

7. The Sacrifice of the Mass leads us to Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful, sad and longing prayers ever said was the prayer of Azariah as he, Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace because they were faithful to the Covenant. They were among the many Jews who had been deported as slaves to Babylon where King Nebuchadnezzar ruled.

Azariah in his prayer acknowledged God's justice, confessing that Israel had strayed from the Covenant which had been established by Moses.

Oh! Do not abandon us for ever,
For the sake of your name;
do not repudiate your covenant,
do not withdraw your favour from us,
Lord, now we are the least of all nations,
now we are despised throughout the world,
We have at this time no leader, no prophet, no prince,
no offering, no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense,
no place where we can offer you the first fruits
and win your favour.
But may the contrite soul, the humbled spirit be as acceptable to you
as holocausts of rams and bullocks,
as thousands of fattened lambs:
such let our sacrifice be to you today,
And now we put our whole heart into following you,
into fearing you and seeking your face once more.

Israel had been devastated by King Nebuchadnezzar's attacks and the temple in Jerusalem had been plundered and destroyed. The young Jewish men who would not break faith with God by worshipping false gods were to be burned alive as punishment. God intervened and the white hot heat of the furnace did no damage to them. When they realized that God's Angel was protecting them in the heart of the furnace, and that they were unharmed, all three in unison began to sing, glorifying and blessing God;
May you be blessed, Lord, God of our ancestors,
be praised and extolled forever.(Daniel: 3)

The Prayer of Praise of God from the heart of the furnace is an outburst of sheer joy. Mary's prayer when she visited her cousin Elizabeth was also an exclamation of great joy at the marvellous works of God. 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, because He has regarded his lowly servant-----.
Mary's prayer is acceptable to God since it is the prayer of the humble heart. (Luke 1: 46-55)

Over and over we read in the Bible that God wants us to come to Him with humble and contrite hearts. When we fail Him and are unfaithful it is our pride and deceitfulness that has led us astray.

That is why the Lord Yahweh says this:

See how I lay in Zion

a stone of witness,

a precious cornerstone, a foundation stone:

The believer shall not stumble.

And I will make justice the measure,

integrity the plumb-line.(Isaiah 28: 16-17)

Jesus is the cornerstone, rejected by the builders, yet still the cornerstone. Jesus taught that the heart of the law is integrity and justice. (Luke 20: 17-18) He came to give sight to the blind, liberty to captives, and to set the downtrodden free. (Luke 4: 18-19)

He gathered twelve apostles around him and taught them about the Kingdom of Heaven, about love of God and love of neighbour. The people who lived in darkness were seeing a great light as Isaiah had foretold. Jesus healed people from every type of infirmity, even raising the dead to life, as he did with his friend Lazarus, who had been dead for three days.

Jesus put the following question to his disciples. It is a question which we too must answer if we are to be his followers.

'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'

And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?'

Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.'

Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So now I say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loose in heaven.' Then he gave strict orders to the disciples to tell no-one that he was the Christ.

(Matthew 16: 13-20)

Before Jesus began his public ministry, he prayed and fasted for forty days in the desert. Jesus prayed all the time and he told us to pray all the time as well. When, at baptism we become members of the Church, we are truly entering a lifetime of prayer. The Catholic faith is centred on prayer.

'With God on our side who can be against us?...Nothing therefore can come between

us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. ...For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus Our Lord.' (Romans 8: 31-39)

The highest form of worship within our faith is the Liturgy of the Mass. All the other forms of worship: devotions, novenas, adoration, benediction, stations of the cross and rosaries, are prayers of the community of faith, which lead the people into a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. God's house is a house of prayer. The serious business of the church is to tend to all the needs of the soul. The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, calls each one to a life of holiness, a life of conversation with God and conversion of heart.

'When Moses set up the Tent of Meeting in the desert, a cloud covered the Tent and the glory of God filled the tabernacle. At every stage of their journey, whenever the cloud rose from the tabernacle the sons of Israel would resume their march. The cloud of Yahweh rested on the tabernacle by day, and a fire shone within the cloud by night, for all the house of Israel to see.' (Exodus 40: 34-38)

Our Churches are our 'Tents of Meeting'. We have in our tabernacles the Real Presence of Christ, body, blood, soul, and divinity. Within our faith we celebrate the feast of the Passover every time Mass is said. Our Paschal Lamb is Christ Himself offered up to redeem the world.

The Blessed Eucharist is not only a Sacrifice but also a Spiritual Banquet. Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament, nourishes us spiritually, as we journey through life with all its challenges. Union with Christ in the Eucharist will lead us home to Him, just as the Israelites were led by God in their time in the desert, before they reached the Promised Land.

'Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavily burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11)

We are truly blessed by God, since He has promised to be with us until the end of time. We should pray when we can in front of the tabernacle, where Jesus remains present for everyone. Here in front of the tabernacle, we can tell Jesus our needs, so that we receive comfort and strength from Him. Remember to thank Him for all the good that He has done for us.

Act of Adoration

We adore You, Most Holy Lord, Jesus Christ, here and in all the churches of the world, and we bless you because by Your holy Cross You have redeemed the world. Have mercy on us. (St. Francis of Assisi)

Prayer for today's needs

Lord for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray;
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin, just for today.
Let me both diligently work and duly pray;
Let me be kind in word and deed, just for today.
Let me be slow to do my will, prompt to obey;
help me to mortify my flesh, just for today.
Let me no wrong or idle word unthinking say;
set a seal upon my lips, just for today.
Let me be faithful to Your grace, just for today.
And if today my tide of life should ebb away,
give me Your Sacraments divine, sweet Lord, today.
So for tomorrow and its needs, I do not pray;
but keep me, guide me, love me, Lord, just for today
(Sister M. Xavier, S.N.D.)

Invocations

Praise and adoration ever more be given to the most Holy Sacrament.

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine! All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!

**The Jesus Prayer.
Lord Jesus Christ
Son of the Living God,
be merciful to me, a sinner.**

Perpetual Adoration

The Blessed Eucharist can be placed in a monstrance and placed on the main altar or in a small side chapel, for the purpose of adoration. Some churches find that a few hours per week or one or two days each week can be maintained as Hours of Adoration for the faithful who wish to attend and pray.

A list of all those wishing to take part in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is drawn up. If the Adoration is Perpetual then there must be enough people to cover 24 hours every day of the week. Each person keeps the same block of time for their watch with Our Lord, and extra people are kept on the list as substitutes in the event that anyone can not do their chosen time.

There is a great deal of responsibility needed by those who wish to pray before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, since they are responsible for the Monstrance and the Eucharist while they are there. Also, they must not leave until the next person

arrives. Some way of contacting the person in charge of the Adoration program must be worked out beforehand, so that good communication is maintained especially during times when a person is ill and cannot keep their appointed vigil. There should also be a meeting of all those wishing to take part in Eucharist Adoration so that everyone understands their duty when they are given their time slot.

There is usually very little problem with those who wish to pray for one hour or more each week as they are probably already good faithful people who can be depended on.

The vigil and adoration of the faithful is seen by Catholics as a means of focusing the mind and heart on Our Lord. It is a beautiful way of conversing with Him about everything in our lives, and the life of the faithful who ask for prayers. Adoration is also a way for us to spend the one hour with Jesus that His Apostles could not spend, when He suffered His agony in the garden.

"So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test." (Matthew 26: 40-42)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, whether for a few hours each week or longer brings great blessings to the Parish, since love and understanding of the Real Presence of Our Lord grows among the faithful.

Adoration brings us to greater reverence and love for Our Lord in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Reading the Scriptures, praying, conversing silently or simply keeping Our Lord company are ways the faithful spend their time during Adoration.

The Eucharist: the Heart of the Catholic Faith.

The Catholic Mass, an act of worship to God the Father, makes real the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, telling His Apostles to do this in His memory until He returns in glory. The Catholic Mass which is a recounting of the Old and New Covenants is our chief means of sanctification and preparation for Heaven. We are following Jesus' instructions in the Mass when He told His Apostles to do this in memory of Him.

The Passover Meal, which we call the Last Supper was the annual celebration and memorial of the freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. All Jewish people followed God's instructions given to Moses to celebrate the Passover of the Angel, who brought the final plague to Egypt, and as a result, the freeing of the slaves by the Pharaoh.

Jesus introduced new words to the holy meal, when He took the unleavened bread and said,

"Take this and eat, this is my body which will be given up for you." At the end of the meal he took the cup. He gave the cup to his disciples, and said, "Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant. It will be shed for you and for many so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me."

The Eucharist is the fulfillment of God's promise to us that He would be our God and we would be His people. Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God offers Himself as the only Victim who can redeem Mankind. His blood shed for us protects our soul from eternal death, frees us from the slavery of sin, and leads us to our promised land of eternal life in heaven.

***Whoever believes in me
believes not in me
but in the one who sent me,
and whoever sees me,
sees the one who sent me.
I have come into the world as light,
to prevent anyone who believes in me
from staying in the dark any more.
If anyone hears my words
and does not keep them faithfully,
it is not I who shall judge such a person,
since I have come not to judge the world,
but to save the world:
anyone who rejects me
and refuses my words
has his judge already:
the word itself that I have spoken
will be his judge on the last day.
For I have not spoken of my own accord;
but the Father who sent me
commanded me what to say
and what to speak,
and I know that his commands
mean eternal life.
And therefore what the Father has told me
is what I speak.(John 12: 44-50)***

The Covenants made with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the Israelite people, David and the Prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary were all fulfilled in Jesus.

God is present to us until the end of time, not as a cloud by day or a pillar of fire by night as He was in the desert to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt, but in the Blessed Eucharist where He remains to lead us out of the slavery of sin and death of the soul to holiness and heaven which is the Eternal Promised Land.

He feeds us in Holy Communion, He waits for us in the Tabernacle, He tends to all our spiritual needs in the Sacraments of the Church. As Baptised Christians we have everything that the faithful prayed and longed for throughout the centuries.

The words of the first commandment resonate with solemnity today just as they did when Moses read out God's laws to the Israelites. God is the one who exists from all eternity. He begins His Covenant by introducing Himself to His chosen people.

' I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no Gods except me.'

Our adoration of God takes a variety of forms. We kneel at the consecration of the Host, we genuflect before entering the pew in church, we bow our head at the sacred name of Jesus, and when the Consecrated Host is placed in the Monstrance for Adoration we go down on two knees before going to our seat and when we leave. Adoration and worship of God which takes place in the Sacrifice of the Mass is not only an outer action but more important it is an inner recognition of the soul of its Heavenly Father.

Adoration comes from our need to respond to God with our love as He asked us to do in the First Commandment. Our prayerful participation in the Mass and all of the Sacraments is our main way of adoring God. Our kindness to our neighbour and proper care of ourselves is also an important part of our love for God. We can not neglect God, ourselves and our neighbour without suffering spiritual consequences which can lead us to darkness and a sense of futility.

Many people who suffer from depression do not realise that their channels of love for God have been blocked and they need to find a way to clear those channels again. They must like the prodigal son return to their Father in heaven with a repentant heart.

Adoration can also take place in an adoration chapel where the Consecrated Host is placed in the Monstrance and then placed on the Altar. Parishioners sign up for up to one hour or more of prayer at a time. The one hour comes from the sad and lonely time that Our Lord suffered for the sins of the world in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"Wait here," he told his disciples, and keep awake with me." On this night of his betrayal,

the Apostles fell asleep and left Jesus alone in his time of agony. He came to them for help only to find them still asleep. Jesus said to Peter, ***'So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour.'***

When adoration takes place in a designated chapel, the faithful are free to pray in the way they choose for themselves. They know that they are in the presence of Our Lord and whether their prayer is with words or sitting in silence, they are offering their love and gratitude to God for themselves, their families, those who are sick, and those who need God's Grace to save them.

When Adoration takes place after Mass, the Priest leads the congregation in prayer, leaving a time of silence for quiet prayer by the people. Adoration after Mass ends with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. During the prayers of Benediction the Priest turns to face the people, holding the Monstrance high and blessing everyone by making the Sign of the Cross with the Monstrance containing the Blessed Eucharist.

Exposition

While the celebrant is bringing the Eucharist to the altar the following or other suitable hymn may be sung by the congregation.

O saving Victim, open wide
The gate of heaven to us below.
Our foes press on from every side;
Your aid supply, your strength bestow.

To your great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land to be. Amen.

O salutaris Hostia
Quae caeli pandis ostium;
Bella premunt hostilla,
Da robur, fer auxillium.

Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria. Amen.

Adoration

During this period there should be appropriate prayers, songs, readings from scripture, and a brief homily to help the congregation focus its attention to the worship of the Lord. It is important to remember that the Eucharist is the "Real Presence" of Jesus Christ.
Benediction

After a period of meditation and reflection the celebrant goes to the altar, genuflects, and kneels. The following or another suitable eucharistic hymn is sung.

Down in adoration falling,
This great Sacrament we hail;
Over ancient forms of worship
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith will tell us Christ is present,

When our human senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
And the Son who made us free,
And the Spirit, God proceeding
From them Each eternally,
Be salvation, honor, blessing,
Might and endless majesty. Amen.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novo cedat ritui:
Praestet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori Gentioque Laus et jubilatio,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio;
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio. Amen.

Priest/Deacon: You have given them Bread from heaven (P.T. Alleluia)
ALL: Having all sweetness with it (P.T. Alleluia)

Priest/Deacon: Lord Jesus Christ, you gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood, help us to experience the salvation won for us and the peace of the kingdom, where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
ALL: Amen.

The celebrant will then bless all present with the Eucharist.

When the priest or deacon has blessed everyone he then replaces the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and genuflects. The following acclamation may be said at this time. This acclamation is called the Divine Praises.

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his holy name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St. Joseph, he most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.
Amen.

As the celebrant is leaving the following or another suitable hymn may be sung.

Holy God, we praise thy name;
Lord of all, we bow before thee;
All on earth thy scepter claim;
All in heaven above adore thee.
Infinite thy vast domain,
Everlasting is thy reign!
Hark, the loud celestial hymn;
Angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and Seraphim,
In unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord!

Mother Theresa of Calcutta, whose call by God was to serve the needs of the poorest of the poor and who took care of those left to die in the streets said that the hour she spent before Our Blessed Lord each day was her preparation to meet Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor.

Adoration leads us to a greater confidence in and love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It leads us to a deeper understanding of the New and Everlasting Covenant and Our Heavenly Father who held nothing back in winning our redemption.

Plan of the Mass

Introductory Rites.

1. *stand*: Entrance Antiphon.
2. Greeting.
3. Blessing and sprinkling of Holy Water.
4. Penitential Rite.
5. Kyrie.
6. Gloria.
7. Opening Prayer.

Liturgy of the Word.

- 1 *sit*: First Reading.
2. Responsorial Psalm.
3. Second Reading.
4. *stand* for the Gospel Acclamation. and for the Gospel Reading.
- 5.*sit* for the Homily
- 6.*stand* for The Creed. and the General Intercessions.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

- 1.*sit*: Hymn and Gifts brought to the Altar.
- 2.*sit*: Preparation of the Bread.
- 3.*sit*: Preparation of the Wine.
- 4.*sit* for the Invitation to Prayer, then *stand, and say Amen.*
- 5.*stand* for Prayer over the Gifts.
- 6.Introductory Dialogue.
- 7.Preface.
- 8a.Acclamation
- 8b.*kneel* for the Eucharist Prayer (#'s 1, 2,3,or 4)
- 9.*stand*: The Lord's Prayer.
- 10 Sign of Peace.
- 11.*kneel*: for the Breaking of the Bread.
- 12 *kneel*: Prayers before Communion.
- 13.Reception of Communion.(kneel and pray when you return to your seat)
- 14.Communion Antiphon.
- 15.Silence after Communion.
- 16 *stand*: Prayer after Communion.

Concluding Rite.

- 1.*stand*: Greeting. 2. Blessing. 3. Dismissal.