



Blessings to you all! As we continue through the Mass, here comes another big word: **Anamnesis** (commonly pronounced: Ann-amm-nee-siss), also known as the **Memorial Acclamation**. Now that Jesus is truly present on the altar and we have adored him quietly, what else should we do but raise our voices and proclaim our joy out loud? After the elevation of the chalice, the priest genuflects in adoration. When he rises, he says, “The mystery of faith.” These words invite one of three responses: “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again”; or “When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again”; or “Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.”

A Charles Belmonte writes, “The Anamnesis is a prayer of remembrance in which the Church calls to mind the Lord’s passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven... We have just been asked to ‘proclaim the mystery of faith.’ And what is this mystery? Precisely the redeeming sacrifice of Christ celebrated in these rites” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 145).

Christ’s Sacrifice: A Past Event Made Present

The Diocese of Peoria points out, “As the Second Vatican Council teaches, the Mass perpetuates the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until Jesus Christ comes again in glory. The Mystery of Faith announces three main points: past, present, future. It recalls the event of the Cross [We proclaim your Death, O Lord], a present reality [and profess your Resurrection] and a future anticipation [until you come again]. The redemptive sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is of infinite and eternal value. Therefore, redemption isn’t an historical event—it is a present reality! At the celebration of the Mass, then, the Cross is remembered in such a way that it is rendered present. We are not spectators of a theatrical re-enactment, but of a sacramental re-presentation” (“A Study of the Mass,” pp. 15–16).

This teaching highlights for us that having Christ truly present in the Mass really stretches us beyond our limits of space and time. At a point in history, we know that Jesus carried the Cross and offered himself in sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. Yet, the Mass allows us to touch that offering, not just as something that happened in the past but as truly present—the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus there before us.

A Memorial That Leads Us into the Mystery

Continuing with the Diocese of Peoria, “How does this happen? On the altar of the Cross, Jesus Christ offered himself to the Father ‘for you and for [many for the forgiveness of sins].’ At the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the way in which we would celebrate this redemptive sacrifice, he said, ‘Do this in memory of me.’ The anamnesis (memorial) of the Eucharistic prayer calls to mind the Paschal Mystery—the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord. As the catechism teaches, ‘the memorial is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God’ (CCC 1363). Thus, the sacred events are made present and real at the Mass. As the Paschal Mystery is made present to the Father, the Church, through the Holy Spirit, is united with Christ in his perfect sacrificial offering” (“A Study of the Mass,” p. 16).

Perhaps this helps us more clearly understand what we mean when we say “Memorial.” The Biblical understanding of memorial is much more than remembering. For us, we might look at an old photo album and recall from the pictures the joy of a certain day. The beauty of the Mass as sacrificial memorial is that it brings us into that certain day. This reality leads us into the meaning of “Mystery.”

Mystery: An Invitation to Grow Deeper

I think the word *mystery* is one we don’t always fully grasp. Through the years, I have heard people say, “It is a mystery,” as a reason to leave one of our teachings at a distance. Maybe for them, saying a certain truth is a mystery is a way of saying, “This is beyond my understanding, so I’m not going to worry about it.” Certainly, one meaning of the word *mystery* is that something is difficult to explain or understand. But from our faith perspective, it really is an invitation to grow deeper. We know that God is infinite and we are not. We know that the truths of God can sometimes feel beyond our daily lived observation and experience. We also know that God has revealed himself to us in love and that Jesus has given himself in sacrifice out of love. The Mystery of Faith really invites us to meditate with joy on the realization that God loves us and brings many truths and realities together at once to show the abundant generosity of that love.

A quote from Mother Teresa might help us meditate on how the Last Supper, the Cross, and the Mass are together the one perfect and loving sacrifice of Jesus: “If Jesus had not established the Eucharist we would have forgotten the crucifixion. It would have faded into the past and we would have forgotten that Jesus loved us. There is a saying that to be far away from the eyes is to be far away from the heart. To make sure that we do not forget, Jesus gave us the Eucharist as a memorial of His love... When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then; when you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now.”