



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

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MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

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Dear Parish Family,

August 8, 2010

Attendance at daily Masses continues to grow. Thank you to the altar servers who have come to serve for daily Mass; and thank you to those who have been participating in the Rosary before Masses.

With the addition of more daily Masses, individuals have expressed a desire to have Masses offered for particular intentions. I will keep a log book of daily Mass intentions in the Sacristy, and will publish the intentions for the week on the sacristy door. The Diocese of Saginaw asks that a Mass stipend of \$5 be offered for each Mass intention. In our diocese, the money from Mass stipends is given to the parish where the Mass is offered. The Book of Intentions in the back of the church will remain and is an appropriate place to write your particular prayer intentions as well.

Please spread the word that immediately following the noon Mass at St. Mary on Wednesday there will be Eucharistic Adoration. For the time being, the period of silent adoration will be approximately 30 minutes (until 1:00 pm,) and will conclude with Benediction. If there is interest, in the future, the length of time could be extended to an hour or even several hours.

Next weekend at the 4:30 pm Saturday evening Mass at St. Mary, Bishop Cistone will formally install me as Parochial Administrator. Please use this week to pray for me as well as for the needs of our parish. I can assure you that your prayers are very valuable for the success of my ministry and the works of the parish. On Sunday September 12 at the 9:00 am Mass, Bishop will come to Mt. St. Joseph for my installation there.

God bless you! See you in church, on the bike trail, or out in town! Let us resolve to pray daily for each other, invoking the powerful intercession of our two patrons: Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception, and Saint Joseph.

Fr. David

The Faith Explained

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

What is the importance of Eucharistic adoration?

Eucharistic adoration is the respect and worship we give to Jesus, who is truly present to us under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure; by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. As St. Alphonsus Liguori noted, "of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us." [CCC 1418]

What is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament?

Exposition is the placement of the sacred host outside the tabernacle for public adoration. This can take many forms. The simplest form is the opening of the tabernacle doors. Another form is the removal of the sacred vessels from the tabernacle for a more prominent and visible placement. The Church also permits a "full" exposition, when the Sacred Host is clearly visible in a vessel called a "monstrance" which is placed on the altar.

What is Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament?

Benediction is a rite in which a priest or deacon imparts a blessing over those who are present for Eucharistic adoration. As he gives the blessing, he elevates the monstrance or vessel that contains the Sacred Host and makes the Sign of the Cross over those present. Benediction normally follows a period of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, just prior to its reposition into the Tabernacle.

What does it mean to have a Mass offered for someone?

An individual may ask a priest to offer a Mass for several reasons: for example, in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person, or, as is most common, for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. One must never forget the infinite graces that flow from the Sacrifice of the Mass which benefit one's soul. Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Mirae caritatis* (1902) beautifully elaborated this point and emphasized the connection between the communion of saints with the Mass:

The grace of mutual love among the living, strengthened and increased by the sacrament of the Eucharist, flows, especially by virtue of the Sacrifice [of the Mass], to all who belong to the communion of saints. For the communion of saints is simply ... the mutual sharing of help, atonement, prayers and benefits among the faithful, those already in the heavenly fatherland, those consigned to the purifying fire, and those still making their pilgrim way here on earth. These all form one city, whose head is Christ, and whose vital principle is love. Faith teaches that although the august Sacrifice can be offered to God alone, it can nevertheless be celebrated in honor of the saints now reigning in Heaven with God, who has crowned them, to obtain their intercession for us, and also, according to apostolic tradition, to wash away the stains of those brethren who died in the Lord but without yet being wholly purified.

In his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, our beloved late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, taught,

In the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Church prays that God, the Father of mercies, will grant His children the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that they may become one body and one spirit in Christ. In raising this prayer to the Father of lights, from whom comes every good endowment and every perfect gift, the Church believes that she will be heard, for she prays in union with Christ her Head and Spouse, who takes up this plea of His Bride and joins it to His own redemptive sacrifice (43).

Please keep in mind that the tradition of offering Masses for others, particularly the dead, originates in the very early Church. Inscriptions discovered on tombs in Roman catacombs of the second century evidence this practice: for example, the epitaph on the tomb of Abercius (d. 180), Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, begs for prayers for the repose of his soul. Tertullian (c. 200) attested to observing the anniversary of a spouse with prayers and sacrifices, i.e. the Mass: "Indeed she prays for his soul, and requests refreshment for him meanwhile, and fellowship with him in the first resurrection; and she offers her sacrifice on the anniversaries of his falling asleep" (*On Monogamy*, X). Moreover, the Canons of Hippolytus (c. 235) explicitly mentions the offering of prayers for the dead during the Mass. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), in one of his many catechetical discourses, explained how at Mass both the living and dead are remembered, and how the Eucharistic Sacrifice of our Lord is of benefit to sinners, living and dead. St. Ambrose (d. 397) preached, "We have loved them during life; let us not abandon them in death, until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord." St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) stated, "Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to

offer our prayers for them." St. Augustine (d. 430) recorded the dying wishes of his mother, St. Monica in his *Confessions*: "One thing only I ask you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be." Finally, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604) said, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them."

We find not only the origins of this practice dating to the early Church but we also clearly recognize its importance.

Given this understanding, we can add some specifics. When a priest offers Holy Mass, he has three intentions: First, to offer the Mass reverently and validly in accord with the norms of the Church. Second, to offer the Mass in union with the whole Church and for the good of the whole Church. Third, to offer the Mass for a particular intention, such as the repose of the soul of someone who has died.

Therefore, the effects of the Mass bring certain benefits or fruits. The general fruits of the Mass are the effects upon the whole Church — to the living faithful as well as the poor souls in purgatory. For this reason, in the Canon of the Mass (the Eucharistic Prayer), a special mention is made for both the living and the dead.

The special ministerial fruits of the Mass are applied to the particular intention of the Mass, i.e. "for whom the Mass is offered."

The special personal fruits of the Mass benefit the celebrating priest who acts in the person of Christ in offering the Mass and to the people who are in attendance and participate in the offering of the Mass.

These fruits are both extensively and intensively finite, since each of us is finite. Therefore, the more a Mass is offered, the more benefit is conferred. For example, all things being equal, 10 Masses offered for the repose of a soul confer 10 times the benefit of one Mass.

The intention of the Mass is also determined by various factors: The Church may stipulate the particular intention; for example, all pastors are required to offer one Mass on Sunday for the intentions of the living and deceased parishioners of a parish. A priest may also have his own particular intention in offering a Mass, such as the repose of the soul of his parents. Finally, a person may ask a priest to offer a Mass for a particular intention; usually, a stipend (*in the diocese of Saginaw, this is customarily \$5*) is given to the priest for offering the Mass, which thereby in justice creates an obligation which must be satisfied.

We find not only the origins of this practice dating to the early Church but we also clearly recognize its importance. When we face the death of someone, even a person who is not Catholic, to have a Mass offered for the repose of his soul and to offer our prayers are more beneficial and comforting than any other sympathy card or bouquet of flowers. To have a Mass offered on the occasion of a birthday, anniversary or special need is appropriate, beneficial and appreciated.

*Written by Father William P. Saunders
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