

# YOUR MASS—YOUR LIFE

There are many pamphlets. This is different. It should be read by **EVERYONE**. Why? Because it concerns everyone. Yes, and concerns everyone more nearly than any other event or person or thing. You scarcely believe this? You will cease to doubt if you read this pamphlet. And here is a hint of the scope of it. The maker of a machine can tell how it should work to run smoothly; only the Maker of men can tell how men should act to live happily. But one action towers mountain-like above the rest. Do not merely learn it from this precious pamphlet; do it—it is man's greatest **ACTION**.

## LOVE OF THE MASS

In common with all Catholics, you assist at Mass on Sunday. It is a grave obligation, imposed upon you by the Church.

But many Catholics assist at Mass solely because they are obliged to do so. They have no love for the Mass, because they do not understand it; and if they do not understand it, it is because **THEY DO NOT LIVE IT**.

Instead of **LIVING THEIR MASS**, they look upon it as an exterior religious rite which remains outside their own lives and at which they assist purely passively.

If you wish—as you do wish—to be a true Catholic and an Apostle, it is absolutely necessary that you should learn to love the Mass; and, in order to love it, you must understand it and unite it to your own life.

We love only such things as are our own, into which we put a **PART OF OURSELVES**. You will love the Mass in as far as it becomes “your Mass, in the degree in which you celebrate it with the priest and *put your own life into it*; in the degree also in which *you put it into your life*.”

“**YOUR LIFE IN YOUR MASS**,” and “**YOUR MASS IN YOUR LIFE**”—such is the complete formula of the union which should exist between your Mass and your daily life; this is the idea which the following pages will attempt to explain and to help you to realize.

## AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MASS

Let us first recall to mind the doctrine of the Mass.

*The Mass recalls to mind and makes us live over again two outstanding facts in the life of Christ: the LAST SUPPER and the CROSS.*

It is evident that the Mass recalls what took place at the **LAST SUPPER**, for at the Consecration the priest repeats the words and actions of Jesus Christ on the night of Holy Thursday.

It is a little more difficult to understand that the Mass recalls what took place on **CALVARY** that first Good Friday.

On the Cross Our Lord really shed His Blood for us; in the Mass there is no real shedding of His Blood; on the Cross, Jesus Christ, at the same time as He shed His Blood for us to the last drop, offered to God the Father the Sufferings and Death which He endured for us. And in the Mass He offers anew to God His Father, through the Ministry of His priests, the same Sufferings and Death He offered on Calvary by His own personal act.

There is, however, in the Mass, something more than there was at the Last Supper or on Calvary. Upon the Altar, it is no longer Jesus Christ alone Who offers Himself to His Father.

**JESUS CHRIST UPON THE ALTAR IS OFFERED** to God not only by Himself, not only by the celebrating priest, but also **BY ALL THOSE WHO ASSIST AT THE MASS**.

Moreover, the priest and **ALL THOSE WHO ASSIST AT THE MASS OFFER THEMSELVES TO GOD** with Jesus. With Jesus Christ, they offer to God the Father their joys, their sufferings and the whole of their lives.

## HAD YOU UNDERSTOOD THIS?

Did you know this? Had you, at any rate, thought about it sufficiently?

Did you know that each time a Catholic assists at Mass, he himself presents to God the Life, the Sufferings, the Death,

of his Redeemer—the Redeemer Himself? Did you know that each time a Catholic assists at Mass he should himself offer to God, with the Sufferings, Life and Death of Jesus Christ, his own sufferings, his daily toil, his efforts, his whole life and his acceptance of death whenever God shall call him?

Had you understood that the Mass is a very different thing from a spectacle at which one looks on?

Had you understood that the MASS is a DRAMA, a drama in which you, possibly, have more of a part to play than the Apostles at the Last Supper and at the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

Had you understood that the Mass is a drama in which you have to take a part, and that, during Mass, you must not merely look on, but must do something, must pray from your heart, must act. That at Mass you are not an onlooker, but an ACTOR (in the literal sense of the word)—i.e., someone who, in this drama, has really and truly a part to play?

### **THE MASS AND YOU**

This shows at once the bond which exists between the Mass and your own life:

On the Cross, Jesus Christ alone offered Himself.

In the Mass there is you also. You first of all offer to God Jesus Christ Himself, and you ought to offer yourself to God with Him in a practical way; you ought to offer your daily work, your week's difficulties, your efforts, your sufferings, your sorrows and your joys—in a word, your whole life.

But the Mass is not merely a half-hour set aside each Sunday to offer to God the death of His Son, and to offer yourself with His Son to God the Father.

The Mass must enter into your life, just as your life must enter into "your" Mass.

The half-hour given up to assisting at Mass must make its influence felt not only on the whole of your Sunday, but on your entire week.

### **I WAS THERE**

If you were present at an important event would you not be considerably influenced by it?

Would you not think of it the following days? You would say: "I was there" to all those who spoke to you about it.

If you had taken part in the event, your recollections and emotions would be greatly intensified; for instance, if you yourself had brought help in an accident, such as a big fire. Think of those who went through a war: "I was there!" they say.

What an increase in self-confidence comes to you with the remembrance of services rendered, of the drama in which you played a part. What a guarantee of courage and confidence for the future!

Well, not only do you come to Mass in order to assist at a drama, an event of prodigious and divine importance, but *you are in that event, you take part in it*, as you will see even better presently.

Does not this prayer of Jesus Christ upon the Cross, continued upon the Altar, this Gift of His Life, which He offers His Father once again for us, merit our attention?

Surely the least that we can do is to remember it, to think of it during the week. Especially as we know that Jesus Christ has associated us with this prayer, and that this Gift was not offered by Him Alone, but by us with Him.

### **THE MASS AND YOUR DAILY LIFE**

If the Mass is so important, if you are so intimately concerned in it, if it expresses your recognition of God's right to your service, does not even one Mass a week carry with it, as far as regards you, a whole series of grave responsibilities?

During the week can you, who have assisted at Mass, who have taken part in it and who will return to Mass again next Sunday, commit such and such an action? Utter such and such words? Read such and such a book?

Can you speak, act, think like those who never assist at Mass, who have never taken any part in Christ's own Prayer?

If you were merely an onlooker at Mass, you might be excused for being badly prepared and for forgetting during the rest of the week the unfamiliar ceremony which you had simply watched.

But if you consider that you are *an Actor* in a drama with which you have been so intimately associated, is it still possible for you to treat it so lightly?

Your Sunday Mass must, therefore, influence and direct your life during the whole week.

Your whole week must, as it were, “centre round your Mass. Your Mass must be the Sun which lights up and transforms the week. It must be its crowning point, its climax, the most wonderful and the most beautiful of all its actions.

Your Sunday Mass ought to raise you in your own esteem; it ought to bind you as it were by imposing on you certain duties and forbidding you certain faults. -

It ought to help you to become a more convinced Catholic and a more generous Apostle.

### THE LITURGICAL “ACTION”

The Mass is verily an ACTION, a palpable event, an exterior reality, in which you ought to participate and collaborate.

It unfolds itself little by little, like a drama in which the actors are Jesus Christ and you, and, with you all those who are assisting at the Mass, while the priest takes the place both of the One and of the others. For the priest represents both you and Jesus Christ.

Moreover, is not the Mass “acted” upon the Altar, as a drama is acted upon the stage?

The Altar is raised, like a stage, so that each one can see and understand what is going on before his eyes.

Around the Altar, as on a stage, are there not personages, some of whom are visible (the priest, the server and you) whilst the other, the Chief Personage, is invisible— Our Lord Jesus Christ?

The priest who represents you is going to speak; he is going to act. He has a genuine role to play, a role which he “lives” intensely, with his whole soul, while at the same time he accomplishes certain external rites.

You must act that role with him.

Follow him with your eyes. You should try to say the same prayers which he says. You may not be able to say the same words, but you can try to have the same thoughts, the same sentiments towards God, which are expressed in the prayers he is reading at the altar.

You understand then that in order to “assist” well at Mass, you should choose a place from which you can see the priest and the altar.

The better to follow the prayers said by the priest, it is highly desirable to have a missal or a good prayer-book, with the prayers at Mass” well set out, clear, etc.

### A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

Of what elements is the Mass composed—the Mass at which you want to assist, either by watching what is going on at the Altar or by following in your book, and which you are going to celebrate with the priest?

*Like a stage drama*, it is made up of several “acts.” We can distinguish four principal ones:

1.—From the beginning to the Creed inclusively; that is known as the *Pre-Mass* or Mass of the Catechumens, because it was formerly the only part of the Mass at which the Catechumens were allowed to assist.

It is made up of prayers and passages from the Scriptures. Compared with the three other parts of the Mass it is obviously the least important.

11.—From the end of the Creed to the Sanctus is what is known as the *Offertory*; the priest offers up the bread and wine, which are going to become the Body and Blood of Christ, and he offers to God at the same time his own life and that of all the faithful, yours, too, therefore.

111.—From the Sanctus to the Pater is the *Consecration*. This is the moment when Jesus Christ Himself comes down upon the Altar; it is the most important part of the Mass.

IV.—From the Pater to the end of the Mass is the *Communion*; in the mind of the Church, in order to assist really well at Mass one should receive Holy Communion.

## 1.—THE PRE-MASS

### *Forgiveness and Prayers*

Just now, at the beginning of Mass, did you carefully watch the actions of the priest? After putting the chalice on the Altar, he did not remain at the Altar. He came down to the bottom of the steps. He invited the server (who speaks in your name here, as throughout the Mass) to join with him in calling upon the mercy of God. Together they recited the verses, so full of humility and trust, of the Psalm, “Judica me.” Then one after the other, they recited the Confiteor. The server said it both for himself and for you. He asked forgiveness of God in your name.

*And what about you? For what did you ask forgiveness? Did you remember the faults (perhaps serious ones) you had committed during the week and for which you needed forgiveness?*

*At this part of the Mass, make your examination of conscience as a Catholic and as an Apostle for the whole week which has just gone by (for there is no such thing as a Catholicism which is not apostolic).*

Have you observed your rule of life?

Have your religious exercises been really a means of nourishing your interior life?

What have you done for Our Lord during all this last week?

What sort of an apostolate have you exercised around you since last Sunday?

After the Introit, Kyrie and Gloria, the priest in your name recommends to God in the *Collects* all the needs of the Church in general and *your* needs in particular. Try to understand these great-hearted, wide and “catholic” demands which are to be found in the *Collects* of the Mass, especially of the Sunday Mass.

At this moment, remember to pray for the Church, the cause of Catholicism throughout the whole world, for the spread of Catholic Action.

Ask Our Lord *to bless your apostolate as a convinced Catholic.*

### *Instruction and Belief*

Before dying and redeeming the world, in the years between Bethlehem and Calvary, Jesus Christ spoke and preached. We must listen and learn, we must study His divine life.

The aim of the Gospel and Epistle is to give us once again the teaching of Jesus Christ, to instruct us, to set us face to face with His Doctrine and His Person.

*You who are a Catholic and who ought to make Jesus Christ known and loved by those about you, should study His Doctrine as set forth in His Gospel. Ask yourself if you read and meditate the Gospel sufficiently.*

Reinvigorated by these divine lessons, you can now, in the Creed, proclaim your Faith. *Does it occur to you that all the articles of Creed ought to have an influence upon your life?* Does it occur to you that, through you, the Faith you proclaim should bit by bit bring Light and Happiness to your indifferent or unbelieving fellow-men?

## 11.—THE OFFERTORY

### *The Drop of Water*

The priest, and you yourself at the same time as the priest, have prepared your heart and mind.

What are you going to do now?

You are going to do exactly the same thing as Our Lord at the Last Supper on the night of Holy Thursday.

Our Lord then took bread and wine and offered them to His Father. The priest takes bread from the little gilt plate known as the Paten.

He takes wine, too, and puts it into the chalice.

Have you noticed that the priest now mixes a drop of water with the wine in the chalice?

*That drop of water represents your life, which is added to the offering of Christ’s life.*

This fusion of the drop of water and the wine of the chalice is a figure of the union which exists between mankind and Jesus

Christ, Redeemer of mankind. *It is a figure of the Union which exists between you, a baptized Catholic now assisting at Mass, and the Soul of your divine Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.*

Meditate the symbolism of that drop of water. Mixed with the wine, it will presently, like the wine itself, become the Blood of Jesus Christ.

*So, too, the offering of your life—your daily work with its efforts and rewards, your family life, your sorrows, your joys, your apostolate, your service, your suffering and pain—the offering of all that will be sanctified and will acquire a new value in the eyes of God by virtue of its union with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice will give a supernatural value to yours.*

In a certain sense, your life will become the Life of Jesus Christ: your joys, your efforts, your sufferings will be the Joys, the Efforts, the Sufferings of Jesus Christ. Think of that, live these sublime truths and *you will love your Mass*, and every week, at the Offertory of the Sunday Mass, *you will cast into Christ your whole entire life*, with the little drop of water, and that Life will become wholly divine.

Go a step further. *As far as in you lies, offer and throw into the chalice, the life and efforts of all your fellow-men, believers and unbelievers, so that, if possible, their lives also may become divine.*

For during the Mass, you should never forget the immense multitude of men, women and children who live, work, suffer, and die without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Think of all those whose work is painful, and of those others whose enforced idleness, as a result of unemployment, is even more so. Think of the wretched inhabitants of the slums, of the sick and the orphans. Think of the nations torn, even at this hour, by pillage, war and famine.

*Try to realize in your mind for one instant the universal suffering of humanity, the daily wear and tear of human lives, the tortures that countless thousands of human beings endure in their bodies, in their hearts, in their souls.*

And what do these fellow-men of yours, redeemed like you by Jesus Christ, do with *their* sufferings? What do they see in them except useless cruelty of hideous fatality. They know not that suffering is a treasure, or they refuse to acknowledge it as such. They waste the sufferings of life, or they increase them by seeking only honours, riches and pleasure.

By offering it to God with the sufferings of Christ you can help to give this wasted suffering a supernatural value; you can help to make it more conducive to the glory of God, and to the spiritual benefit of your fellow-men.

*Offer to God the lives and sufferings of all those who do not offer them, in order that they may be united to those of Christ, Who suffered and died for them.*

### ***The Offering of Your Life***

After having offered up the chalice for “the salvation of the whole world” and particularly for your fellow-Christians, do not forget to repeat slowly and from the bottom of your heart the prayer which is the expression of this offering of your whole life and of all human lives, the prayer which, in Latin, begins with these words:

“In spiritu humilitatis,” a prayer one might paraphrase thus: *After having offered You the bread and wine which are about to become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves to You, O God our Father. (An offering signified by the drop of water mixed with the wine.) We offer You our entire life; work, joys, sufferings, efforts. We ask You mercifully to accept this offering of our daily life and we beseech of You to make that life divine by uniting it to the Life of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.”*

As though to remind you that the Mass is not only his Mass but YOUR Mass (and that you are an ACTOR in the sacred drama), the priest now turns round and says aloud: “Orate Fratres”; “*Pray, my brethren, that my sacrifice which is also YOURS may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty.*”

Next comes the *Preface*, a hymn of Glory addressed to God, during which, in your own name and in that of all mankind, you can unite your voice to all the myriad voices of creation which sing the praises of the Trinity and especially those of your Creator and your Redeemer.

“Yes, it is truly worthy and just, reasonably and salutary to render You thanks, O Lord, at all times and in all places.”

While reading these words of the Preface have you ever thought that what they mean is this: “I thank You, O my God, for the life You have given me; thank You for all the beauties of Nature, with its flowers, its mountains, its sun; thank You for the gift of the Faith, for Your presence in my soul through grace; thank You for letting me know You, for letting me love You, thank You for all You have done with me and for me”?

## 111.—THE CONSECRATION

### *Universal Prayer*

The bell now rings, as though to call your attention to the *most important part of the Mass, which is beginning, the Canon*. The congregation kneels. This is the moment of *the truly Catholic and universal prayer* for the whole Church, which stretches from San Francisco to Tokyo passing by London, Berlin, Moscow.

Do you think at this moment of praying for all your Catholic brethren dotted about among all the nations of the world? Are you proud of feeling yourself united to the immense family of Catholics over the whole earth? Do you think of praying for the Pope, who has the overwhelming responsibility of guiding the destinies of the Universal Church?

Do you think of praying for your Bishop and priest, for the priest who is actually celebrating Mass in front of you, with you?

And, on the other hand, do you remember that the priest is praying for you? That *all the 350,000 priests*, roughly, who have celebrated Mass today prayed for you when they recommended to God “all those who profess the same true Faith”?

*At this part of the Mass have a truly Catholic heart*, a heart as wide as the world, a heart in which all the needs of suffering humanity find an echo.

But you need not forget those in whom you have a special interest. For this is the moment *to pray for your parents* and those with whom you are in daily contact; your family, your friends, your benefactors and neighbours, the poor whom you know, etc., etc.

Pray for all those whom you love. Pray also for those you love less (or perhaps not at all).

Pray for your enemies; those whom you know and those whom you don't know.

But there are, above all, *two great intentions* that you must not forget at this point in the Mass.

The first is YOURSELF. What are you going to ask for yourself? Have you foreseen this prayer during the week? When, on Sunday morning, you come to Mass, to “YOUR” Mass, do you know what is your greatest need in God's eyes? It is strength to resist a certain temptation, or grace to pray better, to understand better the Christian ideal!

The second intention should be *for all those who come within the radius of your influence*; all the souls who look to the example set them by you.

Pray for those whose daily lives mingle with your own; your comrades or companions at school, office, workshop or factory; employees or workmen, whose “boss” perhaps you are; the children God has entrusted to you, etc. Pray for them all at this part of the Mass.

Pray also for all non-Catholics and pagans, to obtain for them the happiness of the true Faith. And, lastly, *pray for your own apostolate*. Try to acquire a sense of what Christian zeal really is. Ask yourself if your own apostolic zeal is not too closely confined to your own family, to your “set” or, at most, to your parish. *Or have you really understood that a Catholic ought to interest himself in, and share in, the Catholic life of his diocese, of his country, nay of the whole wide world?*

### *Real Presence*

We are drawing near the CONSECRATION.

Once again the priest is going to make the same gestures, speak the same words and accomplish the same Mystery as Jesus Christ on Holy Thursday.

*You are now at the heart of the Mass*. This is the great moment of the Holy Sacrifice, *of the Offering whereby Christ is presented to God as a sacrificed victim, and to men as the food of their souls*.

At this supreme moment, Jesus Christ is going to offer His daily toil, the sorrows of His Heart, the Martyrdom of His Agony and Death. He is going to offer up these Sufferings of His, which He endured, not from motives of ambition, as most men endure suffering, not in a spirit of revolt or self-pity, but *so that the Infinite Merits attached to His sufferings might make up for the stupendous sum of human suffering which is wasted, desecrated and lost.*

*Jesus Christ is going to be upon the Altar as He was once upon the Cross, not, however, to suffer and to die, but to offer His Sufferings and Death, as He offered them on Calvary, to offer them as a ransom, a compensation in God's sight, for all the good left undone by men, and for all the crimes committed by them.*

But if Jesus Christ comes upon the Altar to offer Himself for all mankind, *He comes first and specially for you* who are assisting at Mass, *who are offering Him with His priest and who are offering yourself with Him.* Think of it! He is going to come! He is going to be really and truly present upon the Altar. Oh! renew your act of Faith!

The Host which, a moment ago, was merely something, a little bread, *is going to become Someone, JESUS CHRIST.* Yours. Think of it! It is the greatest event in the whole wide world in which you can participate. For you do not merely "assist" at this event. *You participate in it; you are mingled with it. You collaborate in it.*

What a privilege! But, also, what grave consequences such a collaboration entails, and how it should affect your whole week, nay, your whole life!

You who have seen, who have desired with the priest this Transformation of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, *do you not wish to CONSECRATE YOUR OWN LIFE, TOO, by transforming a life which is purely natural into one which is truly supernatural?* Do you not wish to make "divine" what in your life is too human, too mediocre and too petty?

Under the appearances of bread and wine Jesus Christ is there. *He abides in you, too. He lives in your soul, if it is in a state of grace, as truly as in the consecrated Bread, though in a different manner.* He hides Himself in you as in the Host.

*Oh! Let Him be seen in you!* Let Him be recognized in your life and conduct. Bring Him to others by your words, your example, your charity, even as the priest, by and by, will carry the Consecrated Bread to those who hunger for it.

Now that Jesus Christ is truly present before his eyes, the priest is going to make several signs of the Cross, which recall the instrument upon which the Sacred Body was nailed and the Precious Blood poured out. He is also going to make several genuflections to express his adoration.

Pray hard during these few moments, when Jesus Christ is really present upon the Altar. *They go so quickly, these precious moments.*

Our Lord reminds His Heavenly Father that He has offered, and still offers daily, His Life, His Death, all His Love, and His unceasing Prayer for you.

As at the Offertory, *see what you have to give.* What efforts in your life as a Catholic united to Jesus Christ? What sacrifices? What guarantee of progress have you to offer Him?

At the end of the Canon, the priest will ask God to find in Jesus Christ all the honour and glory due to His Infinite Majesty. And what about you? *Does your life give honour and glory to God? Can He be proud to call you His child? Are you really and truly His Apostle? What more would you like to do for Him hence-forward?*

### ***Memento of the Dead***

During the moments which follow the Consecration, the priest prays also *for all the faithful departed* of the great family of mankind. Think at this moment of your own dead, those of your family and those of the human race; think of the countless millions who have died in war, of those who have died in accidents, or on the glorious battlefields of labours devotedness, and apostleship (sailors, miners, doctors, missionaries, nuns, etc.).

Once again remember the 350,000 Masses celebrated every day in which prayers are offered for every soul in a state of grace now expiating its sins in Purgatory.

Pray for those of your acquaintances who are going to die this year. Pray for the 140,000 who die every day, especially for those who are going to die unexpectedly, pray for the guiltiest and the most forsaken among those who will be called

today.

*By Him, with Him, in Him. . .*

May all honour and glory be rendered to God the Father BY Christ, WITH Christ, IN Christ.

At this moment, which is the crowning point of the Mass, when Christ offers Himself really and truly to His Father, does it occur to you to remember that nothing in your life is of any value unless it renders homage and glory to God?

Your daily efforts, your joys and sorrows, your anxieties, your failures, and, above all, the duties of your state; professional work or domestic cares; studying all day long, sitting on an office stool doing accounts, sawing planks, mining coal, surveying, dusting, doing the washing, bringing up children, running a business, being a lawyer, a teacher, a doctor, an officer, a nun, or receiving guests in a drawing-room—all these ought to give glory and honour to God BY Christ, WITH Christ, IN Christ (for it is only by Him, with Him, in Him that we are one mystical body).

Do you really believe this?

And are you going to continue simply *enduring* your existence—especially if your duties are largely of a mechanical nature—when all you do can and ought to give honour and glory to God the Father?

This is the moment to think over this fact *deeply* so as to live it all day long.

#### IV.—COMMUNION

##### *Pater Noster*

The priest is going to say aloud the most perfect of all prayers, the prayer taught us by Jesus Christ Himself. You know it by heart. Say it with him, your eyes turned upon the Host. Apply the various requests of the Pater (Our Father) to your own life as a Catholic and an Apostle.

‘Thy Will be done.’ *By whom? By you.* Each one of us must realize God’s plan for him or her. *Are you doing so?* You know very well what God’s Will is for you. Your conscience, your different advisers, your parents, your teachers (if you are still young) all help you to know it. *Are you doing that Will of God?*

Ask for the daily bread which is denied to so many unemployed; for many of the latter are unable to find relief anywhere. Remember the law of God: “Thou shalt earn thy bread by labour, by the sweat of thy brow”; where will that bread come from, in the case of those who can find no work? *Ask God also for spiritual bread, the grace which helps us to accept the sufferings of Life.*

##### *Communion*

The priest breaks the Host.

A fragment of the large Host of the Mass is now put into the chalice. This fragment is made of the same wheat as that of the small Host which so many Catholics have received today or are going to receive at this Mass. It is made of the same wheat as that of the Host which is destined for you if you are going to receive Holy Communion.

*Is not that a figure of the union which exists between all brethren of Jesus Christ, between all those whom He invites to this Divine banquet, in which He gives Himself to them as food?*

Why, then, should you keep away from this Gift of God, this food of which your soul has need? *Remember that union with Jesus Christ in the Mass is really consummated only in the case of those who receive Holy Communion.*

The reason is clear. In order to be able to live your Mass during the week, or during the day; in order to make your life, in a certain sense, “divine,” to be able to help your fellow-men, you must “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*” And this is, above all the fruit of Holy Communion.

To receive Holy Communion is *to put on the mind*, the dispositions of Christ Himself, *His spirit of self-sacrifice and His Love of God and man.*

Receive Holy Communion every Sunday, unless some serious obstacle presents itself, and even Oftener, *every day if you possibly can.* Many of those who do not go to Communion every Sunday would do so if they understood its importance in their daily lives.

Do you need Jesus Christ? Do you not wish to confide to Him all that is in your heart, your joys, your sorrows, your apostolate? Do you not wish to tell Him that you love Him and that you count on Him to bless your efforts? Your week would be so much more fruitful, so much better, with Him in your heart. What hinders you from going to Communion?

*You think you are not worthy?* That is exactly why you ought to receive Holy Communion. *Communion is not a reward, it is a Strength.* It is a sacred and strengthening nourishment for the soul which one does not take for its taste or as a recompense, but in order to have life, and to have strength to offer to God one's everyday life in union with Jesus Christ.

Communion is not a dessert, a sort of "extra"; it is the life-giving Bread by which Jesus Christ wishes to increase His own Divine Life within your soul, where He really and truly dwells.

*"But I am not prepared,"* perhaps you say, *"I don't know how to prepare myself."*

You don't know how to prepare yourself?

But you have just been an "Actor" in the Mass. You have celebrated It with the priest at the Altar and you need some other preparation? What can you wish for, what more magnificent or perfect preparation for Holy Communion can you desire than the prayers of the Mass said with attention and devotion?

*The priest himself says no others. Jesus Christ said no others* when He gave His Body and Blood to His Disciples for the first time.

In the "Our Father" you asked for bread, the spiritual bread without which the soul can no more live than the body can without material bread.

*You asked for It, and now that the priest, that Jesus Christ Himself, offers It to you, presents It to you, invites you to receive It, you refuse It, you remain in your place and seem to despise It.*

However, if, for reasons independent of your will, you cannot receive Sacramental Communion, *make at least a spiritual Communion*, have an ardent desire to receive Our Lord and talk to Him as though He were sacramentally in your heart.

*Unite yourself to all those who have received Him, and who will receive Him in the course of the day, in your parish, in your country, in the whole world.*

Will they be many? Yes! But, alas, many more will keep away, through ignorance, weakness, indifference or contempt. *Implore Our Blessed Lord to increase the number of those who wish to receive Him in Holy Communion and to give Him love for love.*

### ***Thanksgiving***

After Communion, even if you yourself have not received Our Lord during the last moments of the Mass, it *remains for you to give thanks, to "make your thanksgiving."*

Thank Jesus Christ for having given Himself to you in Holy Communion, or, at any rate, for having offered Himself for you in the Mass. Thank Him for having offered your life to His Heavenly Father at the same time as He offered His own.

Repeat with Him the prayer you said at the Offertory: *"Accept, O Lord Jesus Christ, my life, my joys, and sorrows of the week, my daily work and my apostolate, in union with Your Life, Your Joys and Sorrows, Your Work and Your Apostolate."*

Ask His help for the Catholic Action you must exercise around you. Pray specially for any soul to whom you want to do good. Pray for all your fellow-men, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

### **LAST PRAYERS: LAST RESOLUTIONS**

The Mass is drawing to an end. The priest gives you his blessing. A last time with him, you proclaim, in the last Gospel, your faith in Jesus Christ, in 'His Incarnation and Redemption. Remind yourself that Jesus Christ did not come on earth in vain. His death has been offered to save you and all mankind.

The Mass is over

Has your assistance at it been in vain? Has it been a wasted half-hour? Or *are you coming away better, more closely united to Jesus Christ, having better understood how, and how much, He loves you, and how much you ought to love Him in return?*

*Will you be a better Catholic, a more ardent apostle, never discouraged in spite of difficulties, but always full of faith and trust, because you know that every Sunday you will find Jesus Christ once again in ‘YOUR’ MASS?*

Will you do something more for God after having assisted at Mass? Will you keep the memory of this Mass alive in your heart?

Will you have the courage to show that those who go to Mass and who live their Mass, seek sincerely and humbly to be different from the others?

“Different from the others!”—alas! how rare and how difficult that is! All the same, will you try generously with the grace you get from the union of your life and your Mass?

*Will you try to make Jesus Christ known to your fellow men?*

*They suffer because they do not know Him! It is you who must carry Jesus Christ to others!*

*And thanks to your Sunday Mass, which will give you Jesus Christ once again, you will be for others the LIGHT which guides the TRUTH which liberates and the LIFE which redeems!*

## NOTES

In the early centuries of Christianity, Catechumens was the name given to believers who were being prepared for Baptism, and in the mission-fields this is still the name given to adults under instruction.

On the Altar, the Host, which becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine, which becomes His Blood, are separated, as His Body and Blood were separated on Calvary after His Death.

The word Canon (from a Greek word meaning law or rule) indicates the most important and unvarying portion of the Mass. The prayers which make up the Canon have not changed for nearly eighteen centuries. Think of the millions of priests who have repeated them throughout such a number of years.

In these days, when social and International activities are everywhere so much talked about, is it not good to realize this universal fraternity? “It is Christmas Night, in a chapel belonging to the Church of the Franciscan Fathers at Bethlehem. The pilgrims are crowding in and kneel on the steps of the Altar. Mingled with the Easterners are men from Western Europe, Germans, Americans, Dutchmen. Indescribable realization of the brotherhood of mankind seizes me. My heart expands and seems to melt in the fathomless Heart of Christ. One place is still unoccupied: eagerly I slip into it; I kneel with my fellow-men and like them I await the visit of the Eucharist.” The foregoing Lines were written by Louis Bertrand, of the Academie Francaise (M. Regaux: “A la decouverte du monde social”).

Nihil obstat:

F. MOYNIHAN,  
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur

✠ D. MANNIX

Archiepiscopus Melbournensis.

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