

GOING DEEPER – Understanding Active Participation – THE FINAL ARTICLE –

The Sacrifice that becomes present, that we offer, and that participate in during every Mass

This will be my final article on the parts of the Catholic Mass and the ongoing series that has been happening for about a year and half now here at OLV in Shippensburg (*I might write a few other articles on the Mass, which discuss various topics, but this official ends my series of trying to go through the Mass in order of how we celebrate it on Sundays*). I have spoken on this topic before a little, but it is more than worth repeating and emphasizing because of its centrality and importance to our understanding of what is actually happening every single time we come to a Catholic Mass. The Mass is actually a sacrifice. In fact, the Catholic Mass is THE SACRIFICE. The one sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross travels through time and space and becomes present (*in an unbloody manner*) at each and every Catholic Mass. Just to push this point further and make sure to clarify --- there is only one sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, which happened within human history about 2,000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem. However, this one sacrifice was not simply a common Roman crucifixion. Jesus was the infinite God become man, fully God and fully man, and therefore, every action He did while He was on this earth has the ability to transcend time and space and become present to us right now in 2025!! God is by His nature outside of space and time, and therefore, whatever Jesus did while having his full human nature united to His perfect Divine nature, those actions and those events can travel through space and time and become present to us here and now. The most important actions that Jesus does while on this earth is that He suffers, He dies on the Cross out of love for us, and He rises from the dead as well as sends the Holy Spirit to create His Church on this earth. The entire paschal mystery becomes present at each and every Mass, so we can say and know with confidence that Jesus' love for us on the Cross becomes present at Mass, that Jesus' love-suffering for our sake is present, and that Jesus risen from the dead is present as well.

If the ONE SACRIFICE and victory of Jesus Christ is becoming fully present at every single Catholic Mass, then we might ask the question, what the point of God wanting this to happen? Why does God want these actions to travel through space and time and become present to us in the year 2025 in Shippensburg, PA? The answer is simply yet profound. He wants us to participate and receive His love for us that was present on the Cross and in His Resurrection, and He also wants us to offer ourselves in union with Jesus' perfect offering as a total prayer to God the Father with our lives. Do you believe that Jesus was thinking of you while suffering on the Cross for your sake? Do you understand that He did it for you, specifically, and personally, because He loves you? That same love and presence and that same person is fully there, is fully real within Holy Communion at every single Catholic Mass. Can you imagine what would happen if we took some time to reflect and prepare ourselves to receive this gift? The greatest possible gift that God could give to us?! Our faith and our preparation and cooperation with God's grace in our hearts would be tremendous, so let's simply do our best to respond to God's grace and approach each and every Catholic Mass with that mindset. Jesus, you are fully present here, just like you were present at the Cross and in your Resurrection. You were there because you loved me, and you are here now in the same way because you want me to know that divine, and eternally new love right now in this moment. Finally, we can also simply do our best to offer our entire week as a prayer to God the Father. Just as Jesus offered Himself to God the Father on the Cross {Jesus is God the Son}, so to now at Mass, we are united to Jesus when we attend Mass and therefore have the ability to offer ourselves to God the Father. Offer your entire week to Jesus, and allow Him to offer everything to God the Father. Mary, our mother, does this perfectly through her life. May we follow her example, unite ourselves to Jesus, receive His Divine love, and offer ourselves to God the Father at every Mass. There is one Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and one paschal mystery. This one sacrifice becomes present at every Catholic Mass for our sake. May we reenter this truly awesome and central part of our faith, and may we ask God to show us how the Mass is actually the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with us, for us, and in us; it is through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the Father, who is God for ever and ever. Amen.