



Understanding the Mass

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Part 9: Heaven on Earth

As I mentioned way back in Part 2, Karl Rahner says sacraments are “visible signs that participate in invisible realities.” Throughout this series I have talked about many invisible realities that we encounter during the Mass; the forgiveness of sins, Jesus’ crucifixion, and the Banquet or Supper of the Lamb to name just a few. We participate in these invisible realities.

At Mass we are also surrounded by things that point to rather than participate in invisible realities. Things that point to invisible realities and remind us of God are sacred signs called sacramentals. They are all around us. In fact, almost everything in church is sacramental (pointing to God) including the music (angelic voices), the candles (light of Christ), the incense (our prayers rising to Heaven), the columns (people), the statues (specific people), the art work and even the building itself, organized into a nave where the people pray, signifying the Earth and the sanctuary where the altar (Jesus) is located, representing Heaven.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is filled with invisible realities in which we participate and we are surrounded by items and actions which point to these invisible realities. These pointers, the sacramentals, help make the sacrament more fruitful. They help us raise our hearts and minds up to God so that his merciful grace can fill us with his infinite love and we can help prepare the Earth for the day when He returns.

The Mass is not only the closest personal encounter we can have with the living risen Jesus but also the closest most of us can come right now to Heaven on Earth. **The Mass is truly Heaven on Earth!**

The depth to which we experience these invisible realities depends upon our individual eyes of faith. May your eyes and hearts be open to these invisible realities and the graces of the Holy Spirit as you grow in the love of God!

God Bless You,

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