

The Greatest Prayer: The Eucharist Learning how to Pray the Mass

Vatican II.

- “Source and summit of the Christian life” (LG 11)
- “Active Participation”

Context. The Goal of creation is the covenant: love story of God and man:

- relationship: God’s self-gift to man, and man’s response
 - both as a people/Church, and personally
 - communion of the Church
 - communion of personal relationship
- the Covenant: commandments and worship: “minutely” details
 - Sinai: worship, law and ethics interwoven
 - Man cannot simply “make” worship:
 - Ex 10:26: “We do not know with what we must serve the Lord”
 - Aaron’s worship:
 - 1) going up to God or drawing Him down to us?
 - 2) self-generated cult: a feast the community gives itself: closed in on itself: banal self-gratification
- New Testament: Eucharist is given to us as the new Temple worship
- Key to OT/NT liturgical worship is sacrifice
 - sacrifice is not destruction
 - true surrender to God: way of being, not non-being
 - essence of sacrifice and worship:
 - gift of self is only real gift man can give to God
 - god has all but free will of man:
 - Ps. 50 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving p. 39
 - replacement/representation
 - the NT is bound up in the cultic theology of the OT

- Passover: sacrifice of lamb is center of liturgical year
- Revelation: sacrificed Lamb is the center of heavenly liturgy
 - the cross is the new sacrifice
 - the Eucharist is meeting point of Old and New

--Mass is a sacrifice

- first and foremost Christ's Sacrifice of the Cross
 - Atonement for our sins
 - Total Self-Gift: to Father
- but sacrifice of ourselves: total self-gift
 - meaningless unless He takes ours into His
 - Holy Communion:
 - unites ours to His
 - His gift of himself to us
- His presence: heaven come down to earth

Mass as a Prayer. Mass is a Prayer in the context of this Sacrifice

- clearly we see this in the Ritual Prayer: "Vocal"
- What** is prayer: all of these are present in the Mass
 - Conversation with God that comes from and leads to Communion with God
 - "Prayer is raising one's mind and heart to God, or the requesting of good thing from God."—St. John Damascene
 - Prayer as a response to God calling to us: listening and speaking back
- Why** do we pray? all of these are present in the Mass
 - God doesn't need us to pray, we need to pray
 - recognize he is God
 - we need his help
 - to draw closer to Christ—interpersonal relationship: "Communion"
 - grow in virtue, especially faith hope and love
 - overcome sin through prayer

--grow in grace: in union with Christ

--**How** do we pray? all of these are present all throughout the Mass

--Talk & Listen

--Categories of prayer:

1) **Most Fundamental: adoration**

2) [1] Most common: Petition

a. highest: prayer of contrition: e.g.: *Confiteor*

b. asking for his will: e.g.: *Our Father*

c. discernment:

3) [2] Intercession: e.g.: *Prayer of the Faithful*

4) [3] Thanksgiving: : e.g.: *Eucharistic Prayer*

5) [4] Praise: e.g.: *Gloria*

--Expressions or Forms: 3 or 4

1) Vocal prayer

2) Mental prayer--informal: talk to him

3) [2] Meditative....

4) [3] Contemplative...St. Catherine of Siena

Summary: Keys to praying the Mass

--Sacrifice:

--Atonement

--Self-gift:

--His to the Father and to us

--Ours to the Father through Him

--Real Presence/Heaven

--Trinitarian Mystery

--Communion with God (personal relationship)

--Communion of Saints: the Church

--Categories of prayer

--Expressions of prayer

Praying through the Mass

- preliminary
 - preparation before Mass
 - gestures and postures
 - periods of silence
 - singing
- the Order of the Mass
 - Sign of the Cross & Greeting
 - Penitential Act/Rite
 - Gloria
 - Liturgy Of Word: listening: meditation
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Creed: the hinge: faith in Jesus & His Church
 - Prayer of the Faithful
 - Offertory
 - Preface
 - The Eucharistic Prayer: Wow!**
 - The Rite of Communion
 - thanksgiving after Mass