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 3:13)]* **and** *[Blessed may you be, O LORD, God of Israel our Father . . . For all in heaven and on earth is yours . . . (1 Chronicles 29:10-11)]*

It will become for us the bread of life. *[I am the bread of life; . . . (John 6:35)]*

**People:** Blessed be God for ever. *[Blessed be God! (Psalm 68:36)]*

**Priest:** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink. *[Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. " (Luke 22:17-18)]*

**People:** Blessed be God for ever. *[Blessed be God! (Psalm 68:36)]*

**Priest:** Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father. *[Therefore, we who are receiving the unshakable kingdom should have gratitude, with which we should offer worship pleasing to God in reverence and awe. (Hebrews 12:28)]*

**People:** May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his Church. *[He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me;... (Psalm 50:23)]*

## Eucharistic Prayers

**Priest:** The Lord be with you. *[The LORD be with you! (Ruth 2:4)]*

**People:** And also with you. *[The Lord be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22)]*

**Priest:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** We lift them up to the Lord. *[Let us reach out our hearts toward God in heaven! (Lamentations 3:41)]*

**Priest:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. [*. . . giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)*]

**People:** It is right to give him thanks and praise. [*We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . (Colossians 1:3)*]

### Preface

**Priest and People:** Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. [*"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! " they cried one to the other. "All the earth is filled with his glory! " (Isaiah 6:3)*]

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. [*Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! . . . Hosanna in the highest! (Mark 11:9-10)*] **and** [*I tell you, you will not see me until (the time comes when) you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (Luke 13:35)*] **and** [*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. (Psalm 118:26)*]

### **Eucharistic Prayer Two**

**Priest:** Lord, you are holy indeed, the fountain of all holiness. [*Therefore, O holy One, LORD of all holiness, preserve forever undefiled this house, which has been so recently purified. (2 Maccabees 14:36)*]

Let your spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. [*Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:53-56; 63)*]

Before he was given up to death, [*. . . he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)*]

a death he freely accepted, [*This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. (John 10: 17-18)*]

He took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take this all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you. When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said: Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me. [*While they were eating, he took*

*bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many." (Mark 14:22-25)]*

**Priest:** Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

**People:** Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory. *[Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life. (Hebrews 2:14-15)]*, -OR-

When we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory *[For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:26)]* –OR-

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again *[It is Christ (Jesus) who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us (Romans 8:34); And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be (John 14:3)]*

**Priest:** In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup. *[I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. (John 6:51)]*

We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit. *[Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. (1 Corinthians 10: 17)]*

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world; make us grow in love, together with N. our Pope, N. our bishop, and all the clergy.

Remember our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again: bring them and all the departed into the light of your presence. *[ . . . it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin. (2 Maccabees 12:45-46)]*

Have mercy on us all; make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles and with all the saints who have done your will throughout the ages.

May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ. [*. . . regarding . . . the afflictions you endure. This is evidence of the just judgment of God, so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God . . .* (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)]

Final Doxology (hymn of praise), which we should confirm with our acclamation "Amen" (So be it!). . . . "Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. AMEN." [*For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)*]

## Communion Rite

### The Lord's Prayer

**Parish & Priest:** Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [*"This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one"* (Matthew 6: 9-13)]

**Priest:** Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ. [*I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one (John 17:15)*]

**People:** For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever [*Didache 8:2*]

**Priest:** Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles; I leave you peace, my peace I give to you. [*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. (John 14:27)*]

Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. [*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13)*]

**Priest:** May the peace of the Lord be with you always! [*Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19)*]

**Parish:** And also with you! [*The Lord be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22)*]

## Fraction Rite

**People:** Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace. *[The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)]*

## Communion

**Priest:** This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. *[The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)]*

Happy are those who are called to his supper. *[ . . . Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:9)]*

**People:** Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed. *[Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof, only say the word and my servant will be healed. (Matthew 8:8)]*

## DISMISSAL (3 forms)

**Priest:** Blessed be the name of the Lord.

**People:** Now and forever. *[Blessed be the name of God forever and ever (Daniel 2:20)]*

**Priest:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**People:** Who made heaven and earth. *[Our help is the name of the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 124:8)]*

-OR-

**Priest:** May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *[As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. (Luke 24:51)]*

**Deacon/Priest:**

**A** Go in the peace of Christ. *[Your faith has saved you; go in peace. (Luke 7:50)]*

**B** The Mass is ended, go in peace. *[Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. (John 14:27)]*

**C** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. *[Serve now the LORD, your God, and his people Israel. (2 Chronicles 35:3)]*

**People:** Thanks be to God. *[Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15)]*

## 'An Ordinance Forever' - The Biblical Origins of the Mass

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**Issue:** What are the biblical origins of the Mass and the New Testament priesthood? Is the Mass really a sacrifice, or is it merely symbolic?

**Response:** The biblical origins of the Mass and the New Testament priesthood are rooted in the Old Testament. Both the Old and New Testaments provide clear evidence that the Mass is a true sacrifice, offered by a priest, and the Victim is the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ.

God stated three times that the Passover sacrifice would be “an ordinance for ever,” not for a temporary period, such as until the Messiah came. This sacrifice, and other Old Covenant sacrifices, find their culmination in Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary (Exodus 12:14, 17, 24; cf. Luke 22:7-20). Christ’s sacrifice at the Last Supper was a sacrifice of His Body and Blood, soul and divinity (cf. Catechism, nos. 1362-67, 1373-77). Much as the sacrifice offered at the Last Supper fulfilled the Old Covenant sacrifices, the priesthood of Christ—the priesthood of Melchizedek—replaced the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament. This New Testament priesthood, handed on to the apostles and their successors, allows Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary to fulfill the perpetual ordinance of a sacrifice through the celebration of the Mass (cf. Hebrews 6:19-7:28).

### **Prefiguring the Lamb of God**

God made a covenant with Abraham, swearing that all the nations (Gentiles) would bless themselves through his descendants (cf. Genesis 22:18). He designated Mount Moriah as the place where He would provide the sacrificial lamb, which was prefigured by the lamb that Abraham sacrificed that day (cf. Genesis 22:4-14). God the Father fulfilled the sacrificial provision in an ultimate way by offering His only-begotten Son (cf. Genesis 22:2; John 3:16), the Lamb of God (cf. Revelation 5:6).

Interestingly, Mount Moriah’s location, Salem, is another name for Zion or Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 76:2). In fact, Scripture identifies Mount Moriah as the site of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, the city in which Christ’s sacrificial death took place. Also, Melchizedek was the priest and king of Salem (cf. Genesis 14:18). Jesus, as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, is the definitive High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek; Jesus offers Himself as the sacrifice of salvation and the universal blessing through whom all the nations will bless themselves (cf. Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:17-26; Hebrews 6:19-7:28).

According to the terms of the Old Covenant, the Passover sacrifice has to be offered at the Temple in Jerusalem (cf. Deuteronomy 16:1-6; 2 Chronicles 35:1-19), a sacrifice that has not occurred since the Temple’s destruction in A.D. 70. One is left with two alternatives. First, one could state that Israel has failed to keep the covenant with God

recorded in Exodus 12. Yet if that is true, God is thereby implicated for failing to provide His People with the means to continue the ordinance that He told them to keep forever. Alternatively, one could state that the Temple sacrifice was destined by God to become obsolete and that, as the Lamb of God, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Passover sacrifice (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7). This is the teaching of the Church. Jesus prophesied the fall of the Temple (cf. Mt. 24:1-2), an event that happened in A.D. 70 shortly after the “desolating sacrilege” of the Temple (Matthew 24:15). In addition, while prophets accurately foretold that the Temple would be rebuilt after its destruction in 587 B.C., no subsequent biblical prophets prophesied the Temple’s restoration after Christ’s predicted destruction.

Attempts to rebuild the Temple have failed, most notably the effort of the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate in 362. He hoped to discredit Christ’s prophecy about the Temple. Violent earthquakes at the site killed many of his workmen. When miraculous balls of fire kept bursting forth from the Temple foundation to prevent the approach of workmen, Julian finally abandoned his attempt.[1]

The question remains: How does the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ continue as an ordinance forever? Just as the old Passover lamb freed the People of the Old Covenant from the bondage of slavery, the new Passover Lamb frees us from the slavery of sin (cf. Matthew 26:28). In accepting Saint John the Baptist’s designation of Jesus as the new Lamb of God (John 1:29-35), Jesus states clearly that He will be both sacrificed and eaten (cf. Luke 22:7-20; John 6:51-66), just as the old Passover lamb was both sacrificed and eaten (cf. Exodus 12:8-11). Unfortunately, most contemporary Protestants do not accept this biblically based teaching about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[2]

### **Transcending Time and Space**

The quick Protestant rejoinder to Catholic teaching on the Mass is that Christ died “once for all” (cf. Hebrews 9:26-28; 10:10), to which the Church would say, “Amen!” The Church has always taught that the one sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist (the Mass) are “one single sacrifice,” and that the Eucharistic Sacrifice “represents (makes present)” Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross (Catechism, nos. 1366-67, emphasis in original). How can this be? God the Son created time and space and therefore is not bound by them (cf. John 1:1-3). As eternal Being, Christ stands outside of time, and therefore all of history is simultaneously present to Him. We cannot fully grasp God’s omnipotence. Like the dogmas of the Trinity or Christ’s being both God and man, God’s omnipotence is beyond our capacity to understand, yet does not contradict reason. To argue that God is limited by time and space is necessarily to argue that God is not omnipotent, and therefore not God.

In short, then, God cannot create something, including time and space, that can limit Him. For example, because of God’s omnipotence, all of us, not just one of us, can be temples of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19). This demonstrates His ability to be beyond space, for the Holy Spirit is present in the souls of all believers: the saints who have died (cf. Revelation 6:9-11), as well as all the faithful who are living today. We can also speak of God’s ability to be present throughout time on earth and also outside of time in heaven. Relative to God, Who is eternal and unchanging, everything is present; relative to us human beings, everything we experience is bound by time and

space. Because the Son of God is eternal and transcends time, what He does as the God-Man in history can transcend time. Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary is thus once for all, yet never ending; it is timeless. Thus, when we re-present Christ's one sacrifice at Mass, God actually enables us to make ourselves present to this timeless offering. Analogously, we become "present" to the sun each morning. The sun basically stays put, while we change relative to the sun because of the earth's daily rotation.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice is foreshadowed by the prophet Malachi: "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 1:11). The Church sees these verses as a prophecy of the Sacrifice of the Mass, for what other truly pure sacrifice could there be that Christians can offer throughout the world every day?

The Mass's trans-historical nature is first illustrated when Christ offered His glorified Body and Blood at the Last Supper, the day before He actually died on the Cross (cf. Catechism, nos. 1337-40). It is illustrated thereafter in the Mass offered by His disciples. Saint Paul notes that Christ's sacrifice as the new Passover Lamb is once for all, but he also explains that its celebration somehow continues on in history: "For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Thus, the merits of Christ's sacrifice are applied to Christians throughout the centuries.

We speak of the Eucharist as an unbloody sacrifice. Christ is not killed at each Mass. If that were so, there would be many sacrifices, and Christ would not have died "once for all." Rather, the Council of Trent teaches that at each Mass "the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner" (as quoted in Catechism, no. 1367).

### **He's Got His Whole Self . . . in His Hands?**

Some people ask incredulously, "Could God hold Himself in His hands at the Last Supper? And how could He offer up a sacrifice the day before He actually died?" The short answer is that Jesus could because He can do all things (cf. Matthew 19:26), such as when He appeared to His disciples in the flesh miraculously after His Resurrection, despite locked doors. To answer these questions about the Last Supper adequately, we must examine the biblical and other historical evidence for the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist by analyzing whether God really offered His Body and Blood, soul and divinity at the Last Supper, and whether priests re-present the same sacrifice at every Mass.

Consider Jesus' words: "[H]e who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. . . . [H]e who eats this bread will live for ever" (John 6:54-56, 58).

Some Christians argue that Christ meant this statement figuratively, just as He did when He described Himself as the "vine" or the "door" (John 10:7-9; 15:1-5). However, "to eat

the body and drink the blood” of someone was an ancient Hebrew idiom that meant to slander a person. The Old Testament testifies to this figurative meaning: “When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall” (Psalm 27:2). A footnote in the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition confirms that “uttering slanders against me” in Hebrew literally means “to eat up my flesh.” If we then insert the figurative meaning in John 6:54, Jesus says that “he who slanders me has eternal life.” Such a figurative interpretation would make our divine Lord look very foolish.

While the Levitical priesthood prohibited the consumption of blood (cf. Leviticus 17:10-14; see also Gen. 9:1-4), Jesus came to do away with and yet fulfill this temporary discipline. Given that this Levitical prohibition and similar ones that were still in force when Christ preached on the Eucharist in Capernaum, one could understand the Jews’ disbelief and would therefore expect Christ to clarify Himself if He intended a figurative interpretation of His words. However, despite the ensuing departure of many of His followers (John 6:66), Jesus did not back down from His command to eat His Body and drink His Blood.

Like the Passover lambs before Him, Jesus would be both sacrificed and eaten. Whereas animal blood symbolized life and thus yielded imperfect atonement, Jesus freely offers us His Blood—indeed commands consumption (cf. John 6:54-55)—because His Blood provides us redemptive life and perfect atonement.

Saint Paul affirms Christ’s Real Presence during the sacrifice of the Mass (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-32). How can people “be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:27), and why are they getting sick and even dying, if they are merely consuming bread and wine? As Jesus teaches and Saint Paul affirms, the representation of this one offering—this “breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42)—was to continue in the Church. We partake of this one sacrifice in a sacramental manner, under the appearance of bread and wine, and in a way that does not diminish God, Who is infinite. Jesus not only fulfills Passover in Easter, but also makes it possible for the New Covenant of His sacrifice to be re-presented every day at Mass.

### **The Priesthood of Melchizedek**

Christ’s priesthood forever according to Melchizedek (cf. Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6) makes clear the connection between the Last Supper, Jesus’ Crucifixion, and the Mass. When Christ died on Calvary, “he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 5:9-10). While Christ suffered and died once for all, His sacrifice on Calvary is somehow connected with and continues forever according to a Melchizedekian offering or sacrifice: one using the elements of bread and wine (cf. Gen. 14:17-20). On the day before He died on the Cross, Jesus “pre-presented” His completed, glorified sacrifice under the appearances of bread and wine (cf. Luke 22:19-20) and thus manifested that He is not constrained by time (cf. Catechism, nos. 1337-40). Fulfilling Christ’s command to “[d]o this in remembrance of me” (Lk.22:19), the Church re-presents this same timeless offering of His Body and Blood under the appearances of bread and wine.

Indeed, as a faithful Priest Who continues to intercede for His People in Heaven after His death and Resurrection, Jesus must have something to offer. He does, and it can only be His one, definitive, and never-ending sacrifice (cf. Revelation 5:1-14), which He continues to offer forever as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek through His priests on earth (cf. Catechism, no. 1337). While Jesus does not need to re-present His sacrifice sacramentally to save us, He faithfully continues the Passover ordinance forever as His gift to us, reminding us daily of His great love and providing us with abundant graces to aid our journey to heaven. “When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ’s Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present. ‘As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which ‘Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed’ is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out” (Catechism, no. 1364, citations omitted).

Christ is the one mediator between God and man (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5), but He allows certain men to participate in His mediation, by exercising authority in general (cf. Matthew 28:18-20), granting forgiveness of sin (cf. John 20:21-23), and re-presenting His one sacrifice sacramentally (cf. Matthew 26:26-28). The Catholic Church is the new Israel, a spiritual house, and a holy priesthood (cf. 1 Peter 2:5). The Eucharist is disconcerting to some Christians, not only because it simultaneously shows God’s awesome omnipotence and humble condescension, but also because it reminds us that salvation is not a momentary, once and for all event, but a process that involves our saying yes to God each and every day. Salvation is by grace, but our free assent is needed for the gift of salvation to be efficacious in our lives.

Christ has perfected the Passover ordinance. He has torn down the barrier between God and man, enabling us to be reconciled to the Father and partake again of His divine nature (cf. Romans 5:15-17; 2 Peter 1:4). Heeding Christ’s command, we continue re-presenting and partaking of His sacrifice at every Mass. While “[t]his is a hard saying” (John 6:60), it is very much in keeping with salvation history, and not too remarkable for a God Who created us out of nothing and became man to save us from our sins. Our response to such an incredible gift should echo the words of Saint Peter, when Christ asked him if he also would leave Him: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:68-69).