

most holy religion, and so great a satisfaction is it to me, that I willingly lay aside other very important duties for the pleasure of acceding to your request, and beg you to consider in future, that I am the obliged person in this correspondence. The only condition on my part shall be, that you allow me still to address myself to my dear old villagers, and to write about the poor, as it was my original intention to do: leaving it to your judgment, to omit reading to them any thing which seems addressed solely to you, and which may be, therefore, above their comprehension, or about which they could not be interested.

In my last letter to Thomas, I had reached the Offertory in my description of the Mass; and I remember I left in despair of ever finding language to convey the feelings of a Roman Catholic, as he approaches, even in thought, the solemn moments of the consecration.

You say you cannot all at once realise to your mind, the idea of offering sacrifice, but that it seems very beautiful to do so, and that you think there must be something 'very consoling and satisfactory, in rendering a service to God in which there is reality.' It is precisely this 'reality' which makes our religion so certain to us. How often do we go into the church with feelings so cold and languid, that when it is only to pray, we return home without having given God any service! But when we go to hear Mass—that is, to offer sacrifice by the hands of our Priest—by uniting our intention with his, we perform a real service, we have something certain and fixed, upon which we can look back with satisfaction. But you will understand this better, as you have the Mass more fully explained to you.

It is so long since I wrote my last letter, that I fear to forget what I have therein explained, or whether I said enough to give you a clear notion of the Mass as a sacrifice. You know what it is as a sacrament, by your own rite of what your church calls, 'The Supper of the Lord.' But it is both a Sacrament and a Sacrifice. It is for want of understanding it in this two-fold sense, that there is so much confusion in the minds of even very learned men in England. Our clergy are often astonished at the mistakes they thus make in speaking of the Mass. Having in view only the idea of a sacrament, they do not allow us to use it as a sacrifice, at least they do not comprehend how we do so. I could point out to you many passages in the Oxford Tracts and other recent writings, which our little catechism children would smile at. And our clergy are at a loss to understand how a doctrine which is to us so very natural and simple, should be so completely hidden from men of their high intellect. I think it better to draw your attention at present solely to the Mass as a sacrifice, and in a future letter, to speak of it as a sacrament. As a sacrifice it is available for all who are present at its oblation, or for whom, though absent, it is offered by the Priest or people. As a sacrament it is only avail-

able to those who partake of it—that is, communicate. Thus to the Priest it is always both a sacrifice and a sacrament, because he both offers and consumes it—or in other words, he offers and communicates. To the people it is always a sacrifice, but only a sacrament when they communicate. The prayer called the Offertory being said, and which is a sort of introduction to the offering of the bread and wine—the Priest having the portion of bread which he intends to consecrate placed on a small salver called a Patena, elevates it a little, and repeats the words: 'Accept, O Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, this unspotted Host,' &c. You will observe that these words and all others which are used, signifying that the bread and wine are Jesus Christ, are used so in anticipation of their becoming so. No change whatever takes place in them before the words of consecration. Christ offers himself only to God at the instant the Priest consecrates; but as all cannot be explained at that moment, it is explained by anticipation. The people renew their attention at this moment, and offer private prayers, to be preserved from all distraction from this time, and that they may assist with the attention, respect, and awe, due to such august mysteries. Also it is usual to recal the special intention for which one intends to offer this Mass by the hands of the Priest.

Wine and water have been placed ready at the side of the altar, and the child who serves the Mass now approaches with these, holding the wine in a vessel in his right hand, and the water in another vessel in his left. The Priest pours a small portion of the wine, about a dessert spoonful, into the consecrated chalice, and with a little spoon takes a drop of water, which he mixes with this wine. It is his duty to ascertain that no mistake has been made, and that it is really wine he uses, as the Sacred Presence is promised only to the elements of wine and bread. No prepared liquor may be used, only the pure juice of the grapes. I believe it is doubted whether the tent wine used by your Church, has the requisite purity for consecration. I forgot to say too, that the church uses unleavened bread, as Jesus Christ used such. It is made of the finest wheaten flour, and is prepared by Nuns or other pious persons, who are chosen to prepare it, to insure its being genuine. Perhaps you already know that it is made in the form of a wafer, and is white like pearl. Those consumed by the Priests are about two inches in diameter, those for the people half the size.

While the Priest is putting the water and wine into the chalice, he repeats the prayer, 'O God, who in creating,' &c. He then turns to the altar, and elevating the cup a little, offers it to God, using the prayer, 'We offer unto thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation,' &c.—still anticipatory—and signifying the cup that is about to be the chalice of salvation.

Having replaced the chalice on the altar, and the bread on the linen before it, he repeats the prayer, 'Accept us, O Lord,' &c.