

Series on the Mass, Part 1

September 1, 2019

Series on the Mass was first published in 2015 and is being repeated at the request of parishioners.

This series will go through the parts of the Traditional Latin Mass, explaining and commenting on them. The commentaries will be drawn from various sources and since the series will be given in short sections in the bulletin, a complete bibliography and footnote references will be very difficult; therefore, I list the primary ones here: *Introibo ad Altare Dei*, *Commentaire de l'Ordinaire de la Messe* written by the Monks of Notre Dame de Fontgombault in France 1992, *Calvary and the Mass* by Bishop Fulton Sheen 1936, *Your Mass and Your Life* by Richer-Marie Beaubien, OFM 1960, *Liber Sacramentorum, Notes Historiques et Liturgiques sur le Missel Romain* by Dom. I. Schuster, OSB 1925, *The Encyclical Mediator Dei et Hominum* of Pope Pius XII, 1947, and of course, the 1962 Missal. The intent in writing this is to help the faithful understand the various ceremonies better so they can participate with greater devotion at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Mass is first and foremost a Sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of Christ and the Church, the Head and members of the Mystical Body. The sacrifice of our Savior was not just the last hour dying on the Cross, rather it was His whole life which was directed to this Hour. Pope Pius XII gives this definition of the Mass in his Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, # 17:

No sooner, in fact, "is the Word made flesh" than he shows Himself to the world vested with a priestly office, making to the Eternal Father an act of submission which will continue uninterruptedly as long as He lives: "When He cometh into the world he saith . . . 'behold I come . . . to do Thy Will.'" This act He was to consummate admirably in the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross: "It is in this will we are sanctified by the oblation of the Body of Jesus Christ once." He plans His active life among men with no other purpose in view. As a child He is presented to the Lord in the Temple. To the Temple He returns as a grown boy, and often afterwards to instruct the people and to pray. He fasts for forty days before beginning His public ministry. His counsel and example summon all to prayer, daily and at night as well. As Teacher of the truth He "enlighteneth every man" to the end that mortals may duly acknowledge the immortal God, "not withdrawing unto perdition, but faithful to the saving of the soul." As Shepherd He watches over His flock, leads it to life-giving pasture, lays down a law that none shall wander from His side, off the straight path He has pointed out, and that all shall lead holy lives imbued with His spirit and moved by His active aid. At the Last Supper He celebrates a new Pasch with solemn rite and ceremonial, and provides for its continuance through the divine institution of the Eucharist. On the morrow, lifted up between heaven and earth, He offers the saving sacrifice of His life, and pours forth, as it were, from His pierced Heart the sacraments destined to impart the treasures of redemption to the souls of men. All this He does with but a single aim: the glory of His Father and man's ever greater sanctification.

Our Lord's whole life was one of renunciation and obedience which culminated at Calvary. Our life too should be one of obedience and renunciation, which for us will begin by the prayer of the Mass and then hopefully influence all the rest of our actions.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP
Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish