



# THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 47

February 2022

## Sacrifice

Dear Parishioners,

The Presentation in the Temple is to our Lord's life what the Offertory is to the Mass. Just as the priest takes bread and wine and sets them apart, prays over them and marks them for sacrificial offering, so also our Lady brings her Son to the Temple, surrenders Him to Simon who then confirms the pending sacrifice: "Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." (Luke 2:34)

The notion of sacrifice is inseparable from the idea of the priesthood. Christ is the Sovereign High Priest. His priesthood stems from the union of divine and human natures in His Divine Person. This makes our Lord the perfect Mediator between God and Man, which is the essential definition of a priest.

St Paul tells us that our Lord's first utterance from the womb of His mother were words of sacrifice: "Behold, I come to do thy will, O God." (Her. 10:9) It was His heavenly Father's will that He offer His human life in sacrifice for the sins of man.

This offering was completed on Calvary, but it was begun from the very first moment of his human existence. Our Lord's life was one of continual sacrifice, the essence of which resided in the desire and the will to place God's will above His own: "Not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42) The first priest set the pattern for all those He would call to continue His mission of redemption until the end of the world. The pattern consists in exchanging one's own will for God's will, whatever the temporal consequences.

An essential condition of the Catholic priesthood is the consecration of one's life wholly and solely to God. On condition of this self-offering, the Church empowers the priest to offer Christ's sacrifice of Calvary. The Mass thus becomes the principal responsibility and duty of the priest. Each time he lifts the consecrated bread and wine and thus re-enacts the sacrifice of Calvary, he fulfils the essence of his vocation. Were he to offer but one Holy Mass in his life, such a life would be one lived to the full, complete with meaning, purpose and finality. Calvary was the crowning moment of our Lord's life, but the 33 years of prayer and toil were its precondition. The Mass

is the crowning moment of the priest's life, but it requires a decision of self-renunciation and surrender. He must even be prepared to face conflict and strife and to become, for both good and bad, "a sign which shall be contradicted" (Luke 2:34).

In a world in which the notion of sacrifice and commitment is shunned and the service of a common good is perceived as a form of oppression, the Church no longer finds adequately trained souls ready to follow up a call to service. The collapse in priestly and religious vocations comes from a loss of the spirit of sacrifice which is no longer an essential element in a child's education and formation.

It is interesting to note that the political and economic upheavals of the 19th century formed the backdrop to a sustained increase in priestly and religious recruitment. Similarly, the two World Wars and all the sufferings they caused seemed to contribute to even more vocations. The suffering and hardship of such times not only offered scope to many souls to reflect on the human condition when it is severed from any reference to Jesus Christ and the Gospel but also forced families to endure difficulty, hardship and separation. When these are understood and embraced in a loving spirit of penance and reparation, children become used to the notion of sacrifice and develop a resilience to the efforts and renunciations that sacrifice entails.

But once the ease and plenty of post-war revival became a common experience, the cold stone walls of rectories and convents lost their appeal. Religious life just isn't fun!

Our Lord's Presentation in the Temple and our Lady's Purification offer us an opportunity to reflect on our willingness to give way to God's will. Do we live our lives in a manner that allows God's gentle calling to be heard? Do we organize our children's lives so that they become accustomed to giving rather than taking, offering rather than receiving? Do we train them in self-restraint and self-renunciation? In short, do we cultivate in our homes a spirit of generosity and sacrifice that makes young men and women able and willing to seriously consider giving their lives to God as He gave His to us?

**Fr. John Brucciani**

# What makes the World Go Round?

---

Almost everyone has heard the cliché phrase, coined by film makers in the 1960s, “Money makes the world go round.” But the fact is, does anyone really believe it? Deep down in the inner recesses of the soul, is it even possible for a human being to give credence to such a statement? Today’s culture, outwardly enthralled by money, pleasure, fame, and power, yet remains unsatisfied. Ask nearly any modern celebrity if they are truly happy and fulfilled by their multi-million dollar contracts, their red carpet appearances which delight the paparazzi, their dream mansions, their famous and decadent island getaways. Will they answer in the affirmative?

The answer is not as simple as a yes or no. The human soul is a complex thing, made up of two parts: the intellect and the will. The senses and passions move the will to desire objects which seem good to them. The will then presents these desires to the intellect to judge whether or not they are reasonable. If so, the intellect gives the green light to the will and tells it to seek after what it desires; but if not, then the intellect should, in theory, be able to tell the will to stand down. This is where original sin enters the picture. On that baneful day, when Adam sins, man disrupts the beautiful order which God established in his soul, the hierarchy of reason wherein the intellect is supreme, the will its handmaid, and the senses and passions subject to both of these superior powers. For all of history since the fall of Adam, man has continued to struggle against this disorder in his faculties. So in fact, when the reason tells the will that it ought not to seek after this or that apparent good, for whatever reason, oftentimes the will simply rebels under the influence of the lower passions. Thus it is that the famous men and women referenced above may quite easily answer the question with a resounding, “Yes!” These individuals allow themselves to be duped into seeking the apparent and elusive good of temporary wealth, fame, pleasure, or power. The more important question is, however, how must a Catholic answer this query? In other words, “What makes the **Catholic** world go round?”

The answer is a foolish one; it is not pleasant; it is not cliché; it is not frivolous and light. It is a serious matter and at the same time, in an apparent paradox, a most joyful as well. It is, in fact, sacrificial love, love incarnated in action, the love that is found first and foremost on that most controversial of all works of art, the Crucifix, that makes the Catholic

world go round. From the first moment of His conception, Our Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself up as a sacrificial Victim for the sake of all men. He chose a life of poverty, ignored by the world at large, hated by His own people. He chose a death of deepest ignominy, unspeakable anguish, and utter abandonment. He chose as His closest friends the outcast of the world, fishermen who were nearly illiterate, publicans who were despised by Romans and Jews alike, and not the least that poor soul who would eventually be the unhappy instrument of the His betrayal. This is not the “love” that men adulate today, a horrifically twisted and selfish desire for pleasure above all and at the expense of all others. This is not the hero worship, “love,” with which modern youths fawn over their favourite idol on television or on the sports field, which dies out as soon as a new and more exciting god or goddess comes onto the scene. This is not the cheap love of mere sexual attraction. It is the love that demands the complete denial of self, of self pleasure, of self adulation, of the adoration of Me, Myself, and I, which is **the** cult of modernity. It is the love that the Blessed Virgin Mary displayed toward her Son on Calvary, offering Him to the Father as the only worthy sacrificial Victim in atonement for the sins of mankind. It is not comfortable. It does not give warm, fuzzy feelings inside; but it **does** make one truly happy, even here on earth.

Thus, it is sacrificial love that makes the world go round, the love that involves the sacrifice of oneself wholly and totally to God out of love for Him. It is this complete gift of self which gives to the world “Other Christs.” It is sacrifice of one’s own will that lightens the yoke of a religious profession. It is the sacrifice of all, even one’s own body, which renders that most sacred of unions, Holy Matrimony, exceedingly pleasing in the sight of God. It is as if the Blessed Virgin Mary knew that men would be asking this question when she offered her only-begotten Son for the first time to the service of God in the Temple at her Purification. Then and there she accepted her role in the greatest sacrifice of all time: “This Child is set for the rise and fall of many...and thy own soul a sword shall pierce.” (Lk. 2:34-35) What is it that makes the world go round or, rather, what is it round which the earth revolves? An exquisite answer may be found in the motto of the Carthusians, “Stat crux dum volvitur orbis,” (The cross stands still while the earth turns round).☪

# Presentation and Purification

---

**B**ecause all things, visible and invisible, have been created by God, they belong to Him alone: He owns them. Because man is always in great danger of forgetting this truth, God gave His chosen people, Israel, two very practical reminders of it. In order to show that they recognized their dependence on their Creator for existence and life, they were required "according to the Law of the Lord" to present to Him each year the first-fruits of the fields, the first offspring of each of their animals, and the firstborn son of their own family. The fruits and animals were presented or handed over to God by immolation; that is, total destruction in sacrifice. The firstborn son was redeemed or bought back from God, and in his place a victim (a lamb or turtle dove) was sacrificed.

The other reminder of God's supreme dominion over all His creatures was in the ceremony of purification. The Old Testament book of Leviticus described certain animals, places, diseases and actions as impure. Any contact with these meant that one contracted an impurity that could be redeemed through certain offerings.

What we call the sin of impurity, the sin against the virtue of chastity, clearly has nothing to do with the ceremonial impurity or uncleanness of the Old Testament. Old Testament impurity was simply meant to keep people aware at all times that God is Lord and Master. Women contracted a legal impurity for forty days at child birth. They were thus reminded that all life was a gift from God of which they as mothers were unworthy.

It is obvious that neither Our Lady nor her Divine Infant needed such reminders, because each of them led a life of perfect obedience and submission to Almighty God. So they were not bound by the Law; yet they both obeyed it. Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord and the Purification of Our Lady in the temple, is therefore meant to turn our minds to the importance of obedience, and bend our wills to imitate their example.

Obedience is not just doing what is commanded by someone lawfully placed over us: the sort of thing a slave might do out of the fear of punishment, or reproach, or humiliation, or of being deprived of some favor. Hirelings do as their master tells them: they conform to the rules he lays down, as long as they are under his eye. Then, once they are alone, they are unfaithful and disloyal, and they follow their own inclinations. In such conduct there is neither the virtue nor the merit of obedience.

It is not genuine obedience either, if we submit to our lawful superiors simply to keep on good terms with them, to avoid disagreeable things, and to obtain useful favors. The true word for this would be selfishness, and

it is all too commonly practiced. Indeed, society reckons it to be the height of cleverness. Genuine and meritorious obedience - the only kind pleasing to God and worthy of the dignity of man - is supernatural. This means that it is founded on our Faith, that God has made His Will known to us through other men, whom He has appointed over us to be the guardians and visible representatives of His Supreme Authority.

We learnt this in our Catechism: "By the Fourth Commandment, we are commanded to love, reverence and obey our parents in all that is not sin;" and "we are commanded to obey not only our parents, but also our bishops and pastors, the civic authorities and our lawful superiors". These words clearly show that we are not, strictly speaking, obeying men when we heed their commands. Rather, that we are obeying God in the person of men. When men try to take the place of God, then we are no longer obliged to heed their commands. Thus St. Thomas More, accused of high treason, said to the crowds on the scaffold: "I am the King's good servant; but God's first".

The words said by Pope Pius XII at the canonization of St. Maria Goretti come to mind: "Let fathers and mothers of families learn how they must raise their God-given children in virtue, holiness and courage, and in obedience to the precepts of the Catholic religion; so that when their virtue is put to the test, they will be helped by God's grace to come through undefeated, unscathed, untarnished. Let carefree children and youth, with their zest for life, learn not to be led astray by alluring pleasures that are passing and empty as well as sinful. But rather let them fix their sights on achieving moral perfection, although it is difficult and arduous. With determination and God's help all of us can attain that goal by persistent effort and prayer. A constant, persistent and relentless effort is required of all of us right to the moment of death."

Michel Montaigne, the French essayist (1533-92), wrote these memorable words: "Children should be taught to hate vice for its own texture, so that they will not only avoid it in action, but abominate it in their hearts - that the very thought of it may disgust them whatever form it takes."

Only he that has learnt to obey is fit to command. That is why it is so important to teach those whom God has placed under you, how to submit their wills in the smallest things as well as the greatest, by the example of your own obedience to those God has set over you - in all things but sin. Through obedience the will is purified and made ready to guide the will of others through the exercise of leadership and authority. For true leadership is that which guides others to the accomplishment of goodness and righteousness. ♪

# 30th Anniversary Celebration



19th March 2022

## CEILIDH

ECCHINSWELL VILLAGE  
HALL  
5 - 8PM

Tickets (covering Professional  
Caller & venue):

£25 per family (children up to 18 yrs) Type to enter text

£10 singles

Please bring a plate of food for a  
sharing buffet supper.

Drinks on sale

\* Tickets available via  
St Michael's noticeboard \*

**HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

Just as this newsletter is going into print, we have received news that the Planning Permission for the construction of the church of St Michael Archangel has been granted!

### DEO GRATIAS!

More information in the next newsletter. We meet with the site contractors this month.

**We need £1.5M to comfortably undertake this work for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, yours foremost.**

[www.stmichaelarchangel.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelarchangel.co.uk)

## Liturgical Calendar February 2022

1	St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop & Martyr	7:15
2	Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary	7:15 / 19:00
3	Feria	7:15
4	St. Andrew Corsini, Bp, C. <b>1st Fri - HH 18:00</b>	7:15 / 19:00
5	St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr - <b>1st Sat.</b>	7:30 / 12:00
6	<b>Fifth Sunday after Epiphany</b>	7:30, 9:00
	<i>2nd Collection for District seminarians</i>	18:00 Benediction
7	St. Romuald, Abbot	7:15
8	St. John of Matha, Confessor	7:15
9	St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bp, Conf. Doc,	7:15
10	St. Scholastica, Virgin	7:15
11	Our Lady of Lourdes	7:15
12	Seven Holy Servite Founders, Confessors	7:30 / 12:00
13	<b>Septuagesima Sunday</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
14	Feria	7:30
15	Feria	7:30
16	Feria (Priests' Meeting, away in Bristol)	No mass
17	Feria	No mass
18	Feria	7:30
19	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
20	<b>Sexagesima Sunday</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
21	Feria	7:30
22	Chair of St. Peter	7:30
23	St. Peter Damian, Bishop, Conf. & Doctor	7:30
24	St. Matthias, Apostle	7:30
25	Feria	7:30
26	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
27	<b>Quinquagesima Sunday</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
28	Feria	7:15
1	Feria	7:15
2	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	7:15 / 19:00

**S**tole fees (also called stipends) are offerings in consideration of expenses incurred by a chapel or priest in the course of ministering to the faithful. The stole fee is paid to the priory of the priest's residence.

Mass: £14

Gregorian of Masses: £600

Baptisms: £50

Weddings £150

Funerals £100