

At The Oratory of Our Lady & Saint Francis of Assisi we celebrate the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a way that is reverent, God-centred, dignified, worshipful, in the Latin language of the Church, and with a much-needed emphasis (in this “modern” increasingly secular world) on the sacrificial character of the Mass and the Real Presence of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Mass makes present, for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity and for the sanctification of the people, (those present, but also for those of the Church at large), Christ’s death on the cross. The Mass brings the power of Christ’s death on the cross into the lives of the faithful. Without the Eucharistic Sacrifice there would be no priesthood and without the priesthood there is no celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The priest, as an act of duty, must regularly, if not every day as would be the ideal situation, offer Mass for the salvation of the whole world. The Mass is the sacramental proclamation of the mystery of salvation and makes present the sacrifice of Calvary in every time and place. The Mass is the centre of the worship of the Church and it is also the centre of its unity. It is the offering of the whole Mystical Body of Christ and the un-bloody sacrifice of the Church. Each time a priest celebrates Mass, it is not only a sacrifice and prayers for those present, but for the whole Church militant and triumphant, for all and for all things, with the powers of heaven invisibly present and celebrating with the celebrating priest. United to the Church and the heavenly host, even if it is not possible for any of the faithful to be present, (other than perhaps the server) the celebrating priest is never really alone, and is indeed sharing in the communion of all the faithful throughout the world, along with the angels and saints.

This is our Catholic faith. The one true faith. This is faith that is centred on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Presiding over the gathering of the holy people, the priest, is more than “alter-Christus” (meaning another Christ) indeed the priest is “in persona Christi” (in the person of Christ) offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the atonement of the sins of the whole world.

The faithful participate in this offering with all their heart, with all their soul. It is in this way that the faithful form the Mystical Body of Christ which is present in its fullness at all celebrations, even when there is no congregation, as it was in the upper room and on Calvary. But it is not they who offer the Mass, it is Christ. For the same reason the priest, when alone, offers the Mass "in persona Christi" in the same manner and with the same value as if a thousand others were present, or indeed the whole body of the faithful in all ages.

Therefore, even though a priest has no congregation does not lessen the value of this priestly duty, nor does it invalidate the Mass. The ministry of the priest is to those who do not come to Mass as much as it is to those who do. It is for all those family, friends, neighbours, enemies, and acquaintances, those not yet met and for those the priest may never meet, it is for those who do not understand it and it is also for those who have died and have realised their reward. The Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated for everyone.

The mission, vision and purpose of the faith community of The Oratory of Our Lady & Saint Francis of Assisi is to pray for the whole world, beginning with the community around us and reaching out to all those that we meet day by day with the message of the Gospel. We offer the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the sins of the world, including our own. We glorify God in worship through the constant prayer of the Church in the Liturgy of the Hours. We are the physical presence of Christ in our community.