

a crucifix in every chapel the Missionaries of the Charity have all over the world to remind the sisters that Jesus is thirsty for our souls and that in the poor and abandoned, Jesus thirsts.

John 19:30 - "It is finished"

This phrase corresponds to the *Ite, Missa Est*. This phrase is where we get the word "Mass". It comes from "Missa". *Ite, Missa Est* is Latin and translates into English, "Go, it is the dismissal". The Mass is the final accomplishment of Christ. He has gained Salvation for all man and now that message of salvation must go out to the entire world. Jesus says, "It is finished" because the redemption of man has been accomplished. "The Redemption of man is finished. Love had completed its mission, for Love had done all that it could. There are two things Love can do. Love by its very nature tends to an Incarnation, and every Incarnation tends to a Crucifixion. Does not all true love tend toward an Incarnation? In the order of human love, does not the affection of husband for wife create from their mutual love the incarnation of their confluent love in the form of a child? Once they have begotten their child, do not they make sacrifices for it, even to the point of death? And thus their love tends to a crucifixion." [7] We are dismissed from Mass, and sent out to love. We have just witnessed the greatest act of love and now are called to imitate it and in imitating it, bring the Incarnation and Crucifixion into our life and the lives of others.

Luke 23:46 - "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

This phrase corresponds to the last part of the Extraordinary Form of the Latin Rite Mass. One difference between the Roman Rite's two forms of the Mass (Ordinary and Extraordinary) is that in the Extraordinary, the Last Gospel is proclaimed at the end of the Mass. The Last Gospel is always the same, the first chapter from the Gospel of John is proclaimed in which we are reminded that "The Word, became Flesh and dwelt among us. The Last Gospel begins with the words, "In the beginning." "It is a beautiful paradox that the Last Gospel of the Mass takes us back to the beginning, for it opens with the words "In the beginning." And such is life: the last of this life is the beginning of the next. Fittingly indeed, that the Last Word of our Lord was His Last Gospel: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Like the Last Gospel of the Mass, it too takes Him back to the beginning, for He now goes back to the Father whence He came. He has completed His work. He began His Mass with the word: "Father." And He ends it with the same word."

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[1] *The Order of the Mass I*

[2] *The Order of the Mass I*

[3] *The Order of the Mass I*

[4] Read Psalm 22.

[5] Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen; *Calvary and the Mass*

[6] Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen; *Calvary and the Mass*

[7] Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen; *Calvary and the Mass*

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he said to His mother "Woman, behold you son, he said to the disciple "Behold, your mother."

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Spiritual Reading

From the Catecheses by Saint John Chrysostom, bishop

If we wish to understand the power of Christ's blood, we should go back to the ancient account of its prefiguration in Egypt. *Sacrifice a lamb without blemish, commanded Moses, and sprinkle its blood on your doors.* If we were to ask him what he meant, and how the blood of an irrational beast could possibly save men endowed with reason, his answer would be that the saving power lies not in the blood itself, but in the fact that it is a sign of the Lord's blood. In those days, when the destroying angel saw the blood on the doors he did not dare to enter, so how much less will the devil approach now when he sees, not that figurative blood on the doors, but the true blood on the lips of believers, the doors of the temple of Christ. If you desire further proof of the power of this blood, remember where it came from, how it ran down from the cross, flowing from the Master's side. The gospel records that when Christ was dead, but still hung on the cross, a soldier came and pierced his side with a lance and immediately there poured out water and blood. Now the water was a symbol of baptism and the blood, of the holy Eucharist. The soldier pierced the Lord's side, he breached the wall of the sacred temple, and I have found the treasure and made it my own. So also with the lamb: the Jews sacrificed the victim and I have been saved by it. *There flowed from his side water and blood.* Beloved, do not pass over this mystery without thought; it has yet another hidden meaning, which I will explain to you. I said that water and blood symbolized baptism and the holy Eucharist. From these two

sacraments the Church is born: from baptism, *the cleansing water that gives rebirth and renewal through the Holy Spirit*, and from the holy eucharist. Since the symbols of baptism and the eucharist flowed from his side, it was from his side that Christ fashioned the Church, as he had fashioned Eve from the side of Adam. Moses gives a hint of this when he tells the story of the first man and makes him exclaim: *Bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh!* As God then took a rib from Adam's side to fashion a woman, so Christ has given us blood and water from his side to fashion the Church. God took the rib when Adam was in a deep sleep, and in the same way Christ gave us the blood and the water after his own death.

Do you understand, then, how Christ has united his bride to himself and what food he gives us all to eat? By one and the same food we are both brought into being and nourished. As a woman nourishes her child with her own blood and milk, so does Christ unceasingly nourish with his own blood those to whom he himself has given life.

The Seven Last Words and the Mass

"he submitted and opened not his mouth"

Luke 23:34 - "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

This phrase corresponds to The Confiteor of the Mass, a time when the faithful ask for God's Mercy. At this moment we can be assured that Jesus is saying to the Father, "Father, forgive, them they know not what they do." We even say it our self when we say in the Confiteor, "I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God." [1] We plead for mercy, as Jesus pled in saying together the Kyrie, "Lord have Mercy, Christ have Mercy, Lord have Mercy".

Luke 23:43 - "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

This phrase corresponds to The Offertory of the Mass, a time when we offer ourselves to the Father, along with Christ, the good thief, and all the faithful. Bishop Fulton Sheen speaks of a beautiful image of the large Host being Jesus and the small hosts being each one of us. Everyone at Mass is a small host and we are offered to the Father, in the same way as the large Host, Jesus. Jesus, the large Host is going to Paradise. We too, if we accompany Him in the offering, the sacrifice, we also accompany Him to Paradise, to Heaven. The priest prays, "Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." [2] We too want the Father to approve the offering of ourselves, which we may be to Him spiritual and acceptable. We want to become like Christ!

John 19:26 - he said to His mother "Woman, behold you son, he said to the disciple "Behold, your mother."

This phrase corresponds to The Sanctus of the Mass, a time when we praise God by singing with the Angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." [3] We are in need of holiness and want to present ourselves to Our Lord at Mass in the state of Grace, as Holy as we are able. Jesus knows that we are in need of holiness so He gives us the perfect example of holiness, He gives us His own Mother, to take as our own.

Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34 - "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" [4]

This phrase corresponds to The Consecration of the Mass, which is the height of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Our Lord is offering Himself to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins. "Why the cry of abandonment: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was the cry of atonement for sin. Sin is the abandonment of God by man; it is the creature forsaking the Creator, as a flower might abandon the sunlight which gave it strength and beauty. Sin is a separation, a divorce - the original divorce from unity with God, whence all other divorces are derived. Since He came on earth to redeem men from sin, it was therefore fitting that He feels that abandonment, that separation, that divorce. He felt it first internally, in His soul, as the base of a mountain, if conscious, might feel abandoned by the sun when a cloud drifted about it, even though its great heights were radiant with light. There was no sin in His soul, but since He willed to feel the effect of sin, an awful sense of isolation and loneliness crept over Him - the loneliness of being without God." [5]

John 19:28 - "I thirst"

This phrase corresponds to The Communion of Mass "When they offered Him a drink, He took it not. It was another kind of thirst which tortured Him. He was thirsty for the souls and hearts of men. The cry was a cry for communion - the last in a long series of shepherding calls in the quest of God for men. The very fact that it was expressed in the most poignant of all human sufferings, namely, thirst, was the measure of its depth and intensity. Men may hunger for God, but God thirsts for men. He thirsted for man in Creation as He called him to fellowship with divinity in the garden of Paradise; He thirsted for man in Revelation, as He tried to win back man's erring heart by telling the secrets of His love; He thirsted for man in the Incarnation when He became like the one He loved, and was found in the form and habit of man. Now He was thirsting for man in Redemption, for greater love than this no man had, that he lay down his life for his friends. It was the final appeal for communion before the curtain rang down on the Great Drama of His earthly life." [6] When we go to communion and receive worthily, we quench that thirst of Christ. He wants to be in relationship with us, but more than that, to be in communion with us, united to us. It is not enough that He is with us, for He is always there for us, we must be with Him. "I thirst" is the motto of the Missionaries of Charity, the order Blessed Mother Teresa founded. This motto is printed next to