

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to John (John 6:51)

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Brought in spirit to the foot of the Cross on Calvary

Holy Mass puts us into the presence of the Last Supper. The Last Supper is the first Mass which is consummated on the holy Cross of Calvary on the first Good Friday. This was the evening before the day when Jesus was crucified on Calvary. He knew all along what would happen. The agony, the pain, the rejection, the betrayal, the shame, the abandonment. This would be the last meal with His apostles before His crucifixion. How did Jesus feel? *And He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer (Luke 22:15).* It is amazing. Jesus looked eagerly towards this meal with ardent desire even though His cruel death was just outside the door. To the very end, Jesus harbored no concern for His safety, His comfort, or anything of Himself. All He could think of is how close redemption is for His beloved people and the significant things He would institute in this first Mass. At the Last Supper, Jesus gives us the priesthood, the Holy Mass, the Blessed Sacrament of Real Presence and redemption consummated on Calvary - all priceless gifts that only God can give. Do we express our gratitude and thank Him always?

Holy Mass puts us into the presence at the foot of the Cross on Calvary. In Mass the supreme Sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary is re-presented to God the Father. Thus, Mass is the highest form of prayer of our Mother Church. Through faith, our spirits are brought to the foot of the Cross on Calvary. Our attitudes and behavior at Mass should reflect this mystery of our faith. We have to take the effort to free ourselves of distraction so as to participate in Christ's Sacrifice worthily. Is there any other event in our daily life that holds more love, more sacrifice, total self-giving than the Holy Mass? Though we see no blood shed during Holy Mass, the supreme Sacrifice of Jesus is re-offered to the Heavenly Father under the species of consecrated bread and wine, and Jesus relives His Passion on the Cross.

Holy Mass puts us into union with the entire and whole Christ in Holy Communion. In Mass we are fed with God's Word and the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist received in Holy Communion is Jesus Himself – Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity – the whole Christ. This teaching is at the crux of our Catholic faith. It is a teaching from the lips of the Master Himself. ***I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* (John 6:51).** To receive Almighty God into our heart, we have to be in a state of grace. St Paul gives stern warning that those who do not receive Holy Communion worthily accord condemnation to their souls (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). *There is nothing so great, my children, as the Eucharist! Put all the good works in the world against one good Communion; they will be like a grain of dust beside a mountain - St John Vianney, The Little Catechism of the Cure of Ars, Chapter 13.* Yes, receiving Jesus with ardent love, total devotion and greatest reverence and desire into our heart is greater than many good acts of charity because Jesus is no ordinary guest!

Holy Mass bestows upon us anew Christ's last command to His apostles. Every follower of Christ has a special mission calling irrespective of each life situation. Before Jesus ascended into heaven He said: *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).* This last command of the Lord before His ascension is directed afresh at each of us through the priest. Thus, instructed by God's Word, nourished, fortified and sanctified by the Holy Eucharist, each Catholic receives again the commission of Christ to bring God's Kingdom to every heart that does not belong to Christ. It is a sharing of His divine mission. It is a sharing of Christ's priesthood, Christ's kingship, Christ's prophethood.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, through my presence at Holy Mass I offer to our Heavenly Father in union with You my worship in spirit and truth. This is my highest form of worship to God. During holy Mass, through faith and desire my spirit is brought to the foot of the Cross on Calvary. Your Sacrifice becomes my own personal sacrifice to God as I unite my heart, my mind, my life, all of myself to You on the holy Cross of Calvary. Attending Holy Mass is the most solemn moment of my daily life. Help me to attend Mass worthily so that through the holy Mass I may be given all the graces I need in order to become more like You and thus, be made worthy of the glorious eternal inheritance that our Heavenly Father has prepared for me. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.