

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2020

“You may find cities without walls, without literature, and without the arts and sciences of civilized life, but you will never find a city without priests and altars, or which does not have sacrifices offered to the gods,” (Plutarch, Greek historian)

As we have had the opportunity to celebrate the Extra-Ordinary Form of the Mass, I have spent some time focusing upon a key term - Sacrifice. We believe that the Sacrifice of the Mass is a real sacrifice. Today, I would like to center our attention upon two other realities concerning the Mass. It is also understood to be both a Memorial and a Channel from which all graces flow. Let us take a moment to examine these terms.

The Mass as a Memorial should not strike any of us as something new added to Christianity by later generations of scholars. Quite the contrary, it was Jesus Himself, at the Last Supper, who instructed His apostles to continue offering His sacrifice. His words “Do This” are a direct command from God. He wanted His apostles, and later their disciples down to our generation, to offer a perpetual unbloody sacrifice “In Remembrance” of His bloody redeeming sacrifice offered once upon the altar of the cross. The simple way to understand why Jesus commanded this to be done concerns our own forgetfulness. We forget. As we get older, we forget more. We place statues and markers at historical sites to remember and honor persons, a person, or event which is significant and worthy of remembering. We need to be reminded of the fact that God died for us, in a cruel violent way, to redeem us because of His great love for us. Jesus wants us to always remember that we are redeemed, and by recalling this, we should have a desire to live a transformed life becoming a living witness of His love for all peoples.

The Mass is also understood to be a Channel or Fountain from which all graces flow. I specifically want to use the word fountain for it represents flowing water. The love of God continually flows to us as water flows at a fountain. If water does not flow, there is the potential of it becoming stagnate and putrid. God’s love for all of us is never to be understood in this fashion. It is flowing. It is alive. It is the person of the Holy Spirit. And as water can keep our bodies alive, so too does the Holy Spirit keep the flame of faith alive within our hearts. He pours into us the grace to live the Christian life in the midst of this world. Allow me to conclude with two sentences which best illustrate this point. “On Calvary was wrought the Redemption of fallen man; on our altars is promoted the personal sanctification of those already redeemed. On Calvary were merited the graces that make salvation possible; on our altars these graces are offered to the faithful soul” (Msgr. George J. Moorman, *The Latin Mass Explained*, p. 25).