



Episode 27: My Sacrifice and Yours

SUMMARY

At the end of the Preparation of the Offerings, the priest says to the people: “Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours (*meum ac vestrum sacrificium*) may be acceptable to God the Almighty Father.” There are not two sacrifices. Rather, we share in the singular sacrifice of Christ, each in a unique way.

The *Roman Missal* makes clear that the people offer the sacrifice together with the priest. The people participation in the offering is sacramentalized by the offertory procession in which the people present not only bread and wine, but what these gifts symbolize: the offering of themselves. The priest then takes these gifts to the altar and presents them to God at the place of total self-giving, the altar of sacrifice. The gift of the people is joined to that of the priest and together joined to the eternal offering of Christ, thus highlighting the common priesthood of the Faithful, who are enabled by virtue of baptism to offer prayer and sacrifice.

This offering of priest and people occurs first and fundamentally in the heart. It is the total giving of oneself to God in union with Christ.

Roman Missal

In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people of God’s own possession and a royal Priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the unblemished sacrificial Victim not only by means of the hands of the Priest but also together with him and so that they may learn to offer their very selves.

General Instruction, n°. 95

It is desirable that the participation of the faithful be expressed by an offering, whether of bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist or of other gifts to relieve the needs of the Church and of the poor.

General Instruction, n°. 140

Virgil Michel, osb.

“The externals of the liturgy are there to express and reveal the internal, they are the visible embodiment of the divine powers exercised in all liturgical functions, the visible expression of the sentiments uniting the members of the mystical body of Christ among themselves and with their Head.”

IN THE TRADITION

“With contrite heart and humble spirit
let us be received;
As though it were burnt offerings of rams
and bulls,
or tens of thousands of fat lambs,
So let our sacrifice be in your presence today
and find favor before you...”
Daniel 3:39-40

“I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies
of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual
worship.”
Romans 12:1

“... all spiritual and mature Christians know
that they are a royal race and are sharers in the
office of the priesthood. For what is more
king-like than to find yourself ruler over your
body after having surrendered your soul to
God? And what is more priestly than to
promise the Lord a pure conscience and to offer
him in love unblemished victims on the altar of
one’s heart?”

Pope Leo the Great
Sermon 4

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

✠ “...The only perfect sacrifice is the one that
Christ offered on the cross as a total offering to
the Father’s love and for our salvation. By
uniting ourselves with his sacrifice we can make
our lives a sacrifice to God.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), n°. 2100

✠ “With docile hearts, then, let all Christians
hearken to the voice of their Common Father,
who would have them, each and every one,
intimately united with him as they approach the
altar of God, professing the same faith,

obedient to the same law, sharing in the same
Sacrifice with a single intention and one sole
desire.”

Pius XII
Mediator Dei, 12

✠ “... all the faithful should be aware that to
participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice is their
chief duty and supreme dignity, and that not in
an inert and negligent fashion, giving way to
distractions and day-dreaming, but with such
earnestness and concentration that they may be
united as closely as possible with the High
Priest [...] And together with Him and
through Him let them make their oblation, and
in union with Him let them offer up
themselves.”

Pius XII
Mediator Dei, 80

IN THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Sanctify graciously these gifts, O Lord, we pray,
and, accepting the oblation
of this spiritual sacrifice,
make of us an eternal offering to you.

Prayer over the Offerings, Saturday of the Second Week of Easter

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How conscious are you of offering yourself totally to God?
2. Why is the Lord’s sacrifice the “perfect sacrifice”?

FOR FURTHER READING

Virgil Michel, *The Liturgy of the Church according to the Roman Rite*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937).