

# ROMAN MISSAL

THIRD EDITION

## LIVING THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Living the Christ life is not easy. “What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ... preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage” (CCC 392).

Each Sunday, Catholics return to the Eucharistic table, bringing all the efforts of the previous week, the successes and the failures, the joys and the sorrows. Gathering in the Lord, together with the priest, they join these efforts to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, asking that God receive what is offered to him in humble thanksgiving. Then, strengthened by Holy Communion, they are sent forth into the world to glorify the Lord with their lives.

In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value. Christ’s sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering. (CCC, no. 1368)

## THE ROLE OF THE BAPTIZED

When entering into the Mass with bodies, minds, and hearts fully engaged, the people make to God a perfect sacrifice of praise. Those who come together for the Mass are not mere spectators. “Full, conscious, and actualized participation” in the Mass is not only the right but also the duty and responsibility of all the baptized faithful. That responsibility includes full engagement

## It All Comes Back to the Eucharist

throughout the Mass through knowledge and observation of what is happening around them within the context of the Mass. The baptized faithful who form the congregation are called to join in praise and thanksgiving in song and spoken word, to listen attentively to God’s Word, and to exercise their baptismal priesthood in prayer for the Church, the world, and all in need during the General Intercessions.

In the Mass, the people join their prayer to that of the priest celebrant, offering Christ the Victim, “not only by means of the hands of the priest but also together with him,” and offer themselves as well (GIRM, no. 95). Their participation culminates in the reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the sacrament that unites them more fully with Christ their Head and with one another. There needs to be an awareness that “participation” does not refer primarily to external activity or function during the celebration of Mass; rather, it refers to a deeply spiritual, interior participation of mind and heart, filled with devotion and penetrating the very depths of the mysteries being celebrated.

The Mass brings about in all those who make up the worshipping assembly a “participation of the faithful, namely in body and in mind, a participation fervent with faith, hope, and charity” (GIRM, no. 18). To the extent that participation exists, the work of redemption becomes effective for each person. By such participation, the actions and prayers of the Mass become more personal and allow the faithful to enter more fully into communion with Christ’s redeeming act through worship.