

-----  
To Help You At Mass--VI.  
(g. To the end of the Canon.)

From the Consecration until the priest's Communion, Christ is sacramentally present on the altar. He is there as both priest and sacrificial victim. What does that mean? By sin man withdrew (and withdraw) from God the absolute worship and obedience and love which are strictly owed to Him. This disastrous revolt we human beings, left to ourselves, could never possibly rectify. For this reason, the merciful Son of God took human nature, united it to His own divine nature, and God became man. This God-Man, Jesus Christ, as man, is able to offer to God a human worship; as God, His worship is worthy of the Eternal Father.

The perfect act of worship and obedience and love is the Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, consummated on Calvary, and repeated by him today many times "from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof" in every country of the world. Jesus Christ is in the Mass as He was during the Last Supper and on Calvary, both priest and victim. And we are co-offerers with Christ because united with Him through grace we join in all His actions, even when He is Offerer and Offered in the Mass. Hence when we offer the Mass with Christ we offer an Irresistible Gift to God, One that perfectly pleases and satisfies the Heavenly Father. What power, then in participating in the Mass! If we had been close to Christ in the Upper Room or on Calvary we would not have united ourselves more closely to divine power and mercy than we do by offering Mass.

In the first prayer after the Consecration, the priest in his own name and in that of all the people formally offers to God's majesty, in memorial of the death and resurrection and glorification of His Son, "what Thou Thyself hast given and granted--a Sacrifice that is pure, that is holy, that is undefiled--the holy Bread of eternal life, and the Chalice of life everlasting." He begs God to receive these as of old He accepted the gifts of Abel and the sacrifice of Abraham and the unblemished offering of the high priest, Melchisideck. "Bid them be carried by the hands of Thy Holy Angel to Thine Altar on high, to be in the sight of Thy divine Majesty, that everyone who, by participating in this Altar, shall have received the most holy Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled full of every heavenly grace and blessing." Note that in this prayer the Church swoops back over the whole stretch of history and links Calvary with the first sacrifice offered by Abel and with that of Abraham, who stands for the entire Chosen People, and with the sacrifice of Melchisideck who, the Scriptures seem to say, derived knowledge of the One God in some mysterious manner apart from revelation. Note, too, that in this prayer, the Sacrifice of the Mass seems to need to be "carried up" to God for His acceptance. Here again, of course, we the imperfect ones, co-offerers with Christ, make the prayer for acceptance necessary.

At this point, in a prayer for all the Departed, the priest pauses momentarily and we should call into the Mass for special remembrance those Souls in Purgatory who are most dear to us. The priest then prays for fellowship in Heaven with the holy apostles and martyrs and with many saints, among them the glorious noblewoman Perpetua, whose anguish was less for martyrdom than for the fate of her little babe and her servant-maid, Felicitas, who became a mother only two days before they were scourged, gored by beasts, and beheaded; and Agnes, off whose little wrists even the tiniest handcuffs slipped, and Cecilia, whose name had been sweet music down the ages. The priest continues: "Through Christ Our Lord, through Whom O Lord, Thou ever dost create, and sanctify, and vivify, and bless all these good things, and to us dost give them--through Him, and with Him, and in Him, there comes to Thee, God, Father Almighty, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen." Through the power of Our Lord bread and wine are "brought to life" in the Eucharist; through Him they bear to us rich blessings; through our Eucharistic God or render all glory to God in the Mass.

PRAYERS: (deceased: mother of Rev. Joseph Tschantz. Ill, small daughter of Art Canty.