



Tying It All Together **by Joe Sixpack**

Now that we've examined the origins of the Mass, proofs of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and Eucharistic miracles. Now let's see how the Mass benefits you personally.

The Purpose of the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross are one and the same: they both give glory, praise and worship to the Father; they both provide expiation and reparation for our sins and the sins of mankind; and they both appeal to God for the natural and supernatural favors we need, especially those which help us to become holy.

The personal effects of the sacrifice of the Mass are many. Among them: it remits all venial sins; remits punishment due to forgiven sin—both mortal and venial, provided we participate in the Mass with the proper disposition; it also increases sanctifying grace, increases the infused virtues of faith, hope & charity, and it Increases the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. Again, we receive these benefits according to our own dispositions.

I just wanted to get that extra little bit in before we tie everything together.

Let's recap. The first significant note of any divine worship was when Noah gave worship to God in thanksgiving after the flood waters receded. Then God established the beginning of the old covenant by choosing Abraham as the just man from whom God's chosen children would descend. Later enslaved by the Egyptians, God sent Moses to lead them out of bondage. After freeing the Children of Israel, God established the old covenant: He established His levitical priesthood to make imperfect sacrifices of flesh, cereal, and wine and told them *exactly* how to do them; He told them *exactly* how they were to dress to be worthy to make those sacrifices to Him; He told Moses *exactly* how to build their place of worship and how it was to look and what it was to contain (establishing the sacrifices, priesthood, how to perform the sacrifices and how to set up the place of worship was the liturgy of the old covenant); and He demanded perfect adherence to the way He was to be worshipped.

Jesus fulfilled the old covenant with a combination of two things: His passion, death and resurrection, and the establishment of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper. By fulfilling the old covenant the new and eternal covenant (never to be abrogated) was established. Since part of establishing the new covenant was for Him to return to the Father, Jesus also passed His divine authority to St. Peter, his successors, and the Catholic Church. That means the Catholic Church possesses the authority to determine how the Mass is to be done.

Since Jesus is God—the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and since God is perfect and can never change (Hebrews 13:8), and since He demanded He be worshipped with strict adherence to the ways He established, we are today expected *under pain of sin* to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass exactly the way the Church says we must according to the rubrics. The general rubrics are found in red type in any missal or missalette. The more specific rubrics are found in *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*.

Since we lay people don't celebrate the Mass but merely participate in its celebration, clearly the priest has the weightier obligation when it comes to obedience to the rubrics. But we're not absolved from proper adherence to the rubrics. After all, rubrics applying to the laity are in the missal and missalette.

Before a closer examination of the rubrics and our obligations, let's take a moment to see exactly what is taking place at the Mass.

While all the sacraments are a form of worship, the highest form of worship is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Because of the way Jesus established the Mass, several things are taking place each time we witness this re-presentation of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice to the Father for our sins. Maybe you never realized it before, but the crucifixion is actually the perfected unblemished lamb of the Passover feast. And when the priest celebrates the Mass, we are witnessing the bloody sacrifice of the cross in an unbloody manner on the altar of the Mass.¹

In other words, several extraordinary mystical events are taking place simultaneously on the altar at each and every Mass. To explain these things, we must first realize that God is the Creator of the concept of time and is not subject to it Himself. Time is linear to you and me; we cannot relive what happened a minute ago, neither can we know what will happen a minute from now. We can only experience time in the present. God, on the other hand, because He is not subject to the laws of nature He created, experiences all events in human history—past, present, and future—all simultaneously.

With that noted, here are the extraordinary mystical events are taking place simultaneously on the altar at each and every Mass. While we are physically present at the Mass, we are mystically present at the first Passover, the Last Supper, all the events of the Passion, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension. Now doesn't that make you want to fall prostrate before the altar every time you enter your parish church?!

Next week, we'll get back to the rubrics and the laity's obligations at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In the meantime, do yourself a big favor. If you like these weekly little thumbnail presentations of the faith, your going to just love two other things I have for you... and they're both absolutely free. Just visit JoeSixpackAnswers.com as soon as you get home from Mass. On the right side of the page there is a form. All you have to do is enter your name and email address. Then you'll begin to get a free email course and exclusive invitations to the weekly live webinar events. I'll see you at the next event!

¹ For a full and more cogent explanation of these things, see Dr. Scott Hahn's video presentations *The Lamb's Supper & The Fourth Cup*.