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Ἐν εἰς πνεύματι, μὲν ψυχῆ)

συναθλοῦντε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

Phil. 1:27

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by repeating the invitation to resign or by prolonging the time within which the pastor could answer.¹¹

The session adjourned and the Chancellor went off to write the letter to Fr. Wall. The Bishop and the two Examiners discussed for a few moments more the sad turn events had taken. Fr. Wall was really a likable fellow; but one did have to consider the good of the parish. Perhaps he would accept the invitation and resign. In that case they would see about getting him assigned to some other place where he would be able to do good work, unhampered by the hard feelings which had grown in Jordan.

(To be continued)

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¹¹ Cf. Can. 2149, § 2.

“ON THE MANNER OF QUOTING SACRED SCRIPTURE”

First, the preacher should always so identify the sacred texts in his sermon that it will be clear to his auditors that it is Our Divine Lord who speaks, and not the preacher. If an explanation is to be given, the preacher must be careful not to give the impression that the explanation is his own invention, but should refer to the interpretation of one of the Fathers of the Church; or at least be very careful to give no explanation that is not in accord with parallel places in the Scriptures. Regarding the Gospel maxims—one should never take it upon himself to “prove” them, but should simply state them as incontestable, and then explain how they may be put into practice. For example, in order to show the necessity of humility, it must first be shown that Our Lord has commanded us to be humble, telling us that unless we become as little children, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. It would be useless, and ridiculous, to “prove” this. But it can be established how just and indispensable this commandment is; that since humility is an inescapable necessity for poor and wicked servants such as we are, we must strive without ceasing to attain it. After this, various occasions for the exercise of humility can be suggested. It is by such a method that the preacher brings out in detail what is virtually contained in a Scripture text, and illustrates its meaning in a familiar manner.

—*La véritable manière de prêcher selon l'esprit de l'évangile.* Anonymous

"MEDIATOR DEI" AND THE LAYMAN AT MASS

The encyclical *Mediator Dei*, issued on Nov. 20, 1947, and published in Latin in the *Osservatore Romano* on Nov. 30, has but one primary objective: to relieve the tension (more in some countries than in others) that has arisen from certain disciplinary and dogmatic disputes, particularly with regard to the Mass and related matters. At a time when the Church is menaced by formidable external foes in so many countries, the absolute need for internal harmony is self-evident. It is to be hoped, therefore, that writers and speakers who now undertake the interpretation of this momentous encyclical will do so in a spirit of charity and objectivity. Any other attitude would defeat the very definite purpose of the encyclical.

To accomplish his purpose, the Holy Father does three things. First, in several passages he praises those who have worked so zealously to promote interest, understanding, and active co-operation in the liturgy. Second, he cautions these against various excesses, both disciplinary and dogmatic. Finally, he cautions others of the clergy who are so fixed in the rut of liturgical routine that they refuse even to consider the possibility of innovations. Such innovations, of course, are not to be introduced without permission of the Ordinary.

The encyclical is divided into four sections of which the second is the most important. Although this section throws light on various disciplinary and dogmatic aspects of the Mass, it devotes considerable space to clarifying the part which the laity have in its offering. That this subject needs clarification is clear to those who have been following the more recent literature about the Holy Sacrifice. Certain expressions have been used which would seem to exaggerate the layman's role in the Mass. Not a few theologians were worried about these expressions. So much* so that the eminent canonist, Felix Cappello, S.J., felt constrained to insert the following note (missing in previous editions) in the latest edition of his *De sacramentis*: "Dolendum vehementer quod minus accurate de hac re nonnulli loquuntur, passim asserentes, universos fideles offerre Missae sacrificium, eosdem habendos esse tamquam ministros et munere fungi sacerdotum! In his aliisque facile error theologicus latet." We shall, therefore, limit ourselves

to an interpretation of this one part of the second section of the encyclical.

At first sight it would appear that the laity may not be said to offer the Mass at all, by reason of the following defined proposition of Trent that has been neatly summarized in Canon 802 of the Code: "Potestatem *offerendi* missae sacrificium habent *solii* sacerdotes." Since it is a revealed truth that priests *alone* are empowered to offer the Mass, is it not a contradiction to say that the faithful also offer it? However, the contradiction is only apparent since dogmatic theologians universally teach that the laity also do offer the Mass. The word "offer" is analogous. According to the definition of Trent it must have one meaning applicable to priests alone. It must take on a different, though analogous meaning, when referred to the laity. It is these diverse meanings of the word "offer" that the Holy Father unravels in this part of the encyclical.

He begins his explanation by pointing out that all the faithful should realize that it is "their very important duty and lofty dignity to take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice." Hence during Mass their minds are not to be dormant or heedless or concerned with extraneous matters, but actively united with the mind of their High Priest, Jesus Christ.

"This does not mean, however, that the laity possess "priestly power" (*non idcirco sacerdotali etiam potestate fruuntur*). That the Holy Father is concerned about this matter is obvious from the fact that he reverts to it again, stating that the faithful are not mediators between God and men and, therefore, "cannot enjoy priestly rights" (*nullo modo jure sacerdotali frui posse*). Moreover, he obliges shepherds of souls to make this fact clear to their people.

Supposing, then, that this revealed truth is firmly implanted in the minds of all, we should say that the faithful also offer the Divine Victim, though in a different way from the priest. To prove this, the Holy Father gives quotations from Innocent III and St. Robert Bellarmine. He further proves the point by citations from the prayers of the Mass such as the *Orate, fratres*.

If we seek to know the source of this dignity conferred upon the laity, we find it in the baptismal character. It should be observed here that the Holy Father does not even mention the character of

Confirmation. It seems, then, that it would be a mistake to appeal to this character as a partial source of the layman's dignity to offer the Mass. In the two paragraphs referred to above, only the character of Baptism is mentioned. Nor is there any other passage attributing the layman's dignity to the character of Confirmation.

Coming then directly to the meaning of the truth that the faithful also offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Holy Father says that he will explain the matter "breviter pressequere."

First of all, certain reasons of a *remote* nature justify the expression that the laity also offer the Mass. For example, sometimes the faithful in a body answer aloud the prayers of the priest. Sometimes also, they present their offering of bread and wine to priest that these may be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Finally, by their stipends the laity have the priest offer the Divine Victim for themselves and their intentions. In these three ways particularly (others are not excluded), the people may be said to offer the Mass *remotely*.

But a proximate and profound reason (*intima ratio*) also exists to explain why the faithful, especially those present at the sacrifice, are said to offer the Mass. However, to understand this reason and to preclude the emergence of a dangerous error, it is necessary to restrict the word "offer" to its precise signification.

It is plain from this section of the encyclical that the Holy Father, in accord with the almost universal teaching of theologians, places the essence of the Mass in the consecration alone. However, for the integrity of the Mass, the priest's Communion, and only the priest's is required. Since the essence of the Mass is to be found in the consecration alone and since the "offering" pertains to the essence as its formal element, the word "offer," precisely considered, refers only to the consecration. It does not embrace the other parts of the Mass, though all of them may be said in a broad sense to be offered to God. Hence the word "offer" in its more precise signification is not a synonym for "celebrate," a word which may be applied to the entire sacrificial rite. Moreover, the word "offer" in its exact meaning does not comprise the effecting of the Real Presence by transubstantiation or the mystical immolation portrayed by the double consecration. True enough, Christ's presence and His mystical slaying are essential to the sacrifice as its *materia remota* and *proxima*, but they are excluded from the precise signifi-

cation of the word "offer." Yet again, the word "offer" in this restricted meaning does not refer to the offering of *one's self to God*. What does it mean then technically? Simply this: the directing or presentation of the Divine Victim to God the Father for the glory of the Blessed Trinity and the good of the entire Church. This presentation is the most important, the formal element of the Mass, since the presence of the Divine Victim and His symbolical destruction do not get a definite meaning until they are directed heavenward to the Blessed Trinity.

As regards the effecting of the Real Presence and the mystical slaying, these are the work of the priest alone, when he pronounces the words of consecration. In accomplishing these two effects, the priest acts in the name of Christ, not in the name of the Church. Moreover, "*by the very fact that the priest places the Divine Victim upon the altar, he presents the Same as an offering to God the Father for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity and for the benefit of the entire Church. The offering, understood in this precise and limited sense, is shared by the faithful in their own way and for two reasons: because, namely, they offer the sacrifice not only through the hands of the priest, but also, in a certain fashion, along with him. By this participation the people's offering also is related to the liturgical worship.*"

The "offering" mentioned in the first sentence of the preceding quotation is the offering in the strict sense, the external offering, the only one that truly constitutes the visible sacrifice. Every sacrifice demands such an external offering, since sacrifice by its very nature is an *external* rite. Moreover, the Holy Father states that this external offering is enacted by the priest *alone* in each Mass. The priest alone has sacerdotal power, which means first and foremost that he alone can visibly *offer* the sacrificial Victim to God. However, in making this external offering, the offering in the precise sense, the priest acts not only in the name of Christ, but also in that of the faithful.

The fact that the priest liturgically offers as *minister of the faithful* is the key to the "profound reason" why the people should be said to share in the offering of the Mass. The outward liturgical offering is totally beyond their powers, but they have an intimate relationship with it and in a twofold way according to the Holy Father. First; because the faithful offer the Divine Victim *through*

the priest. Secondly and in addition, because they also offer the Victim in a certain fashion (*quodammodo*) *along with* the priest.

Concerning the first point, it is quite plain that the faithful offer *through* the priest because he bears the person of Christ the Head who offers (as the principal minister) in the name of all His members. Hence the entire Church may be rightly said to offer the Victim through Christ.

With regard to the second point, the faithful are said to offer the Victim *along with* the priest, not because they too accomplish the liturgical rite. Only the priest is empowered to do this. But since the liturgical rite by its very nature (*suapte natura*) postulates *internal* cult on the part of those who offer, the faithful may be said to offer *along with* the priest because they unite their "prayers" (*vota*) of praise, thanksgiving, impetration and expiation with the prayers and internal dispositions of the priest and of Christ Himself, the principal priest. Or, as the Holy Father puts it in another place, because the faithful should reproduce "the same *state of mind* which our divine Redeemer had when He made His Sacrifice of Himself. That is, they should bring a humble submission of mind, and they should proffer adoration, honor, praise and thanksgiving to the infinite Majesty of God." Indeed, the very external rite, though accomplished by the priest alone, *signifies* that the people also are making these internal acts of worship.

But in addition to these active internal dispositions which are so closely associated with the liturgical rite itself, the encyclical gives a second reason why the faithful may be said to offer *along with* the priest. It is because both priest and people should cultivate at Mass an *interior spirit of victimhood*. They should offer up *themselves* to God, surrender themselves to Him to do His will in all things. This spirit of self-immolation is symbolized by the Mass. Christ, the Divine Victim, substitutes for both priest and people. His mystical repetition of Calvary symbolizes the spirit of self-destruction that should animate all those whose place He takes. It should be observed, however, that this attitude of self-immolation, though it is signified very particularly by the Mass, is not restricted to the Mass alone. The same spirit should permeate the Christian at all times. It was already symbolized by Baptism. By that sacrament each Christian renounced the devil, the world and his own selfish desires. He vowed self-immolation and that

spirit should pervade his entire life. Nevertheless, this spirit is renewed in a special way by the meaning of Mass, and during it, therefore, both priest and people should again offer up themselves to God as victims.

From this summary exposition by the Holy Father two conclusions follow regarding the offering of the Mass by the laity. First, their offering is *indirect*. It is done "*through* the priest." Only he can place the outward offering which alone constitutes the sacrifice. But since he is deputed by God to be the representative of the faithful and hence places the outward offering in the name of all, the people also present the Divine Victim to God *through* him. This point should cause no difficulty. It is verified whenever an authorized agent acts for a group. Thus the people of a congressional district act *through* their elected representative in Congress. He acts *directly*; they act *indirectly*. He alone votes; but they vote *through* him. If members of the United Mine Workers wish to lodge a protest with the government, they do so through Mr. John L. Lewis. He alone protests *directly*; they protest *indirectly, through* him.

It follows secondly from the same passage of the encyclical that the faithful offer the Mass *internally only*. This does not mean that the faithful may not say aloud parts of the Mass that are of ecclesiastical institution only. They may certainly externalize these prayers if the Bishop grants permission. But such prayers, even though they may *express* an offering on the part of the people, do not constitute the Mass. The one and only offering that truly "makes" the Mass is that which takes place automatically at the consecration. When we say, therefore, that the faithful offer the Mass *internally only*, we simply mean that this outward offering at the consecration is totally beyond their power. They can only agree to it and put on the interior dispositions which it demands from them. Here again, we have a procedure that is verified whenever an authorized agent acts for a society. If a university presents an honorary degree to President Truman, the external offering is made by the president of the university *alone*. He acts in the name of the whole institution. But his external offering signifies that not only he, but also the other members of the university have internal dispositions of esteem or gratitude or good will to President Truman. So it is at Mass. The priest alone has the power externally to

offer the Divine Victim to the Blessed Trinity. But his external offering postulates internal dispositions from him and from ail for whom he offers. These internal dispositions should correspond both with the purposes of the Mass and with its symbolization, which is the state of victimhood.

Such seems to be the correct interpretation of this part of the encyclical. The Holy Father has added nothing to the traditional teaching about the laity's share in the offering of the Mass, but he has put down that teaching briefly, concisely, clearly. It would seem to be his desire to eliminate for the future ambiguous expressions about the matter. It is also his desire that the faithful should be instructed regarding their noble role in the offering of the sacrifice. For it is a noble role, one that is limited to those who are endowed with the baptismal character. No longer should the faithful assist at Mass "quiescenti neglegentique animo et ad alia excurrenti atque vaganti." Much has been done to eliminate this inactive condition. Much remains to be done. The Holy Father congratulates all who have been active in this apostolate, particularly those who have been promoting interest in the liturgy.

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Charity of the English Monasteries

Thus the providing for the poor became one of the great duties and uses of the Church. This duty rested, before, on the land-owners. . . . This duty could be lodged in no hands so fitly as in those of the clergy; for, thus the work of charity, the feeding of the hungry, the clothing of the naked, the administering to the sick, the comforting of the widow, the fostering of the fatherless, came always in company with the performance of services to God. For the uncertain disposition of the rich, for their occasional and sometimes capricious charity, was substituted the certain, the steady, the impartial hand of a constantly resident and unmarried administrator of bodily as well as of spiritual comfort to the poor, the unfortunate and the stranger.

—William Cobbett, *A History of the Reformation* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop), p. 48.