

My Dear People,

The New Order of the Mass comes into general use today. It is a new ordering of prayers and ceremonies; it is not a NEW MASS. The essential meaning of the Mass is unchanged and unchangeable. The Mass is, and always will be, a EUCHARIST—a community thanksgiving to God for the blessings we have received through Christ, His Son.

It is a living MEMORIAL, in which we recall and present again the thoughts and actions of Christ at the Last Supper and on Calvary.

It is a sacred BANQUET to which we are invited as God's guests, and the nourishment we receive is the Body and Blood of Christ.

It is a SACRIFICE, perpetuating and re-presenting the Sacrifice of the Cross to the Father. The priest acts in Christ's name, and priest and people join with Christ in this Mystery of Faith. It is Christ we offer. He becomes our gift to God; his praise becomes our praise; his thanksgiving becomes our thanksgiving; his victory over sin becomes our plea—our claim, as it were—for reconciliation and forgiveness on behalf of the living and the dead. As we join in offering Christ, we gradually learn to give ourselves also, presenting to God our hopes and fears, our sufferings and disappointments, our strength and our weakness—asking

God to accept us with Christ, to take us as we are and transform us in the crucible of His Love.

That's the Mass. There is no change of doctrine.

The changes that have been made in word and ceremony are designed to bring us to a fuller understanding of the doctrine and a better celebration of the Eucharist. I am not going into the details of the renewed rite, but I would emphasise that fuller understanding will not come without effort. Nor will a better community celebration be achieved without your willing co-operation. Join, therefore, wholeheartedly in the responses and acclamations. If you can sing—and most people can—lift your voice in praise and thanksgiving to God. Be ready to offer yourselves for the reading of the Word of God. Regard it as a privilege to take part in the offertory procession where, as representative of your own people, you will be bringing the people's gifts to the altar. Listen carefully and with reverence to the Eucharistic Prayer, and unite yourselves in mind and heart with the universal Church in the offering of Christ's sacrifice. Come to the Lord's Table and receive Christ worthily as the spiritual nourishment of your souls.

First steps are always faltering steps. We cannot hope to reach perfection all at once. We shall undoubtedly

make mistakes. But if we are really trying, even our mistakes will redound to the glory of God.

With every blessing,

✠ PATRICK LENNON,

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

CARLOW.

9th February, 1970.

**DIOCESE OF KILDARE AND
LEIGHLIN**

**PASTORAL MESSAGE
LENT 1970**

**To be read in all Churches of the
Diocese on the First Sunday of Lent.**