

4th SUNDAY OF LENT - C (March 14, 2010)
Deacon John Baker

Lent leads me to read something I wouldn't usually read.

One reading made a comparison of Christ' death on the cross to the Eucharistic celebration in the Mass.

One paragraph made an impact on me and I felt a need to share it with you.

Of course, the Holy Spirit is behind all of this so I really don't have a choice do I?

The reading started with some things I learned many years ago.

All grace flows to us from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary.

This is why Catholic churches display the crucified Christ in the most prominent location in the church.

In the Mass, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is re-presented for all time.

The sacrifice of Christ is made present to us every time we celebrate the Eucharist

Then the reading connects some of the old things with some new thoughts.

The Mass is much more than a symbolic representation of the past.

The reality of the cross and Christ's sacrifice is present here and now in this Church.

Every time we celebrate the Mass.

The cross and the Mass are the same reality.

They are centered on Christ's sacrifice: both on the cross and at every Mass.

It is one and the same practice.

The Mass continues the reality of the life giving grace that Christ gave to us from the cross.

The grace we receive in the Eucharist today is the grace that flowed from Christ's sacrifice on Good Friday.

The thought that really hit me and made me think was:

Christ's sacrifice on the cross was not worth **more** than the Mass.

There is no difference in the reality of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the Consecration of the Mass we are now attending.

That may be hard to understand or for that matter hard to believe.

The reading continued and I have edited to save time.

The crucifixion and the liturgy of the Eucharist are one and the same sacrifice.

Linked together over time and space.

How can this be possible??

Not a problem for God.

The priest and the victim are the same.

Only the setting is different.

The Mass contains everything Christ offered to God.

The Mass contains all the grace that was granted to Christ by His Father.

Our participation in the Mass joins us also in this great offering of Christ.

I thought maybe I should check the Catechism to see the Church's position.

The Catechism describes these thoughts in beautiful language.

And I quote from the Catechism.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice because it makes present the sacrifice of the cross.

The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are **one single sacrifice.**

The victim is one and the same.

Only the manner of offering is different.

The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of all the church.

Our lives, our praise, suffering, prayer and work are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value.

The celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is totally directed to the intimate union of ourselves with Christ.

In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body.

That's you and me!!

That is a big Wow!!