

## Exodus 32.7-14

Moses' descent from the mountain and his pleading with God could be considered a foreshadowing of the Incarnation. Just as Moses was sent back to the sinful people from God's glorious presence at Sinai, God the Father also sent the Son to our fallen world from the highest heavens. Jesus, our great High Priest, has come to plead for us, and to save us from destruction. This pleading is at the heart of priesthood – not just of those who are ordained in the Church, but the priesthood of all of us who have been baptized. As baptized Christians, God calls us his own 'royal priesthood', and it is among our tasks to stand before him as his glory is revealed at mass and bring to him the many sins, failings, and problems of not just ourselves, but the whole world, and to plead with him. It is our task to pray for (and to work for) the conversion of those who do not yet know Jesus, but also to ask God's forgiveness for the many ways through which we, his own people, have abandoned him. We must pray for the Church when it falls into apostasy and idolatry, the same way our Lord pleads for us continually at the right hand of the Father.

## Elements of the Mass

### What's in a Name? Holy Communion

Holy Communion most specifically describes the part of the mass when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ but it can also be used to describe all of the service of the mass. It reminds us that in receiving the sacrament we are brought into a close relationship with Jesus. Communion simply defined is the sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings. So in Holy Communion we are drawn intimately into relationship with Jesus and are able to understand his will for us in the world. It is also a way of understanding how we relate to other Christians. We all come together to share the one Body of Christ, and so are in Communion with each other. We therefore need to seek to model our lives and actions on those of Jesus. When we receive the Sacrament we receive him and so are drawn close to him and to one another.

15th September 2019  
Thirteenth Sunday  
after Trinity  
Twenty-Fourth  
Sunday of the Year

## Brought Back to life



In the confessional, the sacrament of reconciliation, priests sometimes say to the penitent: 'You have brought joy to heaven today.' By confessing our sins and by seeking God's love and mercy, we bring joy to heaven. This refers back to Jesus' line from today's gospel: 'There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.' God rejoices over what was lost and is found again. St Paul is one great example of someone who brought joy to heaven in this way: 'I thank God who called me into his service even though I injured and discredited the faith.' God remembers us in love and rejoices when we too remember how he meant us to be when he first created us. Confessing our sins is an honest and courageous thing to do. We look into the mirror of our souls and see the reflection of God's perfect image deep within us. When we find the strength to model our lives on this reflection of God's grace, we are brought back to life.

### From the Fathers

'O Christ my Saviour, I have sinned more than anyone; I alone have sinned against you, yet do not forsake me! As a Good Shepherd search for me, your sheep who has gone astray, and do not forsake me. I confess, O Saviour, that I have sinned against you, but since you are compassionate, absolve and forgive me.'

From 'Canon', Andrew of Crete (640-750, bishop, theologian)