

# **The Value of the Mass, Even Without a Congregation**

## ***General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 19***

Even though it is on occasion not possible to have the presence and active participation of the faithful, which manifest more clearly the ecclesial nature of the celebration, the celebration of the Eucharist is always endowed with its own efficacy and dignity, since it is the act of Christ and of the Church, in which the Priest fulfills his own principal function and always acts for the sake of the people's salvation. Hence the Priest is recommended to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in so far as he can, daily.

## ***Prebyterorum Ordinis, 13***

In the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in which priests fulfill their greatest task, the work of our redemption is being constantly carried on; and hence the daily celebration of Mass is strongly urged, since even if there cannot be present a number of the faithful, it is still an act of Christ and of the Church.

## ***Mysterium Fidei, 32***

For each and every Mass is not something private, even if a priest celebrates it privately; instead, it is an act of Christ and of the Church. In offering this sacrifice, the Church learns to offer herself as a sacrifice for all and she applies the unique and infinite redemptive power of the sacrifice of the Cross to the salvation of the whole world. For every Mass that is celebrated is being offered not just for the salvation of certain people, but also for the salvation of the whole world. The conclusion from this is that even though active participation by many faithful is of its very nature particularly fitting when Mass is celebrated, still there is no reason to criticize but rather only to approve a Mass that a priest celebrates privately for a good reason in accordance with the regulations and legitimate traditions of the Church, even when only a server to make the responses is present. For such a Mass brings a rich and abundant treasure of special graces to help the priest himself, the faithful, the whole Church and the whole world toward salvation—and this same abundance of graces is not gained through mere reception of Holy Communion.

## ***The Code of Canon Law, c. 904***

Remembering always that in the mystery of the eucharistic sacrifice the work of redemption is exercised continually, priests are to celebrate frequently; indeed, daily celebration is recommended earnestly since, even if the faithful cannot be present, it is the act of Christ and the Church in which priests fulfill their principal function.

## ***Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests, 13***

It is necessary to evoke the irreplaceable value for the priest of the daily celebration of the Holy Mass — the 'source and summit' of the priestly life — even if it should not be possible to have the faithful present. In this regard Benedict XVI teaches: 'To this end I join the Synod Fathers in recommending "the daily celebration of the Holy Mass, even when the faithful are not present."' This recommendation is consistent with the objectively infinite value of every celebration of the Eucharist and is motivated by its unique spiritual fruitfulness. If celebrated in a faith-filled and attentive way, the Holy Mass is formative in the deepest sense of the

word, since it fosters the priest's configuration to Christ and strengthens him in his vocation.'"