

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (*Luke 22:19-20*)

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My Body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My Blood, which is poured out for you. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Am I a True Worshipper?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship (Romans 12:1). Jesus through His complete acceptance of the eternal Divine Will made a perfect and totally conscious sacrifice to God for our sakes – perfect because He was without sin; totally conscious because He exercised His free will to embrace God's will that He should die to save mankind. In the same way we are called to walk in the footsteps of Christ to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice in a conscious way in union with Christ's supreme Sacrifice on Calvary presented again to God through the Holy Mass, the Eucharist Celebration. In this way we worship God in Spirit and in truth. *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks (John 4:23).*

The essence of a true sacrifice. *He emptied Himself... (Philippians 2:7). His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and His form marred beyond human likeness... (Isaiah 52:14).* A sacrifice is the giving up of something we own which is precious and is offered without expecting anything back in return. It is different from a gift and is made with deeper love and commitment. In a sacrificial rite, the offering is usually destroyed e.g. burnt, to signify the total surrender of the item being sacrificed. Thus in the days of the Old Testament the animal sacrifices to God were burnt after the sacrifice is made.

Symbols of the offering of our whole lives: bread and wine. Bread and wine are common food items that everyone in a civilised society can relate to. Bread which has most nutrients to sustain physical life is a natural symbol of our physical life. Wine which once imbibed can affect the spirit and feelings is a natural symbol of our psychological and spiritual selves. As we symbolically unite our selves to the bread and wine offered during the Eucharist celebration, just as the bread and wine become transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, we too are transformed according to the measure of our desire to be transformed and our faith level.

Calling ourselves into full consciousness. We cannot offer something of ourselves that we are not conscious of. As we grow in the maturity of our worship and love for God, there is a growing motivation not to withhold anything from God but to offer Him all the aspects of our life especially those aspects that are in darkness e.g. a sinful ingrained habit, a vice, a part of our life that we cannot accept, etc. The personal theme of the sacrifice could be the offering up of some personal suffering or trials or a particular dark aspect of our personal life. This could go on with every Mass participated till the personal theme of the sacrifice becomes the development of virtues and zeal for the Lord as we offer up our self-love, pride and egoism. Thus a full and sincere participation in the Eucharistic Celebration brings us into a deeper awareness of ourselves and a transformation into a more fulfilled life through the power of the Eucharist.

Transformation and Renewal. The beautiful aspect of the Holy Mass is that transformation can happen from the very start when we open our hearts to praise God in the entrance hymn. In the Sacrifice of Praise we let go of our selfish nature and enter into the world of God through praising Him, making ourselves fully aware of His divine attributes and His goodness and making a concrete affirmation of them by exercising our tongues and vocal cords. Our spirit is uplifted and our heart open to the graces that God wants so much for us to receive. Transformation continues into the Liturgy of Word during which the Word of God is proclaimed. The Word of God is supposed to do what it says (cf. Isaiah 55:11) as the presence of the Spirit is in it (cf. John 6:63). How transformed I am by the Word of God depends on whether I want to be transformed by it and my faith level.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for the wondrous gift of the Eucharist in which I can participate in sincere worship in Spirit and Truth to our Heavenly Father. Help me understand that to enter fully into the spirit of the Holy Mass I need to open my heart and surrender myself in union with Your Supreme Sacrifice to our Heavenly Father. Lord, You set an example for me to follow in which You emptied Yourself and is obedient even to death on the Cross. Through the sincere participation in Holy Mass may I be transformed to the fullest potential that God planned for me. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, intercede for me. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.