

+J.M.J+

COME TO MASS

By FATHER FRANCIS

NIHIL OBSTAT: John A. Schullien, S.T.D. censor librorum

IMPRIMATUR: ✠Albertus G. Meyer, S.T.D., S.S.L., Archiepiscopus Milwaukiensis
Milwaukia, die 27a Septembris, 1956



Lepanto Press Publishing

421 S. Lochsa Street
Post Falls, ID 83854

We Owe a Gift to God

EVERYBODY likes presents. We know that people who give us presents love us. On Christmas we always give Mother and Daddy a gift to tell them that we love them and that we are grateful for all they do for us. But there is Someone who has done ever so much more than Mother or Daddy or anybody else in the world could ever do. Can you guess who this Someone is? Yes, you guessed it. This Someone is God. He made this beautiful world and put in it all that we need so that we can live. He gave us a wonderful body, and a soul so that we can think and will. God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to give His life for us so that we can have His divine Life in us and be happy with Him in heaven. So you see, we owe a very special gift of thanksgiving to God every day of our life.

God is very good, so very holy. Where will we find a gift big enough for God? Nothing in this world is so precious as life. No gift that we can give is bigger than our life. This is just what God wants. He wants us to give Him ourselves. How can we give God ourselves? We can give God ourselves by giving Him a special gift called a SACRIFICE.

Before Jesus came on earth, people offered sacrifices. They knew that all life comes from God. They wanted to thank God. They knew that they should adore God because He is the Creator of life. They knew they had to ask God for help, for the things they needed to live. And when they did not live as they knew God

wanted them to live, they had to tell God they were sorry. They told God all this by offering sacrifice.

What Is a Sacrifice?

A SACRIFICE is a gift, something we can see. Before Jesus came, people offered fruit or grain or some animal, like a lamb. The grapes or wheat or lamb offered stood for the people, because the gift stands for the person who is offering it. A sacrifice is a gift that is offered to God. Therefore, sacrifice also means "to make sacred." Something is sacred when it belongs only to God; it cannot be used by any other person. That is why, before Jesus came, the people killed the lamb before they offered it to God, and they sprinkled its blood on an altar. Then the animal was burned. The altar was made of stones piled on top of one another. If the gift was food or wine, it was poured out on the stones. Therefore, we say that for a sacrifice the gift is destroyed or changed in some way. The gift that is offered in sacrifice is called a VICTIM. Since only one person can do the actual offering, it is done by a priest. The people make the offering through the priest.

We said that the gift always stands for the giver. Our gift to Mother and Daddy stands for us. It shows them that we love them. Just so, the animal which the people offered in sacrifice stood for them. It showed that these people wanted to belong to God alone. It showed that they



knew that their life came from God, and now they were giving it back to Him by offering the sacrifice.

Abel and Cain Offer Sacrifice

ADAM and Eve surely offered sacrifices. But the first sacrifices we read about in Holy Scripture are the sacrifices of Cain

and Abel. Abel, who was a shepherd, offered the best lamb of his flock. God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice because he offered it with love. Cain, a farmer, offered the fruits of the earth which he grew on his farm, but he did not offer his best fruits. He kept the best fruits for himself. God was not pleased with Cain's sacrifice because Cain was selfish. He did not give himself with his gift to God.

Abraham's Sacrifice

ABRAHAM, too, offered sacrifice. He was a priest, and he had a very fine son, called Isaac. Abraham loved Isaac very much. But when God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, he was ready to do so, even though it was very hard for him. Abraham loved God more than he did Isaac. He took fire and wood and saddled his donkey. Off he went with Isaac to the mountain of sacrifice. When they reached the mountain, Isaac carried the firewood for the sacrifice. Abraham made an altar of stones. He trembled as he prepared Isaac for the sacrifice. But just as he took his knife to kill Isaac, God sent an angel to Abraham. "Abraham," called the angel. "Do not kill your son Isaac!" And Abraham did not kill his son. When he looked around he saw a ram caught in the bushes. Abraham took it and sacrificed it to God to tell God that he thanked Him.

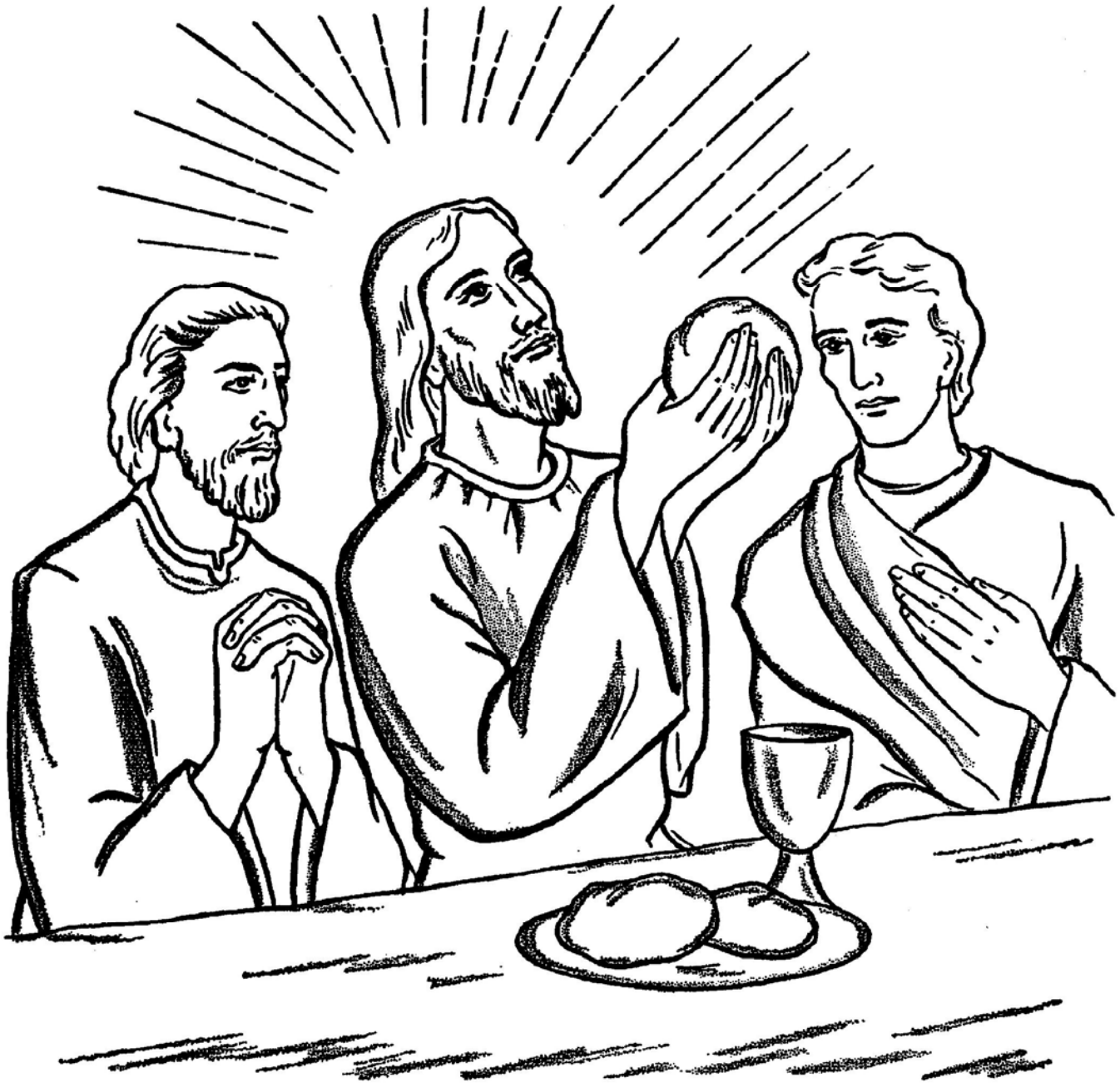


A King Offers Bread and Wine

MELCHISEDECH, who was both high priest and king, was the first to offer bread and wine as a sacrifice. He offered his sacrifice in thanksgiving for a victory over the Babylonians, who had made war on the Canaanites.

Now we know the important things needed for a sacrifice:

1. It must be a visible gift, something we can see.
2. It stands for the person offering the sacrifice.
3. It is offered to God.
4. It is offered on an altar.
5. The gift must become a victim by being changed or destroyed.
6. It is offered by a priest chosen by God.



The Perfect Gift

ALL the sacrifices offered before Jesus came were pleasing to God. But they were not perfect. God was pleased with them only because one day there would be a Perfect Sacrifice.

For a Perfect Sacrifice the gift and the giver must be perfect. There can be noth-

ing wrong with the gift. Nor can there be anything wrong with the giver.

Why were the sacrifices imperfect before Jesus came? Original sin, the sin of Adam and Eve, had put a high wall between God and man. Someone had to take the wall away. Even Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech were not pleasing enough to God to make good for sin. They belonged