



The Mass and Revelation

Week 1 - Introduction

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
We ask your blessing upon our Emmaus Group and upon the time we will spend together.
Draw us closer to You through each other. Give us the ability to search our own
hearts and know ourselves ever more, so we might better know You.*

Mass (Latin: *missa* meaning “dismissal”- “*Ite, missa est*” literally means “Go, it has been sent.”). The catechism defines Mass as, “The Eucharist or principal sacramental celebration of the Church, established by Jesus at the Last Supper, in which the mystery of our salvation through participation in the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Christ is renewed and accomplished. The Mass renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church. It is called “Mass” (from the Latin *missa*) because of the “mission” or “sending” with which the liturgical celebration concludes.”

Read John 6:22-71

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this story?

Look at the text again.

Discuss: What leaps out at you?

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

-Matthew 7:7-8

Discuss: What are the people seeking from Jesus at the beginning of this passage in John 6?

Discuss: What are you seeking from Jesus at this time in your life?

Read the excerpt from St. Justin Martyr’s letter to the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius.

Read John 6:50-54 again

Discuss: Are Jesus' words in this passage symbolic, metaphorical, literally cannibalistic, or something else entirely? What difference does it make?

Eating In John 6:50-53 we encounter various forms of the Greek verb *phago*, "eating." However, after the Jews begin to express incredulity at the idea of eating Christ's flesh, the language begins to intensify. In verse 54, John begins to use *trogo* instead of *phago*. **Trogo** is a decidedly more graphic term, meaning "to chew on" or "to gnaw on"—as when an animal is ripping apart its prey.

The crowd is thinking cannibalism in 6:52. Jesus gives us, not his literal mortal flesh as it was during his earthly ministry, but his substantial, glorified humanity as it was after rising from the dead. This is why he calls himself the "living bread" in 6:51. While cannibals eat flesh alone, Jesus is calling us to take his *body, blood, soul, and divinity*.

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

-John 14:6

Read John 6:66-69 again

Discuss: Have you ever had a moment in your life when you contemplated walking away from Christ and His Church?

Discuss: Are there any particular truths about Christ and Catholicism that have convinced you to continue in your adherence to the faith?

Read the excerpt below from Pope Benedict XVI aloud

"In the Eucharistic celebration, we do not invent something, but we enter into a reality that precedes us, more than that, which embraces heaven and earth and, hence, also the past, the future and the present. This universal openness, this encounter with all the sons and daughters of God is the grandeur of the Eucharist: We go to meet the reality of God present in the body and blood of the Risen One among us...

Feeding on him we are freed from the bonds of individualism and, through communion with him, we ourselves become, together, one thing, his Mystical Body. This surmounts the differences of profession, class and nationality to form one great family, that of the children of God...To be faithful to the mystery that is celebrated on the altars we must, as the Apostle Paul exhorts us, offer our bodies, ourselves, in spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God in those circumstances that require dying to our 'I' and constitute our daily 'altar.'"

Pope Benedict XVI June 17, 2010

Discuss: Why do we call the reception of the Eucharist "communion"?

Discuss: What are some practical ways you can grow in greater communion with your Christian brothers and sisters?



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Week 2 - The Lamb Who Was Slain

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The Apocalypse, or Revelation to John, the last book of the Bible, is one of the most difficult to understand because it abounds in unfamiliar and extravagant symbolism, which at best appears unusual to the modern reader. This book contains an account of visions in symbolic and allegorical language borrowed extensively from the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Tradition identifies the author of the visions as the Apostle John, the Beloved Disciple, who was bishop of Ephesus, one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation.

Read Revelation 5:1-14

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leaps out at you?

In Revelation, "Lamb" is the favored title and image for Jesus Christ, used over 28 times in just 22 chapters. To ancient Israel, the lamb was identified with sacrifice, and sacrifice is one of the most primal forms of worship. The "blood" of the animal symbolized the life of the one offering the sacrifice. Recognizing that his sins deserved death, the person offered the animal's life in place of his own. The Lamb in Revelation, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is "Christ crucified and risen, the one high priest of the true sanctuary, the same one 'Who offers and is offered, Who gives and is given'" (CCC1137).

Discuss: Why might the image and title of "Lamb" be surprising? Where else in Scripture or the Mass do we find references to a "lamb"?

"Sacrifice and offering you do not want; you opened my ears. Holocaust and sin-offering you do not request; so I said, 'See; I come with an inscribed scroll written upon me. I delight to do your will, my God; your law is in my inner being!'"
-Psalm 40:7-9

Read Genesis 22:1-19

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leaps out at you?

Discuss: Do you find any similarities between this story from Genesis and the passage from John 6 we read last week?

Discuss: What is God truly asking from Abraham in this story?

Read the excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI aloud

“A misunderstood theology has left many people with a completely false image, the image of a cruel God who demands the blood of His own Son. They have read out of the Cross the image of Job's friends and have turned their backs on this God in horror. But the opposite is true! The biblical God demands no human sacrifices. When He appears in the course of the history of religion, human sacrifice ceases. Before Abraham can slaughter Isaac, God speaks and stops him; the ram takes the place of the child. The cult of Yahweh begins when the sacrifice of the firstborn, which was demanded by the ancestral religion of Abraham, is replaced by his obedience and his faith -- the external substitute, the ram, is only the expression of this deeper reality, which is not a replacement, but rather looks ahead to the future fulfillment. For the God of Israel, human sacrifice is an abomination; Moloch, the god of human sacrifices, is the embodiment of the false god who is opposed by faith in Yahweh. For the God of Israel, it is, not the death of a man, but his life that is the act of worship. Irenaeus of Lyons expressed this in the wonderful formula: "*Gloria Dei homo vivens*" (The living man in the glorification of God.) And this is the kind of "human sacrifice," of worship, that God demands.”

Pope Benedict XVI, *The God of Jesus Christ*, pp. 54-55

Discuss: What is your view of God? In what ways has it changed and in what ways has it remained the same in your life?

Discuss: What are the most difficult sacrifices our Lord is asking you to make in your life today?

Bonus Discussion: What are some similarities between this story and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ in John's Gospel? (refer to John 19:1-37 for help)



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Week 3 - The Ark of the Covenant

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
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Covenant (Hebrew: ברית (*berith*), Greek: διαθηκη (*diatheke*), Latin: *testamentum* and *convenire*, **meaning** to come together) A kinship bond between two parties, with conditions or obligations, established by an oath or its equivalent as a means to forge and maintain relationships between individuals, families, tribes, and even nations.

Discuss: What are some of the major covenants between God and His people found in Sacred Scripture?

Read Revelation 11:15-12:17

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leaps out at you?

Discuss: What was the importance of the Ark of the Covenant (Rev. 11:19) for the Jewish people?

Discuss: Why does the Church, especially the Church Fathers, identify the Blessed Virgin Mary with the “woman clothed with the sun” (Rev. 12:1) and with the Ark of the Covenant?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“The old ark contained the word of God written in stone; Mary contained in her womb the Word of God Who became man and dwelt among us. The ark contained manna; Mary contained the living bread come down from heaven. The ark contained the rod of the high priest Aaron; Mary’s womb contained the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ. In the heavenly temple, the Word of God is Jesus, and the ark in who He resides is Mary, His mother. “

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 78

Read John 19:23-30

Discuss: What role did Jesus have in mind for his mother Mary in relationship to the Church?

Discuss: What is the role of Mary in your own life?

Read the excerpt from St. Louis de Montfort

“God in these times wishes his Blessed Mother to be more known, loved and honored than she has ever been... They will experience her motherly kindness and affection for her children. They will love her tenderly and will appreciate how full of compassion she is and how much they stand in need of her help. In all circumstances they will have recourse to her as their advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ. They will see clearly that she is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way of approaching Jesus and will surrender themselves to her, body and soul, without reserve in order to belong entirely to Jesus.”

St. Louis de Montfort, “True Devotion to Mary”

“Behold, I make all things new...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end... To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.”

Revelation 21:5-7

Discuss: Share a pivotal moment in your life when you renewed your covenantal relationship with God as His son/daughter?

Discuss: What is a tangible act you can do each day to renew this covenant.

God’s covenant love is revealed in the very creation of the world. Having been made in the image and likeness of God, the Catechism tells us that each one of us is "called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer Him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead" (no. 357). That personal covenant is offered to us in the sacraments of the Church, particularly in Baptism, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist. As the Second Vatican Council says: "The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful and sets them aflame with Christ's insistent love".

Sacrosanctum Concilium, #10



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Week 4 - The Battle Has Been Won

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Parousia (Greek: παρουσία, Latin: *adventus*) literally - “presence, coming, arrival, advent”. It is sometimes used in Greek literature to describe the visitation of a king or high official to a city he has previously conquered. In Scripture, it is similarly used to denote the arrival of important people, most specifically Jesus Christ, who brings judgment upon his enemies (Mt 24:37, 39; 2 Thess 2:8) and rescues his faithful disciples (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Jn 2:28). The word can refer both to Christ’s “visitation” of destruction upon Jerusalem in AD 70 as well as to his Second Advent at the end of time as Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 1:11; 2 Tim 4:1).

Read Revelation 16:1-20 & 19:11-21

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leaps out at you?

Discuss: Where else does the number 7 appear in Biblical literature? What is the importance of the number 7, especially in the first passage?

Discuss: How do we reconcile the image of Jesus Christ as a warrior Messiah with the image of Christ as the Prince of Peace?

“For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.” 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Read Luke 22: 39-46

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leaps out at you?

Discuss: What is the connection between Jesus' agony in the garden and the Mass?

Discuss: What is a personal battle you agonize over? What are the greatest temptations in your life at this time?

Read the excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI aloud

“Luke, on the other hand, tells us that Jesus prayed on his knees. In the Acts of the Apostles, he speaks of the saints praying on their knees: Stephen during his stoning, Peter at the raising of someone who had died, Paul on his way to martyrdom. In this way Luke has sketched a brief history of prayer on one's knees in the early Church. Christians, in kneeling, enter into Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives. When menaced by the power of evil, as they kneel, they are upright before the world, while as sons and daughters, they kneel before the Father. Before God's glory we Christians kneel and acknowledge his divinity; by this posture we also express our confidence that he will prevail. Jesus struggles with the Father. He struggles with himself. And he struggles for us. He experiences anguish before the power of death. First and foremost this is simply the dread natural to every living creature in the face of death. In Jesus, however, something more is at work. His gaze peers deeper, into the nights of evil. He sees the filthy flood of all the lies and all the disgrace which he will encounter in that chalice from which he must drink. His is the dread of one who is completely pure and holy as he sees the entire flood of this world's evil bursting upon him. He also sees me, and he prays for me. This moment of Jesus' mortal anguish is thus an essential part of the process of redemption. Consequently, the Letter to the Hebrews describes the struggle of Jesus on the Mount of Olives as a priestly event. In this prayer of Jesus, pervaded by mortal anguish, the Lord performs the office of a priest: he takes upon himself the sins of humanity, of us all, and he brings us before the Father.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Holy Thursday Homily, 5 April 2012

Discuss: What are some positive steps you can take to resist temptations in your life?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“Both John and Jesus refer not only to a distant *Parousia*, or return – but to Jesus' ongoing *Parousia*, which did take place within the first Christian generation, as it still takes place today. We should not forget that the original meaning of the Greek *Parousia* is “presence,” and Jesus' presence is real and abiding in the Blessed sacrament of the Eucharist. So when John and Jesus said ‘soon,’ I believe they meant it quite literally. For the Church is the kingdom already begun on earth, and it is the place of the *Parousia* in every Mass.”

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb's Supper”, p. 94



The Mass and Revelation

Week 5 - The Marriage of Heaven and Earth

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
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Revelation (Greek: ἀποκάλυψις, apokalypsis) a noun meaning “an unveiling, uncovering, revealing”. In the Bible, the term always refers to a disclosure of something that was previously unknown, whether it be secrets (Sir 22:22), works, (Sir 11:27), the knowledge of God (Eph 1:17), or the plan of salvation (Eph 3:3). Mysteries can be made known in the present, such as Christ’s glory and Lordship (Gal 1:12), or await disclosure until the future, when God will judge the world (Rom 2:5) and bestow glory on his children (Rom 8:19). The title of John’s book is well chosen inasmuch as Revelation removes the veil from God’s plan for the future, drawing back the curtain that hides Christ’s glory, kingship, and control over history from the naked eye.

Read Revelation 19:1-10

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leapt out?

Discuss: What images and sayings in this passage (or in previous passage we’ve read thus far in Revelation) mimic what is experienced in the celebration of the Mass?

“In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. With all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord...” CCC, 1090

Discuss: Why is it often difficult to see the Mass as a participation in the heavenly liturgy?

Discuss: How is the imagery of the Mass as a marriage between Christ and His Church helpful? How is it not?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“In John’s time, Jews commonly used *apokalypsis* to describe part of their week-long wedding festivities. The *apokalypsis* was the lifting of the veil of the virgin bride, which took place immediately before the marriage was consummated in sexual union. And that’s what John is getting at. So close is the unity of heaven and earth that it is like the fruitful and ecstatic union of a husband and wife in love. St. Paul describes the Church as the bride of Christ (see Eph 5) – and Revelation unveils that bride. The climax of the Apocalypse, then, is the communion of the Church and Christ: the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9). From that moment, man rises up from the earth to worship in heaven.”

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 125

Read Ephesians 5:21-33

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leapt out?

Discuss: From what we’ve studied thus far about the Mass and Revelation, how does the phrase in verse 31 “the two shall become one flesh” take on new and richer meaning?

Discuss: How can we see the imagery of marriage as a personal invitation to a deeper relationship with Christ?

Discuss: What are some practical ways you can seek to be purified so as to be presented “holy and without blemish” before Christ “in splendor” (verse 27)?

Read the excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI aloud

“The Letter to the Ephesians develops this image, explaining that the Church is not only a betrothed bride, but the real bride of Christ. He has won her, so to speak, and has done so at the cost of his life: as the text says, he ‘gave himself up for her’ (Eph 5: 25). What demonstration of love could be greater than this? But in addition, he was concerned about her beauty: not only the beauty already acquired through Baptism, but also that beauty ‘without stain or wrinkle’ that is due to an irreproachable life which must grow in her moral conduct every day (cf. Eph 5: 26-27)...**we learn what marriage is** in the light of the communion of Christ and the Church, **we learn how Christ is united to us** in thinking of the mystery of matrimony. In any case, our Letter presents itself as nearly a middle road between the Prophet Hosea, who expressed the relationship between God and his people in terms of the wedding that had already taken place (cf. Hos 2: 4, 16, 20), and the Seer of the Apocalypse, who was to propose the eschatological encounter between the Church and the Lamb as **a joyful and indefectible wedding** (Rev 19: 7-9; 21: 9).”

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 14 January 2009



The Mass and Revelation

Week 6 – Worship Is Warfare

Open by praying Psalm 22

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
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Todah (Hebrew: תודה) like the Greek word *eucharist* is a noun meaning “thank offering” or “thanksgiving”. The word denotes a sacrificial meal shared with friends in order to celebrate one’s gratitude to God. A *todah* begins by recalling some mortal threat and then celebrates man’s divine deliverance from that threat. It is a powerful expression of confidence in God’s sovereignty and mercy. The classic examples of the *todah* are Psalms 22 and 69. Both the *todah* and the Eucharist present their worship through word and meal, particularly the unbloody offering of unleavened bread and wine. The ancient rabbis made a significant prediction regarding the *todah*: “In the coming [Messianic] age, all sacrifices will cease except the *todah* sacrifice. This will never cease in all eternity” (*Pesiqta*, I, p. 159).

Read Revelation 19:11-20:15

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leapt out?

Discuss: Do you find yourself more often living in confidence of God’s sovereignty and mercy, or living in distress by the evils of the world and personal failures?

Discuss: In what ways do the parts and structure of the Mass allow you to live in confidence?

“Put off the old man that belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” –Ephesians 4:22-24

Discuss: By deceiving men and women, the Evil One wishes to create a world that is the opposite of the one willed by Christ and by God. Yet, if the war has already been won by Christ, why is it necessary to continue fighting the battle?

Discuss: Our most dangerous enemies are those we find within our own soul: pride, envy, laziness, gluttony, greed, anger, and lust. Which enemy do you find most nagging in your life? What is the complementary virtue you will need to grow in so as to defeat that enemy?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“What do we see when we stand in light? We see that we are sinners and that we are weak; but we see much more than that as well. We see that, in this war, we are the stronger side by far. At Mass, we invoke the angels, and we worship beside them, as John did – as their equals before God! We call upon their help. Listen closely to the preface of the Mass, just before you sing the “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts”: “Now, with angels and archangels, and the whole company of heaven, we sing the unending hymn of Your praise.”...The words ‘hosts’ in this context connotes military might – like ‘legions’ or ‘divisions’. The Mass, it seems, is like the Normandy invasion in the spiritual realm.”

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 140

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What image most leapt out at you?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“So we should prepare for Mass, throughout our lives, by ongoing doctrinal and spiritual formation. No soldier would rush untrained into battle. Neither should we think we can conquer demons if we’re flabby in our faith. We need to put ourselves through the rigors of basic training, living a sustained and disciplined life of prayer, and studying the faith daily, reading the Bible, using Catholic CDs, podcasts, videos, and books (especially the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*). All this is a lifelong task. Our doctrinal study will invest the liturgy’s every word and gesture with power. We will make the sign of the Cross, knowing that it is the banner we carry into battle – and before that banner, demons tremble.”

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 142

Discuss: What concrete step will you take to increase or renew your training for battle?



The Mass and Revelation

Week 7 – “Behold, I make all things new”

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Metanoia (Greek: μετάνοια) from the Greek verb *metanoiein* is a noun meaning “a change of mind, a change in the trend and action of the whole inner nature, intellectual, affectional and moral”, but often translated as “repentance”. In the Scriptures, repentance is presented as a two-fold “turning” - away from sin (see [Ezekiel 3:19](#); [18:30](#)) and toward God (see [Sirach 17:20-21](#); [Hosea 6:1](#)). This “turning” is more than attitude adjustment. It means a radical life-change. It requires “good fruits as evidence of your repentance” (see [Luke 3:8](#)). In Revelation 21, we see a related transformation in the “new heaven and a new earth”. These abodes are not entirely new, but rather entirely *renewed* (Rev. 21:5). John sees all creation transformed and made radiant with the glory of God. It is no longer a world subject to death and decay and suffering the damaging effects of human sin. The process of cosmic regeneration has begun in the New Covenant as believers are made part of the new creation in Christ, but John is presented with heaven and earth once this process is complete. For man, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the pilgrim Church has been “in the nature of sacrament”. Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, “the holy city” of God, “The Bride, the wife of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:2, 9) (CCC 1042-48)

Read Revelation 21 and 22

Discuss: What are your initial thoughts and questions about this passage? What leapt out?

Discuss: What are the real changes which occur during each and every Mass? In what ways has your understanding of the Mass changed in studying Revelation?

Discuss: In what ways has your approach to the Mass changed over the course of this Study?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“The Mass makes present, in time, what the Son has been doing from all eternity: loving the Father as the father loves the Son, giving back the gift he received from the Father. That gift is the life we’re meant to share; but before we can, we must undergo a significant change. As we are now, we’re incapable of giving so much or receiving so much; the infinite fire of divine love would consume us. Yet, we cannot change on our own. That’s why God gives us his own life in the sacraments. Grace makes up for the weakness of human nature. With his help, we’re able to do what we couldn’t do by ourselves; namely, love perfectly and sacrifice totally.

What God the Son has been doing from all eternity, He begins doing now in humanity. He doesn’t change at all; for God himself is unchanging, eternal, without beginning or end (Alpha and Omega). What changes is not God but humanity. Through his life and death, Jesus deified humanity. He united it to the divine. And every time we receive the Eucharist, we receive this glorified, divinized, empowered humanity of Jesus Christ, the perfect manifestation of the divine Son’s love for the Father. Only with this massive infusion of grace can we undergo the change required before we enter the life of the Trinity. The Eucharist changes us. Now we’re able to do all the same things we’d done before – but making them divine in Christ: making our every gesture, thought, and feeling an expression of love for the Father, an action of the Son within us. Marrying into any family means big changes. Marrying into the family of God means complete transformation.”

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 140

Discuss: How is humanity changed by the Eucharist? In what ways have you personally been changed by the Mass?

Read the excerpt from Dr. Scott Hahn aloud

“Our whole life gets caught up in the Mass and becomes our participation in the Mass. As heaven descends to earth, we lift up our earth to meet it halfway. That’s the splendor of the ordinary: the workaday world becomes our Mass. That’s how we bring about the Kingdom of God. When we begin to see that heaven awaits us in the Mass, we begin already to bring heaven home with us. “

Scott Hahn, “The Lamb’s Supper”, p. 162

Discuss: The Church extends the celebration of the liturgy of the Mass into our daily lives through the Liturgy of the Hours, scheduled prayer of the universal Church 6 times a day. What has been your experience praying the Liturgy of the Hours? If you have not, in what ways do you participate in the Mass in the ordinary- in “the workaday world?” How can you in the future?