

# ave maria CLASSICS

**PUBLISHER’S NOTE:** Clarence J. Enzler was the author of many Catholic books and booklets, including *My Other Self* (1957) and *Everyone’s Way of the Cross* (1970). His nine-part series of Lenten reflections, published under the title “Heroism and Holiness,” first appeared in the *Ave Maria* magazine in February, March, and April of 1963.

## Lenten Reflections

*Three: What Must I Do, Lord?*

BY CLARENCE J. ENZLER

Near the city of Damascus one sunny day around noon, some time after Our Lord’s death, one of the most awesome questions in all of history was asked: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?”

With these words the Roman Jew who was to become the greatest of all missionaries was introduced both to the Risen Christ and to the fundamental concept which permeates his writings, that of the Mystical Body.

It was as one breathing fire against the Christians that Saul approached the ancient city. With tireless energy he had been delivering Christians into chains and prison and testifying to their deaths. Damascus represented a new hunting ground. Perhaps it was even as he reviewed in his mind elaborate plans for entrapping the enemy that the noonday brightness of the sun was eclipsed by an even more brilliant light, shining down from heaven and enveloping him in blinding rays. Saul fell to the ground. He lay there trembling, pinned by a force he had no power to resist.

And it was then that he heard the awesome words: “Saul—Saul—why...?”

“Who are you?” he asked, though he must have known, for he added, “Lord.”  
“Who are you, Lord?”

“I am Jesus Whom you persecute.”

And Saul, whose whole life had been bound up in the observance of the Jewish Law—Saul who could not accept the Resurrection because to do so would set Jesus of Nazareth above the Law—Saul who now suddenly *had to* accept the Resurrection because here and now he *saw* the glorified body of Jesus—Saul surrendered unconditionally. “What must I do, Lord?”

What must Saul do? He must “rise up and go into the city” where he would be told.

### *Everyone’s Way of the Cross*

Clarence Enzler’s perennially popular *Everyone’s Way of the Cross* was first published by Ave Maria Press in 1970 and has since gone on to sell over 3.6 million copies, in both a [regular](#) and a [large print](#) edition. Ideal for either private devotion or public Stations of the Cross, Enzler’s meditation booklet urges us to carry on Christ’s “unfinished business” and unite our will with His.

Thenceforth for the next thirteen years, before beginning his missionary journeys to convert the world, he must learn what it means to be fully a Christian.

\*

So it is with us also. To respond to the divine invitation that we be heroic in holiness, “perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” we need to ask again and again, “What must I do, Lord?” And the answer in essence will always be the same: Learn what it means to be fully a Christian. Learn to see Christ in others. But, above all, “put on Christ” ourselves until, as with St. Paul, He takes possession of us so that we think with His mind, will with His will, and act with, in, and through Him.

How? Through the means Christ Himself provides to make us full participants in His Mystical Body.

It would be unbelievable, had Our Lord not said it, that He, with His Church, forms one Body, which in the phrase of St. Augustine is the whole Christ. Our Lord’s word makes it not only believable but certain and sure; yet it remains a mystery, the meaning of which can be approached only through similitudes.

Our Lord Himself used the analogy of a vine or tree. As the branch of a tree contains the life of the tree within itself, so we contain His life in us.

St. Paul used the analogy of the body. Our own body has many parts, yet is one. The head, mouth, eyes, nose, ears, arms, legs, hands and feet all have different functions, yet comprise one body, animated by one soul. So, too, Christ’s Mystical Body comprises many members and yet is one.

Others have used still other illustrations. As many grains of wheat combine to make one loaf of bread, and many drops of water combine to make the sea, so also many individuals in the Church are incorporated

into one Mystical Body and this Body is Christ Himself.

For this reason Our Lord could say, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me?*”

For this reason St. Paul could write, “All you who have been baptized in Christ’s name have put on the person of Christ...you are all one person in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:27-28).

For this reason we can declare with the certainty of faith that, being members of Christ, we are one with Him. We dwell in Him and He in us. We dwell in the Trinity, and the Trinity dwells in us.

Christ is Christ, and we are we—separate and distinct—yet we are one with Him.

So, when we ask, “What must we do, Lord?” the answer comes: Realize, as best you can, your dignity as Christians.

We must strive to realize that as surely as our hand or foot is united to our own body, even more surely are we united with Christ.

We must realize—a shattering thought!—that as closely as Christ’s own Mother was joined to him *naturally*, we are even more closely joined to Him *supernaturally*. Surely, this is what He meant, when He answered one who told Him that His Mother and brothers were waiting outside, by pointing to His disciples and saying: “He who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, my sister, my mother” (Matt. 12:50).

But always the question persists: How? How can this be? We cannot say. All that we know is that at the moment when Our Lord offered Himself to His Father in His passion and death, mankind’s mystical union with Him came into being—and our own personal union with Him came into existence potentially. Our union became actual the moment we received faith in Baptism. In that flashing instant, the father accepted us as His adopted child, a co-heir with Christ.

So much did we become *one* with Him that His Crucifixion became our crucifixion;

His death on the Cross, our death; His right to heaven, our right to heaven.

And if again we ask how this can be, the answer is that it not only *can* be—it *is*—because the grace that was given to Christ was given Him not only as an individual but as the Head of His Church, so that grace flows from Him into all His members. Our Lord's actions, as St. Thomas Aquinas explains, have the same relation to Himself *and to His members* as the actions of a man himself. Whatever Our Lord did, therefore, is ours as though we had done it ourselves.

And just as Christ on Calvary was mankind—and you and I—making atonement, so in the Mass He is mankind—and you and I—making atonement and giving glory, praise and thanksgiving to the Trinity. This is the utterly incomprehensible dignity of a Christian.

But “what must we do, Lord?” We must realize that from this dignity flows an equally incomprehensible responsibility. Since there is this oneness between Christ and all His members, whatever we do to the least of our brothers, we do to Him. Smile on a neighbor and we smile on Christ. Give blood to the ailing and we give it to Him. Feed a baby or hold it lovingly and we repeat and renew the actions of Mary holding and feeding her Babe. Thus Christ enables us to repay Him a little for what He has done for us. Thus He makes our love and our service both His and ours.

\*

It is vital that we realize this presence of Christ in “the least of these.” For it is our loving intention that measures the worth of all that we do.

But what if we frown rather than smile, reject rather than give, hate rather than love? Then, just as it hurts the whole human body when a part of it is injured, so hurt is done to the Mystical Body when one of its members

denies Christ by acting in an un-Christlike manner.

Just as every act of conformity to God's will is an act of union with Christ, so every act of rebellion is a denial of union with Christ, an act of disunion. Every sin is an attack upon the whole Mystical Body.

Then, our hope is in Christ's prayer, “Father, forgive them; thy know not what they do.”

But again we ask, “What must we do, Lord?” To be fully a Christian we must realize that we are, each one of us, *unique*. Our corporate existence in the Mystical Body does not nullify our individuality. Just as the hand is part of the body and yet has a function uniquely its own which no other part of the body is fully capable of duplicating, so each of us, while united to the Body, has a uniqueness in God's eyes.

What a wonderful thought it is that God has marked out for each of us a place of our own!

In all the world that has existed from the time of Adam to the present there never has been—among all the nearly three billion persons who now inhabit the earth, there is not now—and in all ages to come no matter how long the world shall last, there can never be another *you*, or another me.

Each *you* among the readers of this article came into existence through a unique act of God's creative love. Each you continues to live because at every instant He renews this unique act of creative love. You *are* because He wanted a you to *be*, an individual you, a unique you, the only you that can ever be.

In each you He sees something individual, something desirable that does not exist in precisely the same way in any other person, not even His own Mother.

On the north wall of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., there looks down on worshipers and visitors alike a huge and

compellingly beautiful mosaic of Christ. Each piece in that mosaic is different; ordered to contribute a certain color, shape, or background to the whole design. This piece reacts to the light so as to reflect redness; this one, blueness; this, yellow; this, purple; this, brown.

So, with each of us. We are to react to the light of God's grace so as to reflect Christ, to reflect Him not only to the world but to the sight of God Himself.

We are, each of us, a piece of God's mosaic of the Christ.

There is one sense in which each piece of a mosaic is capable of being the most important. If just one piece of the mosaic of Christ in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception were missing, is it too much to believe that its absence would have a greater impact on the attention of the designer than all the other pieces? So it is with us in the divine plan, we who are all bits of the mosaic of Christ on earth. When one of us fails to reflect his or her portion of the image of Christ, the gap is so noticeable that God the designer, Our Lord the Good Shepherd, must leave the 99 or the 9,999 pieces that are in place and go seeking for that which is lost.

The parable of the Good Shepherd is a wonderful illustration of our uniqueness in God's sight.

So, to be fully Christian, we must understand that each of us in the Mystical Body has a place of his own and for each of us God has a plan of His own. It is literally true that God has planned our entire life. Our happiness not only hereafter, but here, consists in finding and heroically following that plan.

So, one question more: "Lord, what must we do?" To be fully Christian we must strive to be the saint God wants us to be, not the saint *we* want to be.

In responding to God's invitation to be heroes of holiness, the saints desired to be precisely what God intended for them. We who are not saints are intent on being what we ourselves intend. We tell ourselves: I will serve God gloriously by being a great influence, a magnetic reformer, a magnificent missionary, converting whole nations like St. Francis Xavier. I will be a masterful speaker, golden-voiced like St. John Damascene. I will form a society or an institute, like St. Ignatius. I will write a profound book on mystical prayer like St. Teresa. It would be "nice" to be a saint if we could be as one of these.

It is as though the piece of glass designed to give redness said, "I want to be hexagonal." Or the piece in the corner said, "I want to be in the center."

\*

No one can be heroic in holiness on his own terms. We can be holy at all only on God's terms. Only if we are content to follow His design for us in complete abandonment; desiring nothing that is not part of His plan, refusing nothing that is; content to live at this moment of time, in this land and community, following the particular career that is ours; satisfied with the emotional, mental and physical equipment He has bestowed; accepting whatever of consolations or desolations may be ours; full of humble wonderment that our God is at all, much less so intimately interested in us; grateful in short to be our unique selves in the Mystical Body—only then are we truly heroic, and only then are we fully Christian.

No saint has ever been a saint in *general*. Each has been *uniquely* God's saint—or has not been one at all.

This is the long and short of it. This it is that we must be.

---

Reprinting Rights and Permissions

If you are duplicating a portion of this material for private and limited circulation, and not for sale, and if the amount of prose text you wish to use is less than 250 words, you may do so without written permission. The following acknowledgment should appear somewhere on the reproduced material:

Excerpted from *Ave Maria* magazine. Copyright © 1969 by Ave Maria Press, P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556. Used with permission of the publisher.

If you wish to duplicate more than 250 words, please contact us for written permission.

Mail:

Permissions Department  
Ave Maria Press  
P.O. Box 428  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Email: [kelly.140@nd.edu](mailto:kelly.140@nd.edu)

Phone: 1-800-282-1865, ext. 245

Fax: 1-800-282-5681