

from the *Explanation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*

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cle than the one He wrought at Cana in Galilee; for there He changed water into wine, here He changes wine into His sacred blood. In the Mass the scene of the Last Supper is reenacted, for the bread and wine undergo a change similar to that they then did. Christ is also slain anew by the hand of the priest, and by him offered up to God most high. Father Sanchez, writing on this subject, says: "He who desires to profit by holy Mass will be able to obtain forgiveness of sins and the gift of divine grace just as readily by assisting at it devoutly as if he had in person witnessed all these mysteries." Hence it will be seen how salutary is this solemn service, and how much may be gained by those who are present at it.

Let us hear how Denys, a pious Carthusian, explains the representation of the mysteries of Our Lord's life in holy Mass. He says: "The whole life of Christ which He led upon earth was one long celebration of Mass, He being Himself the altar, the priest, the victim."

✧ It may be said that Our Lord put on the sacerdotal vestments when, hidden from sight in His Mother's womb, He took our flesh and assumed the garb of mortality. Issuing thence, on the night of the nativity, as from the sacristy, He began, on His entrance into the world, the *Introit*, which is the commencement of the Mass. The cries He uttered in the crib were the *Kyrie Eleison*. The *Gloria* was sung by the angels who appeared to the shepherds and accompanied them to the stable at Bethlehem. The *Collects* represent the petitions He offered when He spent the night in prayer, imploring for us the mercy of God. The *Epistle* represents the instructions He gave on the prophecies of Moses and the prophets, showing how they were fulfilled in Himself. He read the *Gospel* when He traversed the country of Judea proclaiming His divine doctrine. The *Offertory* was

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when He daily made an oblation of Himself to God the Father for the redemption of mankind as a propitiatory victim. The *Preface* represents His daily tribute of praise to God the Father, His thanksgiving for the benefits conferred upon man. The *Sanctus* was sung by the Hebrew people on Palm Sunday, when they cried: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!" (St. Matt. xxi. 9.) The *Consecration* took place at the Last Supper, when He changed bread and wine into His body and blood. The *Elevation* was when He was lifted up upon the cross and made a spectacle to angels and to men. The *Paternoster* represents the seven words He uttered upon the cross. The *Breaking of the Host*, the separation of His sacred soul and body. The *Agnus Dei* was spoken by the centurion and those who were with him when, smiting their breasts, they said: "Indeed this was the Son of God." (St. Matt. xxvii. 54.) The *Communion* represents the anointing of Our Lord's body and laying it in the tomb. The *Blessing* at the conclusion of Mass represents the benediction He gave to His disciples when about to ascend into heaven.

Such was the great act of worship which Christ performed upon earth, and which He enjoined upon His apostles and their successors to repeat daily, in a short form. Fornerus says: "Holy Mass is a brief epitome of Our Lord's life; a recapitulation in one short half hour of what He did during the thirty-three years He spent upon earth." Thus we, who have the opportunity of hearing Mass, may deem ourselves equally fortunate with the contemporaries of Our Lord; nay, more fortunate than they, since they could only hear and see one Mass, and that a very long one, whereas we may hear more than one every day, and, at small cost to ourselves, share in the fruits of Christ's life and passion. In further ex-