

Part III: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Fr. Bobby's Homily for October 19, 2025

Introduction

Friends, today we continue our four-part homily series on *Understanding the Mass*. In week one, I reflected on why we go to Mass — to worship God, because we owe Him our love and adoration. Last week, Fr. Steve offered a wonderful reflection on the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word.

Just a reminder — all of our homilies and bulletin letters are available on the parish website. If you ever miss one, or want to revisit and reflect again, you can find them online. We hope these reflections serve as a “mini-catechesis on the Mass.” And that brings us to today — part three: the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the moment when heaven and earth meet on the altar and Christ’s one perfect sacrifice on the Cross is made present to us.

A Little Child’s Awe

I think most of you know I simply adore my little niece and goddaughter, Ava. She’s three and a half years old, and she has a deep fascination with Jesus on the Cross. Ever since she was very little, she would point to the crucifix and say, “That’s Jesus on the Cross.”

Now, everything she wants to read has to do with Jesus and the Cross. She loves books about the Stations of the Cross. At the same time, she’s also captivated by the Mass — which makes sense, because the Cross and the Mass are inseparable. She even likes to play Mass at home. Not long ago, she tugged on her father’s sleeve at church, right before Communion, and whispered to him, “Daddy, can I receive Jesus?”

Now, I know she’s very young, but it’s clear that God is already stirring in her little heart. Her parents have been teaching her that what happens on the altar is something sacred — that when the priest lifts up the host and the chalice, it is Jesus Himself who is present under the appearance of bread and wine. And you can see it in her eyes — this awe, this wonder, this childlike captivation with the Cross and with the Mass. Honestly, that’s something we adults need to rekindle. We need to recover our own sense of awe for what happens here every Sunday. We need to be captivated again by the mystery of the altar — by the sacrifice of Jesus made present before our very eyes.

1. The Offertory — Placing Our Lives on the Altar

So, let’s walk through the Liturgy of the Eucharist together. For the sake of time, I won’t touch on every single part, but let’s begin with the Preparation of the Gifts, also called the Offertory. This is when the bread and wine are brought to the altar — simple gifts that represent the work

of human hands, but also symbolize our very lives. When the priest receives these gifts, he's not only taking up bread and wine — he's also taking up everything you bring: your prayers, your gratitude, your struggles, your week, everything you want to offer to God.

This is why we have the Offertory Hymn. This hymn isn't just "filler music" while the collection is taken up; it's meant to help us prepare interiorly for the offering that's taking place. As the gifts are brought forward, the song is intended to lift our hearts and invite us to unite ourselves with what's being offered on the altar. So, when you hear the Offertory Hymn, make it personal. Pray: "Lord, I offer myself with this bread and wine — my joys, my sorrows, my week, my whole life — I place them on the altar." That's why we call it the Offertory — because this is the moment we begin to offer ourselves along with Jesus Christ to our Heavenly Father.

2. The Eucharistic Prayer — The Heart of the Sacrifice

Pope Saint John Paul II wrote his final encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (*The Church from the Eucharist*). Before he died, he was very concerned that the teaching on the sacrificial nature of the Mass had been somewhat lost in the Church, and so he wrote: "The Eucharist is above all else a sacrifice: the sacrifice of the Redemption and also the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which brings to fulfillment all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant." (EE 12)

Friends, at every Mass, Christ's sacrifice on Calvary — once offered in time — is made present to us in mystery. However, it is not repeated but re-presented. The same Jesus who hung upon the Cross continues to offer Himself for us — not in a bloody way, but sacramentally, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Here's the astonishing truth: we are not spectators; we are participants. The priest, standing *in persona Christi*, offers the sacrifice on behalf of the faithful, but each of us is called to join in that offering. This is why the priest says — one of my favorite lines in the Mass — "Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father." The "my" refers to Christ's sacrifice made present through the ordained priest. The "your" refers to the entire Church — you and me — offering ourselves in union with Christ. Your sacrifice, my sacrifice, our sacrifice — all united to His.

And this is the heart of Catholic worship. Catholic worship is sacrificial worship. We don't simply watch or remember what Jesus did; we enter into it. We join our lives to His self-offering to the Father. Everything we do at Mass — every gesture, every prayer — draws us into this mystery of Jesus' sacrificial love poured out for us.

3. The Sanctus — Heaven and Earth Join in Worship

Before the consecration, we sing the *Sanctus* — the "Holy, Holy, Holy." This ancient hymn comes straight from Scripture — from Isaiah's vision of the heavenly throne and from the shouts

of the crowd on Palm Sunday: “Hosanna in the highest!” When we sing the *Sanctus*, heaven and earth are united. The angels and saints are singing with us. We are no longer just in our parish church — we are mystically drawn into the eternal worship of heaven. It’s the song of awe that prepares our hearts for the most sacred moment of the Mass: when the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

4. The Consecration — Christ’s Sacrifice Made Present

That’s precisely what happens at the Consecration. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of Christ spoken by the priest, the bread and wine are changed — truly and substantially — into the Body and Blood of our Lord. The same Jesus who once said, “This is my body, given up for you,” says it again — for you, right now. The same Jesus who poured out His Blood on the Cross now pours it out for us sacramentally. In this moment, we are at Calvary — kneeling at the foot of the Cross, not as spectators, but as participants in the one, eternal sacrifice of Christ.

5. The Per Ipsum – The Offering to the Father

Then comes what is called the doxology, or the *Per Ipsum* — Latin for “Through Him.” When the priest lifts high the Body and Blood of Christ and prays: “Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is Yours forever and ever,” this is the climax of the Eucharistic Prayer. The priest offers Jesus, the spotless Lamb, to the Father on behalf of us all. Then comes the Great Amen. That “Amen” is our wholehearted “Yes” to what has just taken place. It is the Church’s declaration of faith and love — our way of saying: “Yes, Lord, I unite myself to Your sacrifice. I offer myself with You to the Father.”

6. Holy Communion

After the Eucharistic Prayer, we prepare to receive the very One we have offered. At Holy Communion, the Lord who gave Himself on the Cross now gives Himself to us — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Eucharist is not only the sacrifice of Christ made present; it is also the Bread of Life given to us, that we might live in Him and He in us. Every Communion is an invitation to deeper union — to live what we have celebrated.

Invitation

So, my friends, here is the invitation today: don’t come to Mass only to receive something — come to offer something. Before Mass begins, take a few quiet moments in prayer and answer the question: What am I offering today? Maybe it’s gratitude. Maybe it’s a struggle. Maybe it’s pain, hope, or prayers for a loved one. Whatever it is, bring it to the altar. This is what God desires — not just our words or songs, but our whole hearts. Because when we give ourselves to

Him in love — united to the perfect offering of His Son — we discover the deepest meaning of worship: to give all that we have, all that we are, back to God.

Conclusion

As we prepare ourselves to enter into the Liturgy of the Eucharist, I invite you to look at the altar with new eyes. May we have a childlike awe and captivation at what happens here. May we see with eyes of faith — beyond the candles, the chalice, the priest — and recognize Calvary made present. See Jesus offering Himself for love of you. Hear Him say again, “This is my body, given up for you.” Then respond from your heart: “Lord, I offer myself to You in return.” May every Mass become for us not just a duty, but a joyful surrender — a joining of our lives to the one perfect sacrifice of Christ that brings life to the world.