

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

EXCERPT FROM *THE SECRET OF SANCTITY*

BY ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

At the beginning of the Mass, present yourself before God as a criminal imploring mercy; make with a contrite heart a confession of your sins, repeating the *Confiteor* with the priest.

At the *Gloria in Excelsis*, enter into the sentiments of the angels when they chanted this divine canticle, and into those of the apostles who completed it. Praise, adore, and bless God with the priest; desire that His name be known and sanctified, and that His kingdom extend throughout the world.

During the *Epistle* and *Gospel*, if you understand the words, listen with attention; if not, beg God to give the light of faith to infidels and the grace of conversion to heretics.

At the *Creed*, renew your profession of faith; affirm your faith in one God in three Persons—the Father, your creator; the Son, your Redeemer; the Holy Spirit, your Sanctifier.

At the *Offertory*, place your body, your soul, your mind, your heart, your possessions, your hopes, your family, your friends, and all your desires upon the paten of the priest. Present them all to God to be immolated to Him with the body of His only Son in a perfect holocaust and odor of sweetness. Beg God to change and transform you as completely as the bread and wine are changed and transformed into His body and blood.

At the *Preface*, raise your heart to heaven and prepare yourself for sacrifice. Praise and thank God with the Church; repeat with profound respect the canticle of the angel: “Holy, holy Lord God of armies.” “Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.” “Blessed is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord, and Who is to come in the name of the Lord Which saved us.”

After the *Sanctus*, until the consecration, meditate upon the Passion; divide it into seven parts or stations for the seven days of the week, as will be shown later on.

At the *Elevation* of the body and blood of Our Lord, do not remain cold and unmoved, but adore your Lord with body and mind, bowing profoundly and accompanying this inclination with deepest respect.

Between the elevation of the body and blood of Our Lord, remain in profound silence with interior and exterior modestly, fully persuaded that it is the moment when the Victim is immolated, when the blood, in virtue of the sacramental words, is separated from the body, though one and the other remain truly united under each species; that heaven opens, the angels descend with their Lord, and that God floods with graces the hearts prepared to receive them—graces of sanctity for the just, graces of repentance for sinners.

Finally, it is in this sacred moment that we obtain from God all that we ask through the death and the sufferings of His Son.

After the Elevation, offer God the adorable Victim for the four ends of the holy sacrifice. This is the special object of the mass.

For the glory of God, by making acts of *faith* in Him as your First Principle and your Last End; your Father, your King, your Redeemer, your Creator, your Strength, your Peace, your All.

Of *hope*, that He will pardon you all your sins, that He will give you paradise after having granted you here below temporal and spiritual favors.

Of *charity*, giving yourself to Him and sacrificing yourself to Him, to all His designs, however contrary they may be to your inclinations; annihilating yourself with your Saviour and offering yourself to live and die for His glory.

You will thank God for all the favors He has lavished upon you, not only upon you, but upon all His saints, and you will offer the body and blood of Jesus Christ to supply for your lack of gratitude.

Offer the holy Victim as a sacrifice of propitiation for the sins of all men, and for your own in particular. It is the only reparation which can appease the divine justice.

Finally, ask all the graces necessary to you and to your neighbor; to stimulate your fervor ask each request through one of the wounds of our divine Saviour.

Contemplate Him on the cross, and ask through His thorn-crowned Head grace for the Church, for our holy Father the Pope, and for all Superiors.

Ask through the wound of the right hand grace for your family, friends, and benefactors.

Through the wound of the left hand, pray for the enemies of the Church and your own, repeating with Our Lord upon the cross: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Through the wound of the right foot, pray for your subordinates, your domestics, and all those dependent upon you.

Through the wound of the left foot, pray for the souls in purgatory, particularly those whom you may have offended or scandalized, for the souls dearest to the Blessed Virgin, for the souls of your relatives, and for all who stand in need of prayers.

Enter into the heart of Jesus pierced for love of you; give Him your own heart, and beg Him to fill it with His grace and His Spirit.

This prayer may continue until the *Agnus Dei*, when you should prepare yourself for spiritual communion. Ask pardon for your sins, receive the Sacred Host in spirit from the hands of the angels, and make your thanksgiving conversing with Our Lord as if you had received Him sacramentally.

After the last *Collects*, receive the priest's blessing as that of God. Listen with devotion to the last gospel, particularly to the words *Verbum caro factum est*, "The Word was made flesh." If you have received Communion, persuade yourself that this incarnation is renewed, that the Word is made flesh in you and desires to dwell in you.

After the Mass, adore and thank Our Lord; return home penetrated with the grandeur of this mystery, and recite on the way the *Te Deum Laudamus*¹.

HOW WE SHOULD MEDITATE UPON THE PASSION DURING THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

The sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that of the cross. Jesus Christ instituted it to recall His Passion; hence we must never fail to honor it by meditating on His sufferings.

Monday. –Consider the Son of God in the Garden of Olives, where He was bathed in a sweat of blood and water; then at the house of Annas and Caiphas, where He was buffeted and offered every ignominy. Ask God through the merits of Jesus Christ to give you the grace to overcome your passions and to bear injuries with patience.

Tuesday. –Consider your divine Saviour despised by Herod, treated as a fool, compared by Pilate to a thief and murdered. Love your abjection, and do not be offended at the elevation of your neighbor.

Wednesday. –Represent to yourself Our Saviour scourged and crowned with thorns. Avenge upon your body the wounds it inflicted upon your Saviour, and upon your pride the painful ignominy with which it crowned Him. Remember that one must wear the crown of gold after the crown of thorns, or the crown of thorns after the crown of gold.

Thursday. –Follow Jesus bearing His cross; bear yours after Him: if you bear it well, you will help Him

to carry His. Place yourself in spirit upon the altar as upon Calvary, there to be fastened and sacrificed the rest of your days as a victim.

Friday. –Listen to Our Saviour’s seven words upon the cross; repeat them with Him. After recommending to God your soul, your body, your passions, your life, all that is dearest to you in this world, die spiritually with Him, and live henceforth as one dead, with no care or desire for earthly things.

Saturday. –Enter into the tomb of Jesus, and bury yourself in spirit there with Him. Persuade yourself that the world is dead to you, and you to the world. Descend into Limbo with the holy soul of Our Saviour to rescue a suffering soul from purgatory. Enter also into the heart of His blessed Mother to participate in her sorrows.

Sunday. –Consider the glorious wounds of your risen Saviour; enter by Communion into His heart, and establish your dwelling there forever.

*Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.*

*When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man,
thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,
thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God
in the glory of the Father.*

*We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with thy Saints
in glory everlasting.*

*O Lord, save thy people and bless thine heritage.
Govern them and lift them up for ever.*

*Day by day we magnify thee;
And we worship thy Name ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us; have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us,
as our trust is in thee.*

*O Lord, in thee have I trusted;
let me never be confounded.*



1. *Te Deum Laudatus* is **not offered during Lent**. It is part of the Liturgy of the Hours Office of Readings at other time of the year. For reference, the text is included here:

*We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.
To thee all Angels cry aloud:
the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory.
The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world
doth acknowledge thee;
The Father of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honorable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.*