

Does it Matter?
A meditation by Dom Gueranger

The mass, the Pope, the disputed questions of the day—are they all as so many distractions, mere opinions of men? Does it matter what Mass I go to? Read what the great liturgist of Solesmes writes in his “Explanation of the Prayers and Ceremonies of Holy Mass.”

Finally, the priest concludes by offering to the living God the desires and wants of all the Faithful, in these words: *tibique reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo vivo et vero.*

The priest cannot here pray either for Jews or for infidels, no more than he can for heretics, who by the very fact of heresy alone, are excommunicated, and consequently out of the pale of the Holy Catholic Church. Neither can he pray for such as, without being heretics, are excommunicated for other causes; **it would be a profanation to utter the names of any such in the midst for the Holy Sacrifice.** They may be prayed for in private, but not in official prayers. They are excluded from the Sacrifice, as they are out of the Church; consequently it is impossible to mention them during the Sacred Celebration....

In order that all her members without exception may be named, Holy Church here speaks of the Faithful, calling them *cultoribus*, that is, to say, those who are faithful in observing the Faith of Holy Church, for to be included in those mentioned here, it is necessary to be in this Faith; it is necessary to be orthodox, as she takes care to specify, *omnibus orthodoxis*, which means, those who think aright, who profess the Catholic Faith, the Faith handed down by the Apostles. By laying such stress on these words, Holy Church would have us see that she excludes from her prayer, on this occasion, those who are not of the household of the Faith, who do not think aright, who are not orthodox, who hold not their Faith from the Apostles.

The terms in which Holy Church expresses herself throughout show very clearly how far Holy Mass is alien to private devotions. She, then, must take the precedence of all else, and her intentions must be respected. Thus does Holy Church give all here members a participation in the Great Sacrifice; so true is this, that were the Mass to be done away with we should quickly fall again into the state of depravity in which pagan nations are sunk. And this is to be the work of Antichrist: he will take every possible means to prevent the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, so that this great counterpoise being taken away, God would necessarily put an end to all things, having now no object left in their further subsistence. We may readily understand this, if we observe how, since the introduction of Protestantism, the inner strength of society has materially waned. Social wars have been waged one after another, carrying desolation along with them, and all this solely because the intensity of the Great Sacrifice of the Mass has been diminished. Terrible as this is, it is but the beginning of that which is to happen, when the devil and his agents; let loose upon the earth, will pour out a torrent of trouble and desolation everywhere, as Daniel has predicted. By dint of preventing Ordinations, and putting Priests to death, the devil will at length prevail so far as that the celebration of the Great Sacrifice will be suspended—then will come those days of horror and misery for our earth.

Nor must we be astonished at this, for Holy Mass is an event in God’s sight, as well as for us; it is an event which directly touches His Glory. He could not despise the voice of this Blood, more eloquent a thousand times, than that of Abel; He is obliged to regard it with special attention, because His own Glory is there at stake, and because it is His own Son Himself, the Eternal Word, Jesus Christ, who is there offering Himself as Victim, and who there prays for us to His Father.