

THE MASS (2)

- At Mass Christ does not suffer or die again. Rather he represents, prolongs, continues, and renews his great moment of sacrifice down through the centuries so that we can be a part of it.
- The Mass is to be the great way we are drawn to God, and our great source of strength for the journey to him.
- "Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no.102)

Bread: a sign of death

- To provide bread, first of all the seed must be planted; it must be buried. Then, when the wheat has grown, it must be ground down and crushed to make the flour which will be made into dough. Jesus knew that, like the wheat, he must be crushed in death so that he could give himself to us in this most complete sign of love.
- *"I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest." John 12:24*

Wine: a sign of death

- As the grain is ground to make the flour which is then made into bread, so the grape must be crushed to form the wine. By choosing wine as a sign of the gift he was making, Jesus

was once more pointing out that it was given at the cost of his life.

"He was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed."

Isiah 53:5

What is the difference between Christ's offering on Calvary and at Mass?

- On Calvary Jesus was offering directly in his own Person. But at Mass Jesus offers through the person of his priest and also in union with his followers, his Church.
- On Calvary, suspended between heaven and earth, Jesus was alone, isolated from the men and women who had rejected him. But, at Mass, we are united with Christ's offering. We are part of his Body, the Church.
- At Mass, in other words, Christ's offering becomes our offering, for in baptism we became members of Christ's Body.
- We are not spectators at the sacrifice of the Mass like the bored soldiers playing dice at Calvary. We are members of Christ's Body. We offer the sacrifice through him, with him, and in him.