

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 11, 2026

Brothers and sisters, when we love something, be it sports, hobbies, another person, et cetera, we sacrifice our time to learn about it, to be with it, and to share with others. How many parents have learned a new hobby because their children love something. Like, for instance, raising rabbits. The love we have others, it overflows from us and out of us and we like the enthusiasm and energy, and we want to share with everyone, especially those we love. And this is supremely true when we love the Mass. The goodness, the truth, the beauty of the Mass captivates us, and we are overfilled with enthusiasm, excitement, and energy and desire to share this with all we love. More importantly, we don't want them just to raise rabbits, we want them to be here with us praying and celebrating and loving God. Archbishop Sheen, Blessed Sheen commented that “If we get nothing out of the Mass, it's because we have made no sacrifice, and no effort to understand what the Mass is.”

Today, we are continuing our discussion on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with the hope that we can bring more out of our worship with active participation, which is not merely attending the Mass. It is entering into the Mystery being celebrated.

Now importantly, some believe that if they are not the priest celebrant, an altar server, a musician, a lector, one of the ushers, or any other job, then their job at the Mass is to passively sit by and watch it go on. Perhaps this is why some are willing to no longer attend a Mass in person; they just watch it on TV. And if I am the spectator, then I can be a spectator at home in a comfortable pew, shaped like a couch. Perhaps.

On the other side are those who become so preoccupied with the job that they are doing, they have missed what Christ is doing through his Church and what's going on. We get hung up on the details and can't see the forest for the trees. And so, to clarify, the priest celebrates the Mass, all the rest assist him including those sitting in the pews.

Another struggle can come from the thoughts that distract us from actively participating in the Mass. Now, some become preoccupied by how often or how others receive Holy Communion. And it's different than the way I believe, right? We have that battle in our Church - one is them and one of us. And the them's are against us, the vice versa. We can get so worried about what's going on in other people and what they are doing, we are missing what is going on.

Some become preoccupied with our focus on the music, or the type of music or who's singing. Or if Father will continue to sing the songs that I want to sing. Or this little liturgical practice or that liturgical practice. Or which way the priest is facing. I heard people say the priest has his back to us. Interestingly, the same people don't say anything about the parishioners sitting there in front of them. They have their backs to them, too. Moreover, there's seems to be little concern that the priest has his back to the Tabernacle. If we're focusing on what people are doing instead of what Christ is doing, we are missing why you're here. Still others become distracted during the sign of peace treating it as a social moment making sure everybody else is saying hi to you, rather than preparing to turn to the altar of God. It is simple acknowledgement. "Peace be with you" to those around us. We are here for the one on the altar, united, yes,

and here is our hope. Brothers and sisters, these things can pull attention away from the purpose of the Mass and what's going on.

Again, the priest celebrates the Mass. All the rest are called to assist him by uniting ourselves to Christ for His sacrifice. But note, active participation is not about what you or I are doing. Well, not what you or me individually are doing. It is not what Christ is doing to his visible body, the Church. It is not in the central action of the Mass, which is Eucharistic sacrifice. It is not merely about performing roles, like singing or responding. They do enhance the Mass, and they are important. Assisting at Mass is about actively entering into the mystery of Christ's sacrifice. This is what we are called to do in the same manner. Singing, responding, and bringing our witness to help us to actively participate in the Mass.

Today in the Gospel we hear about a king addressing a man who was not wearing a wedding garment. And we know that this is pointing to the end times and the wedding Feast of the Lamb. And those lacking proper attire are cast into darkness to eternal punishment. It reminds us to keep our souls clean, the Baptismal garment that we receive, to keep that white, to the Sacrament of the Church.

Now, this parable also highlights God's impartially creating for all those who are called – Jews and Gentile alike. It reminds us that the Lord rewards and punishes us on the basis of one's successes or rejection of his call in obedience to his Commandments. I'm reminded of Frank Sinatra's theme song. "I did it my way". That way will not get us to heaven, by the way.

The man without the wedding garment attended the feast, but he did not truly enter into it. And in like manner, it's possible to attend the

Mass without actively entering into it; without actively participating in it. We can't become spectators, and we're not meant to. God did not call people just to have the pews filled. He wanted them to be a part of his feast for his son.

We concede that there is a work for each one of us to come to worship God with a clean heart and properly prepared and this is going to help us with our active participation. Our first step is to come to the Mass, to come to the Church, ten to fifteen minutes before Mass starts - you can still sit in the back. Come ten, fifteen minutes before and in silent prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to help us know our sins and then unite them to Christ on the Cross. Thus, united with Jesus, we are prepared to participate in that penitential rite that comes early on in this sacrifice. And during the penitential rite we ask for God's mercy and forgiveness for our specific sins. We are bringing those to him and acknowledging that we need his help. In general confession, through the action of the priest, our lesser sins are forgiven. However, this penitential rite does not replace the need for Sacramental Confession which is required for all grave offenses before we can worthily receive Holy Communion. One of the most common grave sins is missing Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation because of our own fault. That's the First Commandment.

Next, during the Liturgy, we worthily participate by paying attention to sacred scripture to which God is speaking to us. And we ask the Holy Spirit to make present the Word of God for us. And in the pews, there is a missal to help us focus on Word of God, we can pick it up. We can read them along, and in this way, our eyes and our ears can participate, too. The high point culminates in the readings of the

Gospel, which tells us of the life, mystery, and preaching of Jesus Christ.

Now, while the Liturgy of the Word plainly calls for close attention, the whole liturgy, which is the whole Mass, communicates God's trust, and love to those who actively participate. This includes homily. There is the notion that one must memorize the homily. I don't know where this came from because I have not seen anything in the Church teachings that require it. I invite you to consider this: Ask the Holy Spirit to help us learn what He wants us to know and pray to Holy Spirit: "Teach me what you want to know, help me understand what you're trying to say." Not every word in the homily was meant for everybody in the pew. So, what does God want us to know today to grow in holiness and ask the Holy Spirit for that.

Thus, set by the words instructed in the homily, we are ready to participate in the sacrifice of the Mass. That is the liturgy of the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, when the Lord was looking forward to Calvary, he institutes the Holy Eucharist. The Cross would not be a distinct sacrifice. It would not be an entirely different oblation, but a new presence of the same sacrifice of Christ. The Last Supper was the unbloodied presentation of Jesus' sacrifice under the appearance of bread and wine. And this is what our Lord told his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

And this is what the Holy Mother Church does at each Mass. We further participate in the Mass when at the offering, we unite our good words and persecutions, to the bread and wine. After the priest offers to pray. You know, our beginning where he holds it up.

"Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness

we have received this bread we offer you.” Now if the music is playing during the offertory, you might not hear that, but you can see the priest elevating. So, after he said that, he places on the bread back on the corporal and we unite ourselves with the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Then after that, you bring forward the wine. “Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have this wine to offer you, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.” Then we say in our hearts and minds, “Lord, I offer you all the persecutions I've had to endure for preaching the Gospel, for living the faith - for my guests being upset, I left them while I went to Mass, or whatever. “ We laid that in the challenge with Christ and offered it up. Then, at the Consecration, we unite our body and blood to Christ. After the priest says the words of God's creation, in our mind and our hearts we say to Jesus, “This is my body given up for you, Lord, give to yourself a little teeny spec, dropping an even smaller grain of rice onto the patten.” And after the chalice, “This is my blood. I give it to you, Lord, I unite it to you, for your sacrifice, and see yourselves pour a little bit into the chalice, hearts and minds elevated to God.” You want to do this united sacrifice, his mystical body. We are offering ourselves with Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the priest is not praying by himself while the congregation watches. Nor is the priest performing for an audience. No, the priest celebrates the Mass in the person of Christ the head and the faithful assist him praying with him. When the priest prayed, we are praying with him. When the priest offers a sacrifice, we offer ourselves with him, in him. When the priest speaks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, we unite our hearts to that same prayer. In the Mass we follow Christ to the Cross and united to Jesus,

we give the Father the gift of our life, our fiat, our being to be done according to your will, our obedience, even unto death. The Mass is the sign of our love, uniting the love of Christ in offering ourselves with your own Son, to the Father, for the salvation of others.

The mystical body of Christ is offered in the Mass, and we are part of that if you choose to. After giving worship to God, to unite ourselves to sacrifice of Christ, we are then ready to be reverently and worthily receive Holy Communion, which will discuss more next week.

Today, we hear about the king inviting the guests to the wedding feast. Christ invites us to the wedding feast of the Lamb, to the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The question then is not simply whether we will attend, it is whether we will truly participate in Christ's sacrificial offering. The Mass is essential worship of the Catholic faith, and the Eucharist is essential to the worship of the Mass. We go to Mass to give worship to God with all our heart, our soul, our mind, all our strength, because we love him above all things.

Brothers and sisters, that nobler the gift, the nobler we are to become to receive it. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is the noble participation in the one true sacrifice of Christ.

More to come next week. God loves you and so do I.