

GROUP



ONLINE, DO-IT-YOURSELF  
CATHOLIC RETREATS

A MOTHER'S TEARS  
A RETREAT GUIDE ON OUR LADY OF SORROWS

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Two columns of horizontal lines for writing.





# CONFERENCE

## Getting More Out of Mass

### Personal Questionnaire

- 1 How often and in what contexts have I heard or used the phrase “offer it up,” and what has it meant for me up to this point in my life?
- 2 When I think about what Jesus taught regarding meriting rewards in heaven, how does it make me feel? Am I comfortable with it or uncomfortable? Why?
- 3 Some people confuse merit and love—they tend to think that they can “earn” God’s love by giving a good “performance” in their Christian life. What is wrong with this point of view?
- 4 In number 2008, the Catechism explains that our possibility of contributing to Christ’s Kingdom is itself a gift of God. Read over this number, then reflect on what this gift shows us about God’s love for us. Why would he give us this possibility?



*The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, and then follows man’s free acting through his collaboration, so that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man’s merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the predispositions and assistance given by the Holy Spirit.*

—CCC 2008

Read over the following number from the Catechism, then answer questions 5–7:



*Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God’s wisdom. These graces and goods are the object of Christian prayer. Prayer attends to the grace we need for meritorious actions.*

—CCC 2010

- 5 How would I explain this number in my own words?
- 6 How did I receive the “initial grace of forgiveness and justification”? Savor and thank God for that gift.
- 7 How firmly do I believe in my capacity to merit graces for myself and for others? How consciously do I try to do this in my daily life?
- 8 What am I doing in my life right now to deepen (not just maintain) my union with God?
- 9 Reflect on the major commitments that I have right now. What are my motivations, my intentions, for living them faithfully? How can I purify those intentions and link those activities more closely to my relationship with God?
- 10 What suffering am I experiencing in my life right now? Take some time to reflect on that suffering in the light of Christ’s cross, and to prayerfully “offer it up” for an increase of the flow of divine grace into the world.

