

# St. Basil the Great Catholic Church

## Meaning of the Mass

2018-12-16

### The Altar

The altar is a three-fold symbol: (1) **Christ** Himself, (2) **table** for meal, (3) **altar** for sacrifice. Because the altar is a symbol for Christ, the priest kisses it. Since Jesus instituted the Eucharist during the Last Supper, it's easy to see why we have a table present to celebrate the Eucharist today. We're not so familiar with the meaning of ancient sacrifice. A sacrifice is simply **an offering of something valuable to ratify, renew, or repair a relationship**. In the Old Testament, the offerings were sheep, goats, birds, crops, oil, bread, or wine. The purposes for sacrifice were forgiveness for sin, purification, celebration, and reinforcing fellowship.

Halfway through each Mass, the priest says, "*Pray brothers and sisters that **my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.***" Did you know you make a sacrifice at Mass too? By virtue of your Baptism you are a priest, prophet, and king, and you exercise your personal priesthood at every Mass. Your sacrifice is the hour you could have spent sleeping in, running errands, or watching TV. Your sacrifice is the money you put in the collection basket. That's good, but God wants something more. What did it cost Jesus to be with us in the Eucharist? His whole life. God wants the same from you. Isn't that what love is - two people giving *everything* to each other? He appreciates the hour of your time and the check in the basket. He can do amazing things with those. Look what He did with only 5 loaves and 2 fish and He does now with a little bread and wine. That's all just food though. Imagine what He could do with a whole human life - a person made in His image and likeness who decides to give his whole life over? He'd make a world-changing saint.