

THE HOLY
SACRIFICE
OF
THE MASS

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

FR. MICHAEL MUELLER, CSSR

“For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.”

—Malachi 1:11

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*To the Most Sacred and Adorable HEART OF JESUS in the
Blessed Sacrament this book is humbly dedicated in reparation,
thanksgiving, and love.*

NEW YORK
July 22, 1874

Dear Father Mueller:

I take great pleasure in adding my commendation to the many others which have already been given of your excellent book on the Holy Mass. I sincerely hope that it will have the widely extended circulation which it so well deserves.

With best wishes, I remain, Rev. dear sir,

Yours Truly in Xto,
John, *Abp. of New York*

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Protest of the Author

In obedience to the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, of holy memory, I protest that I do not intend to attribute any other than purely human authority to all the miracles, revelations, graces and incidents contained in this book; neither to the titles, holy or blessed, applied to the servants of God not yet canonized, except in cases where these have been confirmed by the HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH and by the HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE, of whom I profess myself an obedient son, and, therefore, to their judgment I submit myself and whatever I have written in this book.

CHAPTER 1

Introductory

TOWARD the middle of the fifth century there lived in the City of Rome a hidden saint named Alexius.¹ He was the son of the Roman senator Euphemian, a man of great wealth. At an early age he felt inspired by God to leave his home for a strange country. Obedient to this inner voice, he went forth from his father's house and passed seventeen years in pious pilgrimages in the East, amid many trials and dangers. At length, to show his love for God in a still more striking manner, he resolved to return to his house in the garb of a poor beggar and spend there the remainder of his days. On arriving at Rome, he met his father, Euphemian, in the street, followed by a train of attendants, as became his high rank. Clad in rags and attenuated by fasts, Alexius was not recognized by his father. So he besought him for charity to give him shelter in his house, and for food, the crumbs that fell from his table.

The nobleman, moved with pity, bade one of his servants to lodge and take care of the poor beggar. The servant conducted him to an obscure apartment under the staircase, where for twenty-two years he passed a life of suffering and humiliation, because the menials made him a butt for their ridicule, beat him and subjected him to many indignities, which he bore with invincible patience. Thus did the life he spent in his father's house become one long-continued prayer, fast, penance and austerity. At length, when he felt death approaching, he begged one of the servants to bring him writing materials. Then he wrote down on a sheet of paper the story of his whole life, whither he had wandered, what had happened to him, what he had suffered at home and abroad. He

¹ St. Alexius of Rome, whose feast day is July 17 as mentioned in the Roman Martyrology.

stated at the same time that he was Alexius, the son of the house, whom his parents had missed for so many years. This paper he held in his hands until death took him on a Sunday at the time when his parents were at Mass. No sooner had his soul taken flight to Heaven than all the bells of the churches in Rome began to ring, and a loud voice was heard to say distinctly three times: "Go to the house of Euphemian to find the great friend of God who has just died and prays for Rome, and all he asks is granted." Then went the people to find the Saint, and Euphemian was the first to enter his house. He went straightway to the room under the staircase, and to his surprise found that the poor beggar had just expired. Seeing the paper, he took it out of his hands, and reading its contents aloud burst into tears and embraced his holy son, hardly able to utter a word. The mother of Alexius was still more deeply affected and cried out, "O my son, why have I known thee too late!"

The story of Alexius is a good illustration of what often happens in these days to many a Christian. Alexius went back to his father's house as a beggar clad in tatters, the better to disguise his rank and wealth. Our dear Savior acts in the same manner in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There He is, but by no outward sign does He betray His real presence; His heavenly glory and brightness He hides from us; He is there, as one may say, in a poor miserable dress, under the appearances of bread and wine. As the parents of Alexius paid little attention to their son in his state of poverty and subjection, so, in this life, many Christians pay but little attention to Jesus Christ, because He humbly condescends to conceal His glory in the Sacrament of His love. But when this life is over and they come to see Him face to face, whom here they possessed in the Holy Eucharist, at the sight of the consolations, of the beauty and of the riches that they failed to recognize in time, they will exclaim with the mother of Alexius, "O, Jesus! dear Savior, why have we known Thee too late! Ah! had we only known Thee in Thy mystery of love, when alive on earth, we would have allowed no opportunity to escape us of assisting at the celebration of Thy sacred mysteries, of receiving Thee in Holy Communion. Not an hour should have passed without a thought of Thee. Thou wouldst have been our whole delight, our whole joy, our whole happiness, the object of all our desires, thoughts and actions. O dear Lord, why have we known Thee too late!"

“Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior!” cries out the Prophet Isaias.² Yes, undoubtedly, God is a more hidden God in the Eucharist than anywhere else. His greatness lies concealed under the littleness of a host, His power under the feeble species, His universality under an atom, His eternity under a moment, His wisdom under an apparent folly. There indeed is He the hidden God; more hidden than in Mary’s womb, more hidden than in the crib, more hidden than under the darkness of Calvary, more hidden than in the gloom of the sepulcher. For here His humanity, His divinity, His glory, His beatitude—all are hidden. To all unbelievers and heretics He is hidden indeed. To many lukewarm Catholics, nay, even to many of those who stand at His altar and touch His sacred Body, He is hidden. Alas, that that adorable Sacrifice and Sacrament of the altar should be to so many a hidden treasure; that there should be so many who have eyes and see not, although to them is granted to behold what kings and prophets, and patriarchs and saints have sighed in vain to gaze upon. Alas! that there should be so many who deserve the reproach which Our Lord made to His disciples, “I was a stranger, and you received Me not.” “Your little faith in My presence in the Blessed Sacrament made Me appear to you a stranger, although quite near. Touching Me, you knew Me not. You are like those disciples of Mine, journeying to Emmaus, to whom I appeared after My resurrection, conversing with them most familiarly, but they knew Me not, saying, ‘Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?’ So long a time have I been with you and have you not known Me?” Three years had Jesus spent in the company of His Apostles. This He calls a long time, in which they certainly should have learned who He was. Yet their faith was not such as He wished it to be. Philip asks of Our Lord to show them His Father. Jesus answers, “So long a time have I been with you and have you not as yet known Me? He who sees Me sees also the Father; for the Father is in Me and I am in Him. We cannot be separated.” And we? How long have we been with Jesus? We became acquainted with Him in our childhood; we went to Mass at least every Sunday; we received Him over and over again for so many years; and yet the complaint of Our Lord, made

² Is. 45:15.

to His Apostles, applies perhaps more justly to us. “So long a time have you celebrated Mass,” says He to many a priest; “So long a time have you assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary,” says He to many a Catholic; “So long a time have you entered into close intimacy with Me in Holy Communion and yet you seem not to know Me. You know not My Divinity in the Sacred Host, or your respect and veneration for it could not be so small; you know not My Body and Soul there present, for you do not imitate the example I gave you on earth and give you in this mystery of love; you know not My love, or it would affect you more; you know not My Heart, which is ever open to you, with charity inexhaustible, for you still seem to doubt its goodness and meekness, its tender love and its unbounded mercy. You know not My sanctity, or you would not appear at the altar without gravity, without devotion, and without reverence. You know not My high dignity, or you would not touch Me with such coldness and thoughtlessness, nor would you approach the altar in a state of unworthiness. Indeed, were you thoroughly impressed with the thought that in the adorable Sacrament of My love you receive *your Lord and your God*—had you a lively conviction of this truth—would you dare approach Me as you do, without preparation, without sorrow, humility or reverence? Would you presume after having received Me, your Redeemer, to employ the eyes that have contemplated your Lord and God in this adorable mystery in the indulgence of curiosity, the tongue on which He has reposed in slander, raillery or expressions wounding to charity? Would you profane the heart into which He has entered by inordinate affections, anger, hatred or envy? Whence is it that you relapse so frequently into habitual failing and draw so little profit from hearing Mass and receiving Holy Communion? It is because you know Me not in the mystery of My love.

“Every object that is brought in contact with fire experiences its effects; it is either enkindled wholly, or at least is heated. What fire is more intense than the fire of divine love in the Blessed Sacrament? To receive this divine fire so often into your heart, to be near it every day and yet remain cold, not to burn for Me with that ardent love which consumed the just men of the Old Law, in expectation of their Savior coming! Do you then value the possession of a benefit less than its promise? You are always permitted to enjoy

My Presence in the sacred Tabernacle, and those patriarchs only asked for the momentary appearance of a Redeemer. Truly, the faith of the patriarchs and their fervent desires will one day rise up in judgment against you. Their desires had no center upon earth, but you can repose your thoughts and your heart upon Me in this Tabernacle, in which abides your God. My love could not suffer you to repeat the complaint of the Prophet, ‘O my God, wherefore art Thou far from me?’”

The tabernacle in our churches does not contain, like the Ark of the Covenant, the perishable records of the past mercies of God. It encloses the living God Himself, the Creator of Heaven and earth. “It is the Lord.” The pure eyes of St. John speedily recognized his Divine Master when He appeared to His Apostles after His resurrection. “It is the Lord,” he exclaimed. Our Lord is recognized by the beloved disciple because the pure heart easily penetrates those veils which surround His holy and glorious humanity. At the altar it is also the purest and most loving souls that enjoy the most intimate and consoling sense of His Sacred Presence; the outward appearances under which He hides Himself are sufficiently transparent to the eyes of their faith; they touch, they embrace Him in mutual love, and no sooner do they behold the Sacred Host than they exclaim, “It is the Lord.”

This earth, which is the abode of the Holy Eucharist, would appear a kind of terrestrial paradise, if we were only capable of appreciating that precious treasure. Wonderful and ineffable truth which thrills every Catholic heart! Neither human nor angelic intelligence and imagination combined could ever in their highest flights have conceived the idea of power and love like this. “It is the Lord!” Fervent priests and Catholics, however, are not satisfied with merely knowing Our Lord well in the Blessed Sacrament themselves, but consider it their duty to make Him known also to others by whatever means lies in their power; for He is not equally well known to all.

Dark clouds of error and weakness in faith have settled thickly around the throne of our dear Savior in the Sacrifice of the Mass ever since the time of the Reformation. It is the duty of priests especially to scatter those clouds by speaking on the sublime subject with a lively faith, in language glowing with love for this mystery of love, in words that work miracles; that is, in words which create in the mind of the hearers such profound conviction

of this great truth of our religion, and which at the same time enkindle in their hearts such great love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament as is calculated to make them *run* with a holy joy and delight to assist at the Sacrifice and receive the Communion. Our Lord upon the altar is silent during Mass, expecting that His priests, upon reflecting what He is there for—for them and for all the faithful—and what He has done for them in this mystery, would become inflamed with such love for Him as would put into their mouths words of such burning eloquence whenever they have to speak of His real presence, that every word should be a fiery dart piercing the hearts of their hearers with that divine love, and light of faith, and ardor of devotion, which are burning in their own. This is, indeed, what Jesus Christ expects from every good priest of His, especially in our time, when faith in this great mystery grows weaker every day, not only among the higher classes of society, but even among the common people, especially among the young men and young women. How many are there who regularly attend at Mass without ever entering into the spirit, nay, without ever properly joining in the external ceremonies? How many are present at Mass with so much indifference, as clearly to show that they either do not value these awful, these most beneficial mysteries, or that they understand little or nothing else than that the priest turns sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, and is clothed in a motley-colored garment. To them Mass and Vespers, or the performance of the funeral rites, are all pretty much the same thing. With great reason, then, did the Council of Trent command all the pastors of congregations frequently to explain the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to the faithful, that at least they may not be answerable for any want of respect, devotion and diligence which the people may be guilty of in attending at Mass. The Fathers of the Council were fully convinced that the power and influence of the Church over the hearts of men depended on the efforts which her priests would make to enkindle in souls a lively faith in, and an ardent love for, the Sacred Mysteries. “Many are infirm and weak among you,” writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, “and many sleep” in sin and indifference toward God and their own salvation, “because they discern not the Body of the Lord,” that is, because they are ignorant of the great treasure of the Mass and Holy Communion. As Samson was

celebrated for his extraordinary bodily strength, so is the Catholic Church noted for extraordinary spiritual strength. Were she asked, like Samson, wherefrom she derives all this invincible strength and vitality, she would answer: "It is from her faith in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; it is from Holy Communion. Take away the Mass and we are shorn of our strength, weak like the rest of mankind."

This faith is the dove with the olive branch, come to proclaim the passing away of the mighty deluge of sin; it rouses the lukewarm from the fatal lethargy that has fallen upon their souls, it brings sinners back to God, it inflames the pious with more ardent love for Jesus Christ, it causes the unbeliever to reflect on the truths of our religion, it dispels the clouds of religious errors, it puts the devil to flight and makes him tremble; it brings down the angels from Heaven upon earth to stay with the Christians and defend them against the attacks of Satan; it opens the source of all heavenly benedictions; it brings true peace and joy into the heart. It is this faith that disposes the heart for participating in the plenitude of this divine mystery and makes it easy for the soul to contemplate the Son of God, to approach Him with ardor, and to enjoy Him in peace; that keeps the interior eye of the soul forever fixed, not upon the weak accidents that show themselves to the senses, but on the Son of God, the King of glory, Who veils the splendor of His countenance that she may have easy access to His mercy unawed by the greatness of His Majesty. This is the faith that causes the heart to leap with joy and give forth acts of every virtue, in order to receive with greater reverence the divine Guest who honors it with His presence. This faith fills the soul with hope to approach Him with gladness; with humility to lose herself in profound respect; with charity to embrace Him; with devotion to render Him homage; with obedience to submit herself to His divine will. This is the spirit that concentrates all the powers of the soul in a profound recollection, and banishes from her whatever can interrupt her conversation with her dearly beloved Savior, Jesus Christ. It introduces her into the true kingdom of God, leading her frequently as it does to the sacred banquet to unite herself with her divine Spouse by means of the Blessed Sacrament.

The learned and the wise ones of this world are often blind to all this; and as they rely too much on their own opinion and judgment, contented to guide themselves only by their own lights, not caring to rise higher than human reason, for want of humility and devotion, so they grovel all their lifetime in the littleness of their own ideas and sentiments—a littleness incredible in all that regards the mysteries of the Faith and the spiritual direction of souls. So they are vexed at Revelation; and histories of miracles—with an occasional professed exception in favor of those recorded in the Gospel, offend them, just as though the Lord could and would no longer perform a miracle, nor reveal Himself again after His ascension into Heaven, forgetful that in the very Gospel they profess to believe He has told us plainly, “Amen, amen I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do;”³ “And he that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and will *manifest myself to him.*”⁴

These men do not consider that wonders are in a particular manner the work of God, intended to awaken our attention to His holy Providence, and to move our souls to praise His goodness and power, often also to bear witness to His truth.

Our fathers in the Faith never, as do so many of the wise ones today, found it so difficult for Almighty God to work miracles, especially by means of the Blessed Sacrament. Bossuet said: “Why do people wish to make it so laborious a work for the Almighty to cause miraculous effects?” “There are,” says a great poet, “more things in Heaven and on earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy.” That which is considered to be impossible at the present day was doubtless possible formerly, when the world was younger and more innocent than it now is—more worthy of the miracles God wrought in it—when angels and saints of Heaven loved to commune with its simple and innocent people, whose life was divided between labor and the practice of good works.

“The bad,” says St. Alphonsus, “are as ready to deride miracles as the good are to believe them”; and he adds, “As it is weakness to give credit to all

³ John 14:12.

⁴ John 14:21.

things, so, on the other hand, to reject miracles which come to us attested by grave and pious men either savors of infidelity, which supposes them impossible to God, or of presumption, which refuses belief to such a class of authors. We give credit to a Tacitus, a Suetonius, and can we deny it without presumption to Christian authors of learning and piety? There is less risk in believing and receiving what is related with some probability by honest persons and not rejected by the learned, and which serves for the edification of our neighbor, than in rejecting it with a disdainful and presumptuous spirit.” “When facts are related that teach and edify us,” says St. Francis de Sales, “we should not believe that the proofs upon which they rest are entirely defective and worthless. ‘Charity believeth all things,’ which is to say, it does not easily believe *that one lies*. And if there be no sign of falsehood in what is represented to her, she makes no difficulty in giving it credence, especially when it relates to anything which exalts and praises the love of God toward men, or the love of men toward God, the more so as Charity, which is the sovereign queen of virtues, takes pleasure after the manner of princes in those things which tend to the glory of her empire and domination. Supposing, then, that the narrative be neither so public nor so well attested as the greatness of the wonder would seem to require, it loses not for that its truth; for, as St. Augustine excellently says, ‘When a miracle is made known, however striking it may be in the very place where it happened, or even when related by those who witnessed it, it is scarcely believed, but it is not the less true.’” “Though an assent of Catholic Faith be not due to them,” says Pope Benedict XIV, “yet they deserve a human assent according to the rules of prudence by which they are probable and piously credible.”

At the time of St. Bernard, some revered the revelations of St. Hildegarde, even those passages which they could not understand; others, on the contrary, condemned them as mere reveries. St. Bernard himself read them with the greatest care, and he was *edified beyond description*. Now as those revelations were differently judged by divers persons, St. Bernard said to his companions, “These revelations are not the work of man; and no mortal will understand them unless love has renewed in his soul the image and likeness of God.” However, one of those present observed that many persons, both learned and ignorant, religious and secular, daily pierced the

soul of the handmaid of God by repeating that her visions were only *hallucinations of the brain*, or deceits of the devil. Upon which St. Bernard replied: "Let us not be surprised, my brethren, that those who are sleeping in their sins should regard revelations from on high as follies, since the Apostle affirms that the animal man cannot comprehend the things of the spirit. Yes, certainly, those who live buried in pride, in impurity, or in other sins, take the warnings of God for reveries; but if they were vigilant in the fear of God, they would recognize *by sure signs*, the divine work. As to those who believe those visions to be suggestions of the devil, they show that they have no deep knowledge of divine contemplation; they are like those who said of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that He cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub."

Such men, for being in the habit of always thinking first how a tenet or practice or a fact is most presentable to the public, are soon and almost imperceptibly led to profaneness, from a habit producing, as it generally does, the spirit of rationalism in matters of faith. Their too delicate and fastidious taste has too much regard for the feelings of a certain class of people. I am aware that Christian charity, the great queen of virtues, demands of us to have due regard for the feelings of others; and I am thoroughly persuaded that no one was ever yet converted by harsh means or abusive language. Charity is, however, not only not incompatible with truth, but it ever demands that the whole truth should be told, especially when its concealment be a cause of error or of perseverance in error and sin, in matters, too, of most deep and vital importance. Hence to judge from the works of our greatest Catholic divines, it would appear that the deeper theologian a man is, the less does he give way to this studious desire of making difficulties easy at any cost short of denying what is positively *de fide*. They seem to handle truth religiously just in the way that God is pleased to give it to us, rather than to see what they can make of it themselves by shaping it for controversy, and so by dint of skillful manipulation squeeze it through a difficulty. Let such men examine themselves well to see whether they are not out of harmony with the mind of the Church and the spirit of the Saints, whether their faith is not too feeble, and their distrust of God's wonders too overweening and too bold, whether, in short, for the good of their own soul

they may not have the principle of rationalism to unlearn, and the temper of faith—sound, reasonable, masculine, yet childlike faith—to broaden, to heighten and to deepen in themselves by the very contemplation of what may now be in some degree a scandal to them, namely, *Quam mirabilis est Deus in sanctis suis* [that God is marvelous in His Saints], by means of the Holy Eucharist.

What difficulty can one pretend to have in believing certain extraordinary graces which we read of in the lives of the Saints? He who believes the favor which God conferred on men by making Himself man, ought to find no other incredible and surprising. All the communications which God can make after this are as nothing. God, having given Himself in such a wonderful manner to men, can now refuse them nothing. It is to give them all else that He gave Himself in the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist. The belief in this truth naturally inclines all good Christians to believe whatever appears to reveal the power, the goodness, and the love of their divine Savior toward men in the august mystery of the Mass. They appreciate the manifestations of this goodness of the Lord; they bless and thank Him for them, and feel powerfully, yet sweetly drawn by them toward this center of all earthly happiness.

It is principally for this reason that, for my own use and for the use of others, I have often wished for such a compilation on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as I now offer to my brethren of the Catholic Communion, a compilation which I have endeavored to write as much as possible in the same manner as the book *The Blessed Eucharist, Our Greatest Treasure*, being fully convinced from a long experience that this manner of explaining so sublime a truth is better calculated than any other to convey instruction to the minds of all, especially of the humbler classes, who compose the greater part of the body of the faithful, to enliven their faith and make them relish and practice what they are taught to believe of so stupendous a mystery. A book like this, containing a full, plain and I trust, correct explanation of the Mass may be welcome to Catholics in general, but especially to well-disposed and pious souls, whose chief desire and aim in life is to know the will of God, their heavenly Father, and knowing it, to do it.

I am impressed more strongly than ever with a sense of the grandeur and sublimity of the subject. It has always been a matter of considerable difficulty not only to Protestants, but even to most Catholics, nay even to many theologians to form a clear conception of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Perfectly conscious of my utter incompetency for the task, I could have wished that someone more competent and more experienced in writing had engaged in the undertaking. Hence I am ready to charge myself with presumption for venturing on so difficult a task which has occupied the pens of the ablest theologians.

I can find for myself no excuse but in the sincerity with which I have sought to collect, from all the authors at my command, the most select and pithy sentences of the Fathers and theologians, in order to give devout persons an opportunity, with little effort or expense, to become acquainted with the ideas of those great men and saints of God on the subject, that their hearts may be inflamed with greater ardor for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—a fountain so full that the further it extends, the fuller it becomes; and the fuller it becomes, the further it extends, which signifies that the Holy Mass is a subject so grand and so sublime that the more we say of it, the more there remains to be said. Notwithstanding this sincerity of mine, I am fully sensible that I am far from having done justice to a mystery inaccessible to angels, impenetrable to devils and totally incomprehensible to human reason, a subject so difficult to handle, so vast in its extent, so sublime in its conceptions, so unspeakable in its blessings, both spiritual and temporal. It is not necessary to urge in my defense any theological embarrassments under which I labored, since that will hardly be an excuse for not doing well what it was not necessary for me to do at all. But I may be permitted to add that in my book, *The Blessed Eucharist, Our Greatest Treasure*, a certain deficiency may have been felt by many a pious reader in the perusal of the first chapter on the Real Presence, and of those chapters treating on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; they may have wished to see in the former still more solid proofs in confirmation of the Real Presence, especially as the belief in this truth forms the basis of our whole conception of the Mass; in the latter they may have desired to see a fuller and more detailed explanation of the treasure of graces we possess in the divine

gift of the Mass. To supply this deficiency, the following pages were written during intervals snatched, since last Fall, from my many religious and missionary labors. As to the defects of this undertaking—which unquestionably are many—I hope the sincerity of a good will and the desire of spiritually benefitting my Catholic brethren will be sufficient to plead my cause with the indulgent and considerate reader. And thus, imperfect as this new production may be, I present it to my brethren of the clergy and laity, confidently hoping that it will induce many souls to betake themselves with greater eagerness and assiduity to the source of all temporal and everlasting happiness—to Jesus Christ, their sweet Savior and good Shepherd, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Now should my brethren of the clergy and laity, many of whom would have been certainly better qualified than myself for the task, deem this publication ever so little calculated to realize this hope of mine, I would most humbly request them to encourage its circulation to the best of their power. “A willow-tree,” says Pope St. Gregory the Great, “bears no fruit, but by supporting as it does the vine together with its grapes, it makes these its own by supporting what is not its own.”⁵ In like manner, he who warmly recommends a book calculated to do much good makes his own all the good that is done by the book.

But as it is only by faith that we can understand what the Lord teaches us in a mystery in which everything is sublime, everything is prodigious, and as it is only by prayer that we can derive profit from it, it is from Him that we must implore the necessary grace to discover the infinite treasures of the divine goodness and mercy which lie so humbly hidden under the outward appearance of bread and wine, saying often—It is Thyself, O Lord, Who hast accomplished this sublime mystery; of Thee we humbly beg understanding and love, so as to be able to apply to ourselves the fruits of it; and you, holy Mary, Mother of God, and our tender Mother, obtain for us these precious graces, so that a work whose accomplishment cost so many sorrows to your heart may not prove sterile to our souls.

Intercede particularly for me, I beseech you, that I may relate with benefit the supreme glories—the wonderful works—of your beloved Son, and

⁵ *Hom. 20, in Evang.*

my Divine Master. May the mysteries which I undertake to explain make a deep impression on our minds and hearts—so that they may shine forth in our whole life—so that they may be our strength at the hour of death and become the pledge of our everlasting happiness. Beseech your Divine Son to bless these instructions, which I now offer to His people under your patronage, for the glory of Jesus Christ, the sanctification of the faithful and the edification of the Church. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.