

# WHY DO PRIESTS OFFER THE MASS WHEN IT IS UNSAFE FOR US AND/OR OTHERS TO ATTEND?

**Priests who are not in religious orders (that is, your parish priest in our diocese, Winona-Rochester) are not required to offer Mass daily, but encouraged to do so, and all priests offer Mass on the Lord's Day. But why, when others cannot attend?**

The Mass was given to us, the baptized faithful, as a glimpse into heaven. Every time a Mass is offered it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ (CCC #1330)—it “not only recalls the events that saved us but actualizes them, makes them present.” (#1104)

**There is no such thing as “my Mass.” There is one eternal Mass in which we participate--because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross happened in time, but goes beyond time and space.** When we sing the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) we sing it with the angels. When we kneel and pray, we do so before the cross...and we do it with the communion of saints in heaven.

The Mass allows this truth to be experienced here on earth through the ordination and action of the priest and God. When the priest celebrates the Eucharist, he re-presents the one eternal Mass, and we participate in that sacred liturgy. Because heaven is beyond what we see—and God and our redeemed presence before Him is greater than time and space—the one eternal Liturgy of the Eucharist occurs in heaven. *But it is actualized on earth.* And the Eucharist is truly the body and blood of Jesus Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit.

**The Mass is meant to welcome the baptized faithful and draw us to union with Jesus Christ through our participation in the liturgy and receiving of the Eucharist. Right now, in this difficult time, we cannot gather and receive the Eucharistic body and blood of the Lord. But we CAN participate in the heavenly liturgy, in some manner, through participating in the Mass through prayerfully engaging it on TV, radio, or a video-streaming service. That heavenly liturgy is happening right now and always. It is our joy to deliberately participate in that. And it is the joy and purpose of the Church to continually make that eternal Mass present on earth in a particular time and place, regardless of circumstances.** This is why you may know saints' stories of priests who are captured or arrested by hostile governments, placed in solitary confinement, and yet strive to find ways to offer the Mass in captivity, regardless of the presence of others physically or not. The cross of Christ was actualized in that barren cell. And the communion of saints and the angels are always present!

**Some day soon, we will ALL be present at the altar. But for now, we participate through prayer, receive nourishment through the scriptures, and meditate on the eternal mystery of the mass.**

## HOW DO I MAKE A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION?

**This is an ancient practice that many have engaged in, a simple prayer where you state your desire to be spiritually united with Christ.** Many saints have suggested that it is a powerful prayer to offer any time of day, whether you have weekly access to the Eucharist or not. But it is especially appropriate for those who cannot be physically present at the Mass and want to be. Perhaps while viewing the Mass, at the period where the priests takes the Eucharist, you could pray:

***My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you with all my heart. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already in my heart and unite myself to you completely. Please do not let me ever be separated from you. Amen.***

