



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Scriptural Walk Through the Mass Part I



Eucharist Public Domain

Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study to become lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Opening: Last week we discussed the important role parents have to teach their children the fullness of faith. Indeed, we, ourselves, cannot experience the fullness of our faith if we do not spend some time learning about what it is. We may experience a part here or there, and a friend might expose us to this tidbit or that, but if we are honest, the ability to experience the fullness of faith comes as part of a life long journey of learning as to the blessings we may receive through prayer, learning the scripture, contemplation upon the mysteries of Christ, reflecting upon the inspirational writings and histories of the saints and doctors of the church, learning from the Magisterium of the Church, and so much more. What is central to our faith is the celebration of the Eucharist.

To some, the Mass celebration is boring. They might view it as an outdated ritual which does not inspire the people of our day. If we look at the Mass as an obligation because, well, it is simply part of our family routine; they are missing out because they do not comprehend the history or the many blessings celebrated before them. Perhaps they do not fully appreciate the real presence of Christ. Perhaps their parents did not teach them or they were not fully Catechized, but if they do not find peace and inspiration in the Mass, it is because they do not fully understand the richness of what we celebrate.

Our daughter passed away in January of this year from brain cancer. She suffered greatly from the drugs they prescribed her to control the swelling caused by her second surgery and the cancer. The side effects of the drug kept her in constant anxiety and muscle pain. The one thing we noticed is that the only peace in her day was when we took her to Mass.

Attending Mass had such a calming and peaceful affect on her. Though the drug interfered with her ability to concentrate, speak, and communicate at home; at the Mass, she was at peace. She could clearly sing, pray, and participate in the responses of the people. She asked us to take her to daily Mass and sometimes asked to go twice, so we took her to one parish at noon and another in the evening. You also have to understand, this was during a cold and snowy winter. It was difficult to take her out in such conditions, but she was adamant about going to Mass.

I cannot explain how appreciative I am of the spiritual journey upon which my daughter took us during her last months with us. I will never forget her love of the Mass and the Eucharist. I will never forget the peace it brought her in the face of so much pain. It was if it was her oasis in a desert of suffering. If only all the children of the creation of God could have such an appreciation of the Mass, I believe people would be thronging to every opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist. Sadly, there are so many empty spaces in the pews.

I suspect that those who find the Mass a drudgery or do not find inspiration during their attendance, do not understand why we celebrate as we do or perhaps they are simply too distracted with the world. Over the next several weeks, we will discuss the scripture we celebrate during the Holy and Divine liturgy which memorializes our Lord's Passion and Resurrection and hopefully our discussion will provide some slight insight as to why we should cherish the opportunities we have to learn of the ways of God, the ways of our Lord and Savior, and to celebrate the meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of the holy Son of God.

A Scriptural Walk Through the Mass

Some Reflection: Before we get into our scriptural discussion, let's start with a question.

(Question: Part of the purpose of the Mass is to celebrate. **What are we celebrating and why should we come together in celebration?)**

Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. "Father!" he said. "Here I am," he replied. Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" "My son," Abraham answered, "God will provide the sheep for the burnt offering." Then the two walked on together. (Genesis 22:7-9)

But for you the **blood [of the lamb]** will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thereby, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you. This day will be a day of remembrance for you, **which your future generations will celebrate** with pilgrimage to the Lord; you will celebrate it as a statute forever. (Exodus 12:13-14)

(Question: We see in the old testament, the test of Abraham. It was the blood of the lamb which God provided that saved the life of Isaac. It was the blood of the lamb which saved the Jews during their plight in Egypt. **What Lamb does God provide us for our salvation?**)

Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.** Whoever eats[s] my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.** Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. **This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.**” (John 6:53-58)

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “**This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.**” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.**” (Luke 22:17-20)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.** (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

(Question: These words might sound familiar. **Outside of the Bible, where do we hear similar words?**)

The Two Greatest Commandments

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

(Question: The Mass helps us fulfill both of the greatest commandments taught to us by Jesus. **How does the Mass help us to fulfill the two great commandments?**)

What Do We Do During Mass?

(Question: Let us reflect upon the conduct of the Mass for a moment. **What are some of the things we do during the course of the Mass?)**

- ◆ Gather together in worship of God
- ◆ Hear the Word
- ◆ Pray for the needs of the world
- ◆ Offer the sacrifice of the Cross in praise and thanks to God
- ◆ Receive Christ Jesus in Communion
- ◆ Are sent forth in the Spirit as disciples of the Gospel

The Mass has two main components:

The Liturgy of the Word → Setting the table of God's Word

“...the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone, for they are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy.”
(No 29, GIRM)

“Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture the Word of God is addressed to all people of whatever era and is understandable to them, a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, by the Homily, as part of the liturgical action.
(No 29, GIRM)

The Liturgy of the Eucharist → Setting the table of the body of Christ

Before we jump into these components of the Mass, let's talk first about those who comes together to celebrate. We have the people and the priest, so let's take a moment and look at their roles in the celebration.

The role of the priest: Presides and acts [ordained in apostolic succession, (Matthew 16:18, Mark 3:14-19, Acts 1:21-26] in the person of Christ. (No 27, GIRM)

(Question: It is the priest who leads the celebration. **What gives the priest authority to lead the celebration of the Mass?)**

43 There, at the altar, I will meet the Israelites; hence, it will be made sacred by my glory. 44 Thus I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar, just as I also consecrate Aaron and his sons to be my priests. (Exodus 29:43-44)

48 For the LORD had told Moses, 49 The tribe of Levi alone you shall not enroll nor include in the census along with the other Israelites. 50 You are to give the Levites charge of the tabernacle of the covenant with all its equipment and all that belongs to it.

It is they who shall carry the tabernacle with all its equipment and who shall be its ministers; and they shall camp all around the tabernacle. (Numbers 1:48-50)

“And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)

“I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”(Matthew 16:19)

He appointed twelve [whom he also named apostles] that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons: [he appointed the twelve:] Simon, whom he named Peter; James, son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, whom he named Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. (Mark 3:14-19)

Then they prayed, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this apostolic ministry from which Judas turned away to go to his own place.” Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:24-26)

Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1)

(CCC: 1539) The chosen people was constituted by God as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” But within the people of Israel, God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service; God himself is its inheritance. A special rite consecrated the beginnings of the priesthood of the Old Covenant. The priests are “appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.”

(Question: So we see in scripture the role and authority of our priests as well as the Apostolic succession by which they are ordained. They lead us in the celebration, but what is our role in the celebration?)

The role of the people: “...the faithful are to be instructed and refreshed. (No 28, GIRM) [*The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The decree of the LORD is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple. (Psalm 19:8)*]

As we are coming to the end of today's discussion, I would like to share an article of the Catechism for us to contemplate upon until next week.

1088 “To accomplish so great a work”—the dispensation or communication of his work of salvation—“Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, ‘the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,’ but especially in the Eucharistic species. By his power he is

present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes, it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised 'where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.'"

Quotes: I would also like to share the following quotes upon which to reflect.

"The Mass is the most perfect form of prayer." Pope Paul VI

"The celebration of Holy Mass is as valuable as the death of Jesus on the cross." St. Thomas Aquinas

"If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy." St. John Vianney

"For each Mass we hear with devotion, Our Lord sends a saint to comfort us at death." Revelation from Christ to St. Gertrude

"Put all the good works in the world against one Holy Mass; they will be as a grain of sand beside a mountain." St. John Vianney

"It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass." St. Padre Pio

Final Thoughts: In our discussion today, we have mostly discussed the background of the Mass, such as why we gather, why we sing, the role of the priest, the role of the people, and most importantly, the presence of Christ. Next week, we shall begin our discussion with the order of the Mass and some more of the scripture which reveals the blessings of our celebration. We hope you will be able to join us.

Wrap Up: So, again, our time has come to an end.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Scriptural Walk Through the Mass Part II.