

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 26:26-28*)

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to His disciples said, "Take and eat; this is My Body." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is My Blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – The most beautiful words ever uttered in the whole Universe

The Last Supper - the first Holy Mass. What were the feelings of Christ at the Last Supper? He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). Jesus not only "desired" but "eagerly desired" to eat this meal with His apostles. This was the night when He would suffer the humiliation of being betrayed by one of His own apostles. This was the night when He would suffer the indignity of being arrested by a crowd comprising none other than chief priests, elders and temple guards who came for Him as if against a robber, with swords and clubs (cf. Luke 22:52). This was the night when Peter whom Jesus made head of His Church would deny Him three times in public. In store for Him was so much humiliation and heartbreak but all Jesus could think of was giving His all for each and every one of us. *Lord, let my desire to receive You in Holy Communion match Your desire to give me Yourself in the sacred species.*

The institution of the ministerial priesthood. " ..do this in memory of Me" (Luke 22:19). The ministerial priesthood was instituted by Jesus as a gift for us so that the Supreme Sacrifice can be perpetuated in order to dispense the graces He merited for us through His life, passion, death and resurrection. Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the primary source of grace for Catholics. In Mass, the priest acts "in persona Christi" i.e. in the person of Christ; the priest is not a mere instrument of Christ but let Christ take over him. At the altar the priest must decrease and Christ must increase. It is as if the priest no longer exists. At Mass, the priest and the congregation must not be full of themselves but full of the Lord. All attention must be on the Lord who must be at the central focus of the Mass. Thus, we come to Mass not to be religiously entertained but to worship God and to be part of the Supreme Sacrifice Jesus attained for us on Calvary. The awe of this most solemn act must accompany everyone at Mass so that we can return to God all the reverence and adoration due to Him alone. It is instructive to remind ourselves that attending holy Mass is like standing at the feet of the Cross on Calvary on which Christ was crucified.

God is still speaking His tender words of love to us (cf. Matthew 26:26-28). God does not change. He is still speaking to us the same words of love uttered by Jesus Himself at the last Supper. Only this time, it is through His ordained priests who are acting in persona Christi. Although the other prayers of the Mass may vary slightly, the words of Consecration during Holy Mass are the same throughout the Catholic world as they are the very words of Jesus Himself at the Last Supper. Do I listen attentively to the words of the Consecration, hearing it as from the lips of Christ, allowing my heart to be transformed by the power of His grace at that beautiful, solemn moment when all knees are bent in adoration? Thus, in ancient Tradition, we go to church to "hear" Mass. To hear with the heart and be transformed by the most beautiful words ever uttered in the whole universe. In the same Tradition, priests "say" Mass, uttering the most beautiful words ever uttered in the whole of universe.

Exercising our common baptismal priesthood as laity. Through Baptism we share in the life of Christ as priest, prophet and king. Thus, our community is a priestly one. *But you are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, so that you may announce the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).* The priests of the Old Testament era offered imperfect sacrifices to God in atonement for the sins of the people. Priests of the New Testament era after the time of Christ offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, a perfect Sacrifice, to the Eternal Father for the salvation of all sinners. Exercising our baptismal priesthood, through faith and power of God's grace, we can bring to the altar and consecrate to God the souls of every one that we pray for and all sinners who are in need of salvation, during Mass.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, thank You for the gifts of the Sacrifice of Holy Mass and our beloved priests. Through Mass, Your once and for all Supreme Sacrifice on Calvary is perpetuated till everyone is safe in our eternal home with our Heavenly Father. It is my Sacrifice to the Heavenly Father too as I unite myself to the bread and wine at the Offertory. Give me the graces I need in order to enter into the Spirit of sacrifice so that in union with You in Your Supreme Sacrifice on Calvary I may worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise, You Jesus.