

Jesus Opens to Us the Arms of His Mercy



“Beloved daughter, to many the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass no longer has meaning. These have lost that spiritual sensitivity of reaching out and touching the wounded hand of my Son. In a special way, during the Holy Sacrifice Jesus comes in close contact with those who meet Him in a profound act of faith in a deep sense of His Divine and human presence. It is a great loss when one loses the spiritual sight of the Son that the Father sent to guide us into the Eternal Vision.” (April 3, 1981)

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Lodi, Ohio, Pg. 40.)

There are basic truths we learned about the Eucharist, the Holy Mass, when we were young. It is the greatest of the seven sacraments because it contains Jesus Himself in His Humanity and Divinity. It is a sacramental meal that prefigures the wedding feast of heaven and celebrates us as the family of God. It is the new Passover Meal that leads us out of slavery to sin and toward the Promised Land where the Supper of the Lamb of God is memorialized forever. As a sacrifice it fulfills and transcends the Old Testament animal sacrifices which could only signify the forgiveness of sin. The sacrifice of Jesus' Body and Blood on the altar of Calvary paid the debt for all sin, forever; there is no need for another sacrifice. In the Mass as on Calvary the Sacrificial Gift or Victim and the Primary Sacrificing Priest are one and the same; Jesus is both Priest and Victim. The very Sacrifice on Calvary is made present on our altars in an unbloody way, one and the same sacrifice on every altar around the world until the end of time. St. John Chrysostom says, **“We always offer the same Lamb, not one today and another tomorrow, but always the same one. For this reason, the sacrifice is always only one.”**

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’”
The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pg. 334, #1322, 1324.)

There are those who doubt the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Perhaps reflection on the Old Testament rituals that prefigured our sacramental liturgy might amaze us with the enormity of God's preparation for this great mystery. The chosen people of God lived in the promise of a Messiah, a new deliverer like Moses who would free them from their oppressors. They held ritual sacrifices for atonement, purification and thanksgiving; they sent their sins off into the desert on the back of a scapegoat. God was so majestic to them they dare not utter His name. They carried their Tabernacle with them while wandering in the desert where they were fed with manna from heaven. God's Presence

was with them in a cloud that led them by day and a pillar of light that led them by night. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant, with the mercy seat of God, was kept, wherein were held their sacred signs: the manna from heaven, the rod of Aaron's priestly ministry, and the Ten Commandments of God's Law given to Moses. Each Passover they recounted this long history of God's covenant with them and anticipated a new Covenant and a restored Jerusalem. Jesus is the New Moses, the Messiah, the living Bread come down from heaven, the Eternal High Priest, the Perfect unblemished Lamb of God whose offering satisfies divine justice and reconciles mankind to the Creator and welcomes us to share in His glory. In their tabernacle was a golden table that held the Bread of Presence and some wine. They believed that to gaze upon that Bread of Presence was to see the Face of God. Picture the apostles, then, at the last Passover Jesus celebrated with them as He took bread and broke it, saying: **"This is my Body which will be given for you; do this in memory of Me."** And when He took the cup of blessing, **"This cup is the new covenant in My Blood, which will be shed for you."** (Lk 22: 19-21.) What lessons in the divine mysteries they must have shared in this parting meal, and what insight into the sacraments Jesus must have revealed to them as He instituted the priesthood and ordained them for this new dispensation. He would build the new law upon the twelve apostles just as the old law had been built upon the twelve tribes of Israel.

In his encyclical letter, **Ecclesia de Eucharistia**, St. John Paul II speaks of the awe he felt as he celebrated this great mystery in so many and varied places, much as the apostles must have in the early days of the Church as they traveled to all nations.

I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares...This varied scenario of celebrations of the eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ. (Par. 8.)

We know of Eucharistic miracles in which the host turned into human flesh at the words of consecration, confirming our faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the sacred species. Wherever God is, He is adored by His angels and saints and the holy souls. Picture heaven's glory descending upon our altars at the consecration as angels descend and ascend, singing **"Hosanna to God in the highest"** as they did at Bethlehem when God was made flesh on the altar of a manger. See the saints and holy souls gathered around the altar, thanking God for his goodness, pleading the blood of Jesus upon poor sinners for their salvation, and praising His unfathomable love. Surely relatives and friends are in that gathering praying for us as we pray for those in need. Notice Mary at the right side of the priest and Joseph at his left, God's instruments in bringing the God-Man to earth, now sharing in bringing Him to our altar. As the Father hovers over the priest, over Jesus, the

Holy Spirit transforms all that lays before Him. Would that the love that burned in the hearts of the Apostles as they received their First Holy Communion that day in the Cenacle room would burn in our hearts each time we receive Jesus in the Eucharist. In the unity of Christ's Spirit, let His Blood flow through our spiritual veins as surely as blood flows through our physical veins! Let us offer back to the Father the most perfect and pleasing gift He has given to us, His very own Son, along with ourselves! May the vessels of our hearts be full of prayers of gratitude and praise, humble contrition and petition for souls in need.

Scripture tells us Peter and John procured and prepared a room in Jerusalem for their last Passover meal with Jesus. It does not tell us where Mary was; surely she would again celebrate the Passover as she always had done with Joseph and Jesus. Was she in the Cenacle Room, perhaps serving the food? Did she receive her First Holy Communion from Jesus that night as the apostles did? The mystic, Venerable Mary of Agreda, states that Jesus and the Apostles were first to arrive, then Mary and the holy women, whom Jesus directed to an adjacent room where Mary would witness, in deep contemplation, all that was taking place in the Cenacle room and would instruct the other women. She would be united in Jesus' prayers. Jesus explained how He would replace the law of the Patriarchs and the Prophets with the new law of grace with His Church and its priesthood. Although Judas was present, Jesus did not address the treachery in Judas' heart, indicating the reverence we must show priests, for none can be worse than Judas. Then Jesus prayed.

“My eternal Father and infinite God, thy divine and eternal will resolved to create this my human nature in order that I may be the Head of all those that are predestined for thy glory and happiness and who are to attain their true blessedness by availing themselves of my works. For this purpose, and in order to redeem them from the fall of Adam, I have lived with them thirty-three years. Now, my Lord and Father, the opportune and acceptable hour for fulfilling thy eternal will has arrived, the greatness of thy holy name is about to be revealed to men and thy incomprehensible Divinity, through holy faith, is to be made known and exalted among all nations. It is time that the seven-sealed book be opened as Thou hast commissioned Me to do, and that the figures of old come to a happy solution. The ancient sacrifices of animals, which prefigured the one I am now voluntarily to make of Myself for the children of Adam, for the members of my mystical body, for the sheep of thy flock, must now come to an end, and I beseech Thee in this hour to look down with an eye of mercy. If in the past thy anger has been placated by these ancient figures and sacrifices which I am now about to abrogate, let it now, my Father, be entirely extinguished, since I am ready to offer Myself in voluntary sacrifice to die for men on the Cross and give Myself as a holocaust of my love. Therefore, Lord, let the rigor of thy justice be relaxed and look upon the human race with eyes of mercy. Let Us institute a new law for men, by which they may throw down the bars of their disobedience and open for themselves the gates of heaven. Let them now find a free road and open portals for entering with Me upon the vision of thy Divinity, as many of them as will follow my footsteps and obey my law.”

[Jesus explained the sacraments, then washed the feet of the apostles, including Judas, praying:] “Eternal Father, Creator of the Universe, I am thy image and the figure of thy substance engendered by thy intellect. Having offered Myself for the Redemption of the world through my Passion and Death according to thy will, I now desire to enter upon these sacraments and mysteries by humiliating Myself to the dust, so that the pride of Lucifer may be confounded by the humility of the Only-begotten. In order to leave an example of humility to my Apostles and to my Church, which must be built up on the

secure foundation of this virtue, I desire, my Father, to wash the feet of my disciples, including the least of all of them, Judas, steeped in his own malice. I shall prostrate Myself before him in deepest and sincerest self-abasement to offer him my friendship and salvation. Though he is my greatest enemy among the mortals, I shall not refuse him pardon for his treachery, nor deny him kindest treatment, so that, if he shall decline to accept it, all the world may know, that I have opened up to him the arms of my mercy, and that he repelled my advances with obstinate contempt.”

(Venerable Mary of Agreda, THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD, Tan Books and Publishers, Rockford, IL, Pgs. 434-464.)

Mary of Agreda describes the Father and the Holy Spirit being present in the Cenacle room in the same way they were at the Baptism of Jesus and at the Transfiguration. Enoch and Elias, representing the Patriarchs and the Prophets of the old law, were present. St. John, the beloved, was given special insight into the exalted mysteries, especially regarding Jesus' holy Mother, and was given the commission over her, which would be made manifest at the foot of the Cross. All received special understanding of the Real Presence in the sacred species. Then, Jesus, recognizing Himself as man inferior to Divinity, broke the sacred bread and partook of it first as the First and Chief of all the priests; as He did so, the effects of the Transfiguration overtook His body, manifest only to Mary, and partly to John, Enoch and Elias. In Mary of Agreda's vision, before administering communion to the apostles, Jesus gave a parcel of the sacred bread to the Archangel Gabriel who administered it to Mary, for, as the greatest of all the saints, no favor can be granted to another that was not first granted to her. Mary of Agreda saw the angel deposit the blessed Sacrament in the breast of Our Lady, above the heart, as the most legitimate shrine and tabernacle of the Most High God. It remained there until after the Resurrection when St. Peter said Mass and consecrated the Body and Blood of Christ in memory of Jesus for the first time. If we could capture some of the splendor in that Cenacle room at that Last Supper of the apostles with Jesus, how devout our communions would be! How we must treasure, too, the image of Our Lady as the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God as revealed in the message of Our Lady of America©. **“I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within.”**



**Copyright© Our Lady of America Devotion, Lodi, Ohio, Holy Week, 2019.
All rights reserved.**