

Pastor's Column

Wasted Pain

I share with you a favorite prayer of mine written and prayed by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. The prayer is directed to Jesus. What draws me to this prayer is the connection the bishop makes between everyday life and the Eucharist.

When one makes this connection, the Mass comes alive. The Mass is no longer people "watching" the priest celebrate, but rather, all of us together, uniting our lives to the life of Christ. Our sacrifice is becoming Christ's sacrifice:

Wasted Pain

There is nothing more tragic in all the world than wasted pain. Think of how much suffering there is in hospitals, among the poor and bereaved.

Think also of how much of that suffering goes to waste. How many of those lonesome, suffering, abandoned, crucified souls are saying with our Lord at the moment of Consecration: "This is my body, take it?" And yet that is what we should be saying at that second. "Here is my body, take it. Here is my soul, my will, my energy, my strength, my poverty, my wealth—all that I have. It is yours. Take it! Consecrate it! Offer it! Offer it to the Heavenly Father with yourself, in order that he, looking down on this great Sacrifice, may see only you, his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. Transmute the poor bread of my life into your life; thrill the wine of my

wasted life into your divine Spirit; unite my broken heart with your Heart; change my cross into a crucifix.

Let not my abandonment and my sorrow go to waste. Gather up the fragments, and as the drop of water is absorbed by the wine at the Offertory of the Mass, let my life be absorbed in you. Let my little cross be entwined with your great cross, so that I may purchase the joys of everlasting happiness in union with you.

Consecrate these trials of my life which would go unrewarded unless united with you; transubstantiate me so that, like bread which is now your Body, and wine which is now your Blood, I, too, may be wholly yours. I care not if the species remain, or that, like the bread and wine, I may seem to all earthly eyes the same as before. My station in life, my routine duties, my work, my family—all these are but the species of my life which may remain unchanged; but the substance of my life, my soul, my will, my heart, transubstantiate them, transform them wholly into your service so that through me all may know how sweet is the love of Christ!

—Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

F.J. Sheen