

# Mysterium

Session 4 - Thursday, July 21

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## MERCY & WORTHINESS

1. *Man is in search of God.* Even after **losing through his sin his likeness to God**, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence. All religions bear witness to men's essential search for God. (CCC 2466)

Notes

1.1. For by grace you have been **saved through faith**; (Ephesians 2:8)

1.2. You see that a man is **justified by works** and not by faith alone. (James 2:24)

## THE SYNERGY OF FAITH AND WORKS

1.3. Faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, (James 2:22)

2. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying,

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to be clothed with **fine linen, bright and pure**”—

for the fine linen is **the righteous deeds of the saints**.

For Prayer

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Revelation 19:6-9)

3. **The works of good Christians are of such worth that heaven is given us for them; but it is not because they proceed from us and are the wool of our hearts but because they are dyed with the blood of the Son of God....** So our souls, which of themselves are not able to produce one single good thought towards God's service, being steeped in sacred love by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, produce sacred actions, which tend towards and carry us to immortal glory ... by reason of the Holy Spirit, who, by charity dwelling in our hearts, works in us with so exquisite an art, that the same works which are wholly ours are still more wholly his, since he produces them in us as we again produce them in him, he does them for us as we do them for him, he operates them with us as we co-operate with him.... He leaves for our part all the merit and profit of our services and good works, and we again leave him all the honor and praise thereof, acknowledging that the commencement, the progress, and the end of all the good we do depends on his mercy, by which he has come unto us and prevented us, has come into us and assisted us, has come with us and conducted us, finishing what he had begun. (St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*)

## RETURN TO PARADISE - THE TREE AND THE RIVER

4. Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the **tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

4.1. This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of **Gihon** and directed them down to **the west side of the city of David**. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

5. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. (John 18:1)

6. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write...“I know **your works**, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false; I know you are **enduring patiently** and bearing up for my name’s sake, and **you have not grown weary**. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen, repent and do the works you did at first...Yet this you have, *you hate the works of the Nicolaitans*, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.**’

## ADAM IS REDEEMED - FROM AN ANCIENT HOMILY ON HOLY SATURDAY

7. God has died in the flesh and Hell trembles with fear. He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve... The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won him the victory...I order you, O sleeper, to awake. **I did not create you to be held a prisoner in Hell**. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, **you who were created in my image**. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I in you; together we form one person and cannot be separated...**See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree...** Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly Paradise. **I will not restore you to that Paradise, but will en-throne you in heaven.** (*Liturgy of the Hours, Holy Saturday, Office of Readings*)

For Prayer

## THE CENTURION - MADE WORTHY IN CHRIST

8. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed. (Matthew 8:8)

8.1. When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.” (Matthew 8:10)

## MADE WORTHY BY JESUS TO RECEIVE GOD

9. My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)

GOD LOVES HIMSELF WHOM HE SEES IN US. RECONCILED AND IN COMMUNION WE BECOME FIT RECEPTACLES OF HIS LOVE.

10. God loves His creatures which are the work of His hands and above all man whom He has created in His own image and likeness. He does not, however, love them in themselves or for themselves, but loves Himself in them and in all things relates them to Himself. [His works] are lovable in His eyes only insofar as they share, though in a finite manner, in His infinite being...[I]n loving Himself, God cannot but love me unless I withdraw myself from His love by ceasing to love Him. (John Nicholas Grou, SJ, *Meditations in the Love of God*, 6)

MADE WORTHY IN THE MASS

11. By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity. (words of the deacon as he mingles the water and wine on the altar at Mass)

12. May he make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect. (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer III)

13. May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer III)

14. Christ's whole life is a mystery of *redemption*. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross, but this mystery is at work throughout Christ's entire life:

— already in his Incarnation through which by becoming poor he enriches us with his poverty;

— in his hidden life which by his submission atones for our disobedience;

— in his word which purifies its hearers;

— in his healings and exorcisms by which “he took our infirmities and bore our diseases”;

— and in his Resurrection by which he justifies us. (*CCC* 517)

*For Prayer*

THE PRAYER OF JESUS & THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

15. In the liturgy of the hours the Church exercises the priestly office of its Head and offers to God “without ceasing” a sacrifice of praise, that is, a tribute on lips acknowledging his name. This prayer is “the voice of a bride addressing her bridegroom; it is the very prayer that Christ himself, together with his Body, addresses to the Father.” “All who render this service are not only fulfilling a duty of the Church, but also are sharing in the greatest honor of Christ's Bride for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church, their Mother.”

When the Church offers praise to God in the liturgy of the hours, it unites itself with that hymn of praise sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven; it also receives a foretaste of the song of praise in heaven, described by John in the Book of Revelation, the song sung continually before the throne of God and of the

Lamb. Our close union with the Church in heaven is given effective voice “when we all, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation redeemed by Christ’s blood (see Rev 5:9) and gathered together into the one Church, glorify the triune God with one hymn of praise. (*General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, §15-16)

*Notes*

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### **Books**

Michael Barber, *Coming Soon: Unlocking the Book of Revelation*

Scott Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper*

Thomas Nash, *Worthy is the Lamb*

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*

### **Audio**

Brant Pitre, *The Bible and the Mass: The Jewish Roots of the Christian Liturgy*

### **Video**

Fr. Josh Johnson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, *Altaration*, Ascension Press

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*For Prayer*