

Our Sacrifice – Our Selves

What are the most important words in the Mass? What is the most important prayer we pray within the Mass? This is a question that really can't be answered, because the whole Mass is itself a single prayer, so all its words are equally important. Given this understanding, there is one line of our prayer that expresses what I think is a most important idea or understanding of the Mass, and its relationship to the rest of our lives. It comes during the Preparation of the Gifts when the priest addresses the people: "*Pray, my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.*" The immediate or specific reference here is to the offering of the bread and wine, which will become the Body and Blood of Christ crucified. But why would we ever need to pray that God would find this already perfect sacrifice acceptable, the sacrifice which God has already accepted as evidenced by raising Jesus from death? Obviously we don't need to pray for that. What we pray for here is that our sacrifice of *ourselves* will be acceptable to God, the living and giving of our lives in loving service to others, just as Jesus lived and gave His life for others. The bread and wine we bless and receive at Mass are the sacrifice of Jesus that we accept and make our own. Our participation in the Mass is not just a remembrance of what Jesus did, but a pledge and promise that we will do the same all throughout our lives, day in and day out, not just on Sunday or whenever we go to Mass. If our celebration of the Mass is not intimately and integrally connected with all of our life, how we live and what we do day to day, then we're missing the point of it all. So, even though we can't really pick out one prayer or another as the most important prayer in the Mass, this connection and relationship between our prayer of the Mass and the living and giving of our lives for others is of the utmost importance.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.
Contact Fr. Dan Krettek at dkrettek@saintmaryhc.org.