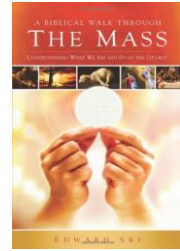


Edward Sri

A Biblical Walk through THE MASS



Understanding What We Say and Do in THE MASS

Introduction/Foundation (Part 1)	2
Part II: Introductory Rites	3
Part III: Liturgy of THE WORD	11
Part IV: Liturgy of THE EUCHARIST	19
Part V: The Concluding Rites	31

Summary of <i>Holy Mass</i>	33
Understanding the Mass Chart	36
Preparing to attend Mass	37
Nicene Creed	38
Apostles Creed with Bible References	41
Consubstantial with the Father (ARTICLE)	42
Why do priests kiss the altar? (ARTICLE)	43
The Dance of the Holy Spirit (ARTICLE)	44
US Catholic Conference of Bishops Liturgy of the Word	45
Intercessory Prayers/Misc Prayers for life	46
Hands of a Priest (ARTICLE)	47
Do this in memory of me (ARTICLE)	49
PSALM 130	54
PSALM 118	55
How to dress for going to church	56
Jewish Passover/Photo: Seder Plate	58
Why do we have Holy Water (ARTICLE)	62
Ten Commandments	63
Miracles of the Eucharist	65
Praying the Name of God (30 days)	67
US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) Content List for info on MASS	70
What is used during Mass (PHOTOS/Explanations)	71
Vestments of Priests/Bishops	75
Mass Journal	78
Things to do and not do at Mass	80
What do YOU see at Mass	81
Catechumenal Structure of the Mass	83
Message of Jesus	84

A Protestant's view of the Mass

"The standing up, sitting down and kneeling, people saying things from a book... I knew there was "something deeper" going on in the Mass..."

Introduction

Indeed, something much, ***much*** deeper is going on!!! Many people may be confused by all the *Catholic calisthenics* and the dry, mechanical way of talking to God. Often, we take all of this for granted and may not even understand what we are hearing, seeing, saying or doing. Many do not know the rituals and prayers of the Mass ***are Scriptural***.

The **Roman Rite** is the main liturgical rite of the Latin Church and the main particular church *sui iuris* (of one's own right) of the Catholic Church. It is the most widespread liturgical rite in Christianity as a whole. The Roman Rite gradually became the predominant rite used by the Western Church, developed out of many local variants from Early Christianity on, not amounting to distinctive rites, that existed in the medieval manuscripts, but have been progressively reduced since the invention of printing, most notably since the reform of liturgical law in the 16th century at the behest of the Council of Trent (1545–63) and more recently following the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Part 1: Foundations

What is The Mass? (Pgs 7-14)

"From the time of the Apostles, The Mass has been the central act of Christian worship... the celebration of the Eucharist that Jesus instituted at the Last Supper..."

The Eucharist is:

1. **A memorial** of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross (*Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*): - ***Sacramentally makes present Christ's redeeming sacrifice on the*** Calvary (CCC 1366 – 1368); Jesus' language had strong *sacrificial overtones* (CCC 1373 – 1374); Jewish notion of *memorial* does not only recall the past event but makes the event *present* (Seder Meal) - the re-present (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross; ...it's salutary (beneficial) power is applied to forgiveness of sins we daily commit.
2. **Real presence of Jesus:** He **is *uniquely present* in** Eucharist; He is *substantially* (amply) contained. *Transubstantiation*¹ is where a change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the *substance* of His body and blood; not a chemical one or change in visual appearance (John 6:53-56) - faith assures you of this, though your senses suggest otherwise; most *amazing* event in the universe happen at every Mass; sacred species remains outside of Mass in Tabernacle (NT Ark of Covenant) where we should reference the presence **by *genuflecting* (Reflection* - see w/eyes of Soul; if His kingdom is not of this world, should not the sacrifice for sins and new covenant also different?)*****NOT a chemical change!***
3. **Holy Communion** with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: THE most amazing event in the universe takes place at every Mass- Son of God Himself comes upon our altars and dwells in our midst! ***He remains with us as long as the sacred species remains in Tabernacle; He enters our bodies, joining Himself to our souls in the INTIMATE union*** – to be revered by genuflecting or other holy expression of adoration; by spending time in adoration, the *intimacy* with Jesus brings great strength and consolation; it is where we *rest in the Lord's presence*; Jesus *thirsts* for us to draw near to Him.

"In the Eucharist, it is as if we become like the Beloved Disciple who rested on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper."

4. **Jesus revealed as the Passover Lamb** (1Cor5:7-8); in Jewish Passover ritual, was not enough to sacrifice and kill animal but the *eating* of the sacrificial lamb was necessary to seal the *covenant* (Ex 12:1-8)- a communion meal – this correlates with Jesus sacrifice as the Lamb of God so to be in *communion* with Him and the new covenant.

“In the moments after Communion, we become like Mary, who carried the God-Man in her womb for nine months; we become *living tabernacles...*”; we become what we eat, **we change into what we consume; we gradually transform by nourishing ourselves with the Eucharist**
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal/girm-chapter-2.cfm>

Entrance Procession to begin Mass

When the time has come for Mass to begin, everyone STANDS, and a hymn is sung, or a short reading is used. The entrance procession is led by the cross since Jesus is meant to lead all Christians through life. If incense is used at the Mass, the incense prepares the way for Jesus by going before Him. Usually, there will be two candles flanking the processional crucifix symbolizing Christ as the light of the world. The other ministers who are to serve at the altar follow the Crucifix.

The deacon enters next, carrying the Book of the Gospels. ***No other book in Christian tradition holds the same honor as the Gospels, the texts that are the very words and actions of our Lord and Savior.*** Finally, the priest who is to celebrate the Mass enters. As each person approaches the sanctuary, he genuflects to the tabernacle (or a bow to the altar if no tabernacle is present in the sanctuary). NOTE: For the entirety of the Mass, all reverences are made to the altar in the form of a bow rather than to the tabernacle. That is because, once the ministers enter the sanctuary and the Mass begins, our focus shifts to the altar where the sacrifice of Christ is to be made present. The priest and deacon kiss the altar to show reverence for the sacrifice to take place there and prepare for the Introductory Rites of the Mass. If incense is being used at the Mass, the priest will usually incense the altar, now, too. As he passes in front of the crucifix in front of the altar, he will stop and incense the crucifix.

St Rose de Lima Catholic Church
Murfreesboro, TN

Part 2: Introductory Rites

1. The Sign of the Cross (Pgs 17 – 23) **STAND: OPENING SONG**

The congregation STANDS and the priest, deacon, altar servers and possibly others process to the altar. They all bow and reverence the altar and the priest/deacon ascends the steps of the altar followed by others. The priest kisses the altar and begins by inviting all to make the Sign of the Cross.

Priest: ***"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."***

We invoke God's presence and invite Him to bless us, assist us and guard us from all harm; denotes God's faithful people, helps fight temptation, protects from all evil, and brings terror to devils, vanquishes death, destroys sin, empties hell, dethrones Satan and restores the universe.

Two aspects of Sign of the Cross:

A. Physically making sign over our bodies: prefigured in Old Testament (Ez 8)²

- Ritual has roots in OT as sign of *divine protection* and mark of *distinguishing the righteous from the wicked*. (Ez 8)
- Expresses a firm commitment to live according to Christ's standards, not the world's
- Expresses our desire to be set apart from corrupt ways of the world in our own day
- Invokes God's protection in our lives; to guard us from evil and harm; to strengthen fight against temptation; to seek help in midst of suffering and great trials; used to bless children asking the Lord *to bless and protect them*.

B. Words recited while making the sign

- In OT, Calling on God's name represents the *presence* of a person and *carries the power* of that person
*"Our help is in the **name** of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."* Ps 124:8
- In NT, at beginning of Mass, we make the Sign of the Cross; we reverently invoke God's divine presence and power as if consecrating the next hour to Him in everything we do as we prepare to enter into the sacred mysteries of the Mass; approaching God by virtue of supernatural life God gave us at Baptism
- In NT, Jesus' name equated to holiness and power of God's name³
- Echoes Jesus' great commission to apostles (Mt 28:19)
"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
- Make commitment that our lives reflect harmony with God in all that we do in His name
- Should be said and made with careful attention and reverence ⁴

USCCB (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

The Mass begins with the entrance chant/song. The celebrant and other ministers enter in procession and reverence the altar with a bow and/or a kiss. The altar is a symbol of Christ at the heart of the assembly and so deserves this special reverence. All make the Sign of the Cross and the celebrant extends a greeting to the gathered people in words taken from Scripture.

[Why does the priest kiss the altar?](#)

In **kissing the altar**, the **priest** symbolizes the bond between Christ and his church; acknowledges the sacrifices of those martyrs (relics) who gave their life for the furtherance of the faith; and, when performed with the deacon, is an extension of peace to the community.

² <https://catholicexchange.com/biblical-roots-sign-cross>

In third century, Tertullian wrote, "At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, **we trace upon the forehead the sign.**"

Ezekiel 9:4-6:

In Ezekiel's dream, he saw much wickedness in Jerusalem and was going to punish them again but the faithful/righteous ones, would be spared by the appearance of a mysterious mark (Hebrew letter **Tav**)

The Ancient picture ✚ is a type of "mark," probably of two sticks crossed to mark a place, similar to the Egyptian hieroglyph ⚡, a picture of two crossed sticks. This letter has the meanings of "mark," "sign" and "signature." The Modern Hebrew, Arabic and Greek names for this letter is tav (or tau), a Hebrew word meaning, "mark." Hebrew, Greek and Arabic agree that the sound for this letter is "t." The early pictograph ✚ evolved into ✕ in the Middle Semitic script and continued to evolve

Revelation 7:2-4:

John witnesses four angels at the four corners of the earth, holding back storm winds ready to wreak havoc on the earth and sea.

"Then I saw another angel come up from the East, holding the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who were given power to damage the land and the sea, "Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we **put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.**" I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand marked from every tribe of the Israelites."

Revelations 14:1

"Then I looked and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand **who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads**".

Revelations 22:4

"They will look upon his face and **his name will be on their foreheads.**"

Revelations 9:4

"They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or any tree, but only those people who did not **have the seal of God on their foreheads.**"

St Cyril of Jerusalem noted two dimensions of the Sign of the Cross: "a badge of the faithful" and "a terror to the devils" who seek to harm us (cited: *The Sign of the Cross: The Gesture, The Mystery, The History* – Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006)

³ Phil 2:9 (St Paul)

"...the name which is above every name..."

Phil 2: 10-11

"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father..."

Mk 16:17-18, (sick are healed); Lk 24:47 & Acts 10:43 (sinners find mercy); Lk 10:17 (demons are expelled)

Jn 14:13, 15:16, 16:23, 26-27 - Jesus said:

"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do."

Mt 18:20 – Jesus said:

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

⁴ ...Careful attention and reverence...

"When we cross ourselves, let it be with a real Sign of the Cross. Instead of a small, cramped gesture that gives no notion of its meaning, let us make a large, unhurried sign from forehead to breast, from shoulder to shoulder, consciously feeling how it includes the whole of us, our thoughts, our attitudes, our body and soul, every part of us at once, how it consecrates and sanctifies us...Make a large cross, taking time, thinking what you do. Let it take in your whole being – body, soul, mind, and will, thoughts, feelings, you're doing and not-doing – and by signing it with the cross, strengthen and consecrate the whole in the strength of Christ, in the name of the triune God."

Roman Guardini *Sacred Signs* (St. Louis: peio Decimo Press, 1955), 14

2. The Greeting (pgs 24 – 29) **STAND**

Priest: ***“The Lord be with you...”***

People: ***“...and with your spirit.”***

This is NOT an ordinary greeting! These words convey *the reality of Jesus’ presence* with the community of believers assembled in His name AND expresses the profound reality of God’s life that was given to us at Baptism; it is a *call to mission* and to go beyond our *comfort zones* as so many biblical figures chose to answer the LORD’s call ⁵.

The greeting ***“The Lord be with you...”***

- Can inspire and encourage us
- Reminds us of the higher calling we each have as children of God according to our Father’s plan
- Access to a higher power that can support us through trials and challenges of life
- Helps us be faithful to God’s plan for us
- Points to awesome reality of mysteries of Christ’s death, resurrection and communion
- Reminds the LORD is truly with us and of our *higher calling* to a role no one else can play
- Though we are unworthy, the words remind us at very beginning of Mass that we have access to a higher power, and we can ***trust HIM*** to make up for whatever we are lacking
- Awareness of our fellowship with saints who were greeted with these same words
- Acknowledge Holy Spirit works through the priests by virtue of priest’s ordination

While there are other *GREETING* options (Rom 1:7, 1Cor 1:3, Gal 1:3, Eph 1:2, Phil 1:2), they all underscore that they share Christ’s apostolic mission.

ACTIVITY: Pray for the priest at beginning of Mass that he performs the Holy Sacrifice in a Holy Way and pray that each of you are attentive, focused and reverently demonstrates your deep love for Holy Mass.

⁵ “The Lord is with you...” - Gen 26:3, 24 (Isaac); Gen 28:13-15 (Jacob); Ex 3:12 (Moses); Jos 1:5, 9 (Joshua); 2 Sam 7:3 (King David); Jer 1:6-8 (Jeremiah); Lk 1:28 (Blessed Virgin Mother)

Joshua 1:5-6, 9

“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the LORD, your God is with you wherever you go.”

Gideon - Judges 6:12 & 6:16

“The LORD is with you.”

“I will be with you, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man.”

Moses – Exodus 2:15, 3:11, 3:13, 4:1, 4:10 – Moses felt inadequate, but God responded with assurance (Ex 3:12, 4:12)

“I will be with you.”

God’s power was manifested through Moses weakness (2 Cor 12:9-10)

3. I Confess (pgs 30 – 35) **STAND**

*“I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do,
Through my fault, through my fault,
Through my most grievous fault.
therefore, I ask blessed Mary every-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you
my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.”*

Unlike Old Testament encounters with God⁶ we are called to prepare ourselves for a sacred encounter with Him in the sacramental form of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called by the priest to “prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries” by cleansing our souls of sin before we come into presence of God⁷.

The prayer is called the *Confiteor* (Latin for “I confess”) and was often done in formal public ceremonies.⁷ Early Christians confessed their sins before partaking in Eucharis (*Didache*).⁸

The Confiteor

“I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters...”

Jas 5:16 – “confess your sins to one another...” sin affects relationship with God AND each other
Examination of Conscience

...in my thoughts

...in my thoughts – Phil 4:8: guard our thoughts, keep focused on good

Ways to fall into sin (Sermon on Mount)

- Anger toward others (Mt 5:22)
- Adultery of heart/lustful thinking (Mt 5:27-28)
- Judging others (Mt 7:1)
- Being anxious about future/falling into deep discouragement (Mt 6:25-34)

...and in my words,

Spoken word can be used to bless or to curse. There are many ways what we say can be used for harm.

Ways to fall into sin (New Testament)

- Gossip (2 Cor 12:10, 1Tm 5:13, Rom 1:29)
- Slander (Rom 1:30, 1Tm 3:11)
- Insult (Mt 5:22)
- Lying (Col 3:9, Wis 1:11, Sir 7:12-13)
- Boasting (Ps 5:5, 75:4, 1Cor5:6, Jas 4:16)

...in what I have done...

These are actions that directly hurt other people OR our relationship with God.

Ways to fall into sin (Ten Commandments)⁹

1. I am the LORD your God. You shall not have strange gods before me
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the LORD's day
4. Honor your father and your mother
5. You shall not kill
6. You shall not commit adultery

7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness
9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife
10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods

...and what I have failed to do...

We are also held accountable for the good that we failed to do. (Jas 4:17). We are called to be *Imitators of Christ* with

- Compassion
- Kindness
- Lowliness
- Meekness
- Patience
- Love (Col 3:12 – 15)

We are challenged to ask if there is anything in our lives that keep us from following Jesus' call.

*...Through my fault, through my fault,
Through my most grievous fault...*

These lines help us recognize that sinning against God is NO light matter! It is more than a simple apology, it is *heartfelt*, deep contrition and sorrow for our sins

*...therefore, I ask blessed Mary every-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you
my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God."*

As always, we enlist the prayers of our mother Mary and the communion of saints including our brothers and sisters in the Church, to pray for us as individuals that we may avoid the near occasions of sins.

⁶ Encounters: Old Testament - Gen 17:2, 28:17; Ex 3:6, 19:16, 19:9-19, Ps 51:2, 7/New Testament Mt 17:6, Rv 1:17

⁷ Repentance: Old Testament - Lv 5:5, Nm 5:7, Dn 9:20, Neh 1:6Neh 9:2, Ps 32:5, 38:18, Prv 28:13, Sir 4:26/New Testament – Mt 3:6, Mk 1:5, 1Jn 1:9, Jas 5:16, 1 Cor 11:28,17

⁸ Earliest non-biblical accounting Christian texts called *Didache* (Teaching of the Apostles)

⁹ [The Ten Commandments](#)

4. Lord, have mercy (pgs 36 – 41) **STAND**

Priest: *"Lord, have mercy."*

People: *"Lord, have mercy."*

Priest: *"Christ, have mercy."*

People: *"Christ, have mercy."*

Priest: *"Lord, have mercy."*

People: *"Lord, have mercy."*

We are drawing closer now into the sacred mysteries of the Liturgy with fear and awe at the joining of heaven and earth. We ask for God's mercy on us and to grant us His salvation. This sometimes is called *Kyrie* and it is an expression of repentance, petition and prayer.

What is Biblical mercy?

It is not a child's game nor is it the way Our Father sees each of us approaching Him with a contrite and sorrowful hearts. Just as in the Gospels people come to Jesus asking for His mercy in their pleading for healing and help in their lives¹⁰, we bring our own physical ailments, personal trials and *spiritual* blindness, weakness and sin seeking His divine help.

Some view this three-fold petition as invocation of Jesus as our brother, our Redeemer and our God. While for others, we are asking mercy of the divine Persons (Lord, Son and Holy Spirit).

There are three languages used in the Mass:

1. Greek (Kyrie Eleison – LORD, have mercy) NOTE: out of reference for traditions
2. Hebrew (Alleluia, Amen)
3. Latin (or common liturgical language of Western Church: USA=English)

USCCB (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

The Penitential Act follows the greeting. At the very beginning of the Mass, the faithful recall their sins and place their trust in God's abiding mercy. The Penitential Act includes the *Kyrie Eleison*, a Greek phrase meaning, "Lord, have mercy." This litany recalls God's merciful actions throughout history. On Sundays, especially in Easter Time, in place of the customary Penitential Act, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place. On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, the *Gloria* follows the Penitential Act. The *Gloria* begins by echoing the proclamation of the angels at the birth of Christ: "Glory to God in the highest!" In this ancient hymn, the gathered assembly joins the heavenly choirs in offering praise and adoration to the Father and Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ Asking for Mercy: Blind men (Mt 9:27, 20:30-31); Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-48, Lk 18:38-39); 10 Lepers (Lk 17:13)

5. Gloria and Collect (pgs 42 - 49) STAND - may be sung

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you; we bless you; we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.*

*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

The Liturgy now shifts from sorrowful repentance to joyful praise as we pray the Gloria. The Gloria is often prayed in song. It is a *biblical mosaic* saturated with words from Sacred Scripture and tells the story of Jesus in three acts: 1. His coming, 2. His redeeming death, 3. His triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven. We join with all the angels and saints in heaven to praise God for His work of salvation and for His own glory.¹¹

ACT I: His Coming

***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you; we bless you; we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father...”***

In Luke 2:14, the angels announced to the shepherds Christ’s birth.¹² We praise the Father for His omnipotent reign over heaven and earth (*Fatherly omnipotence*). Loving God is not just for what He does for us but for who He *is*, for His glorious goodness and love. We cannot help but worship and give thanks and praise.

ACT II: His redeeming death

***“...Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father...”***

We focus on Christ’s redemptive mission and triumph over sin and the devil.¹³ and the worship of the Lamb by the angels and saints in heaven¹⁴

***“...You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer...”
You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us...”***

We repeat the prophetic words of John the Baptist when he first saw Jesus. He is revealed as the *Lamb of God*, the *Passover Lamb* of the New Covenant who offers up His life for our sins. Just as the lamb was sacrificed on the first Passover night in Egypt in order to spare Israel from death, so Jesus I the new Passover lamb who is sacrificed on Calvary in order to save all humanity from the curse of death caused by sin.¹⁵

ACT III: His triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven

***“...For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”***

In the Bible, the right hand is the position of power¹⁶. We bear witness to Christ’s reign over heaven and earth and His kingdom, which will have no end AND we *humbly* ask Him to “receive our prayer:” and “have mercy on us.” The Gloria sums up all salvation history.

COLLECT

USCCB (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

The Introductory Rites conclude with a prayer called the COLLECT. The celebrant invites the gathered assembly to pray and, after a brief silence, proclaims the prayer of the day. The Collect gathers the prayers of all into one and disposes all to hear the Word of God in the context of the celebration.

¹¹ Names we use for God:

- “God, almighty Father” (praise Him for His omnipotent reign over heaven and earth)
- “Heavenly King”
- “God almighty”
- “Lord, Almighty”
- “King of Israel” (Is 4:46)
- King of Glory (Ps 24:7-10)
- “...the great King over all gods...” (Ps 95:3)
- “King of kings”

¹² These were the same shepherds who were responsible for caring for the flocks used for sacrificial offerings in the temple. When a lamb was born from this flock, it was inspected and well-kept ensuring perfection for the sacrifice in the temple.

¹³ Rev 5:6-14, 12:11, 17:14

¹⁴ Rev 5:8, 12-13, 7:9-10, 14:1-3

¹⁵ John 1:29, *A Biblical Walk through the Mass* Ascension Press, pg 46

¹⁶ Mk 16:19, Ps 110:1, Heb 1:13, Dn 7:14

Part 3: The Liturgy of the Word

"When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel"

Introduction (Pgs 52 - 57)

The *Two Tables of the Mass* describes the two main parts of the Mass and together form the “one single act of worship”: greatest Bible Study on earth

Liturgy of the Word

- Nourished by Holy Scripture
- Lead us to deeper communion with Jesus in Eucharist
- *Light of our souls*¹³
- Encounter God Word as if He had spoken to each of us personally¹⁴
- Nourished sacramentally with Body and Blood of Jesus Christ
- *Bread of our life*¹³

- Serious matter: we prepare through *Sign of Cross, Confiteor, Kyrie and Gloria*¹⁵
Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Reflects the order of God's redemptive plan with Jesus as center of salvation history with all Scriptures pointing to Him.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Nourished by body and blood of Jesus Christ
- *Source and summit* of Christian life

Three-year cycle of Readings

- Rooted in Jewish practice
- Come from Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, then Gospel (not dependent on an individual's preference or expertise but collectively for the entire Church throughout the world)

Liturgical year

- Corresponds to various season and feasts of the Church; see Jesus as an infant in the manger, fasting in the desert, offering Himself on the cross, rising from the grave, founding His Church, instituting the Sacraments, ascending to the right hand of the Father and sending the Holy Spirit upon us. "*The graces of all these divine mysteries are renewed in the Church.*"¹⁶

- Advent: Old Testament=longing for the Savior
- Christmas season: rejoicing in birth of Son of God who came to dwell among us
- Lent: walk with Jesus in prayer and fasting to prepare for His sacrifice
- Holy Week: Jesus passion, death and resurrection
- Ordinary time: focus on public ministry of Jesus and celebrates various mysteries of faith
 - Feast of Corpus Christi (Gift of Eucharist)
 - Feast of Holy Trinity (Mystery of God as Three Divine Persons)
 - Feast of All Saints (Praises God for transforming us)
 - Feast of individual saints
 - Feasts of Blessed Virgin Mary (Immaculate Conception, Nativity, assumption into heaven, and other parts of her life)

The Liturgical Year is like a family celebrating important events of its members. So, too, the Family of God celebrates birthdays, anniversaries, and other key aspects of God's plan of salvation.

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Most of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of readings from Scripture. On Sundays and solemnities, there are three Scripture readings. During most of the year, the first reading is from the Old Testament and the second reading is from one of the New Testament letters. During Easter Time, the first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles which tells the story of the Church in its earliest days. The last reading is always taken from one of the four Gospels. In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church feeds the people of God from the table of his Word (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 51). The Scriptures are the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures, God speaks to us, leading us along the path to salvation.

¹³ *The Imitation of Christ* (Thomas à Kempis, 1950)

¹⁴ While written by humans with different writing styles, all were inspired by God (theopneustos – *God breathed* 2 Tim 3:16)

¹⁵ Mark ourselves and come into God's presence (*Sign of the Cross*); confess our unworthiness to be in God's presence (*Confiteor*); ask for Mercy (*Kyrie*); sing His praises (*Gloria*); listen to His inspired (*Scripture readings*)

¹⁶ Abbot Gueranger, *The Liturgical Year*, vol. 1, Book 1, 11

6. The First Reading - Old Testament (pgs 58 – 60) **SIT**

This reading is usually from Old Testament with exception of Easter season when it is taken from the Acts of the Apostles.

At the beginning of the reading:

Lector: "A reading from...."

At the end of the reading:

Lector: "The Word of the Lord..."

People: "Thanks be to God"

We cannot adequately understand Jesus and the New Testament Scriptures without first knowing the story of Israel and the Old Testament. Old Testament Reading at Mass helps us to enter that story of Israel and see the unity of the Bible more clearly. These reading generally correspond to the Gospel reading for the day.¹⁷ It is a common facet of worship in the Bible from the Old Testament.

The closing dialogue is likened to a great shout or trumpet call reminding us wonderful it is to hear God speak to us through the Scriptures:

"The declaration should be heard with absolute amazement. How absurd it would be to take for granted that God should speak in our midst. We are expressing our amazement, and we are saying that we do not take it for granted when we cry out from the depths of our hearts,

THANKS be to GOD."¹⁸

After our response, we take a few moments of silence to reflect on the reading and sit in awe and adoration for God who has just spoken to us just as Mary our Mother "...kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." Lk 2:18

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These words from the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal** (GIRM) set before us a profound truth that we need to ponder and make our own. The words of Sacred Scripture are unlike any other texts we will ever hear, for they not only give us information, but they are also the vehicle God uses to reveal himself to us, the means by which we come to know the depth of God's love for us, and the responsibilities entailed by being Christ's followers, members of his Body. What is more, this Word of God proclaimed in the liturgy possesses a special sacramental power to bring about in us what it proclaims. The Word of God proclaimed at Mass is 'efficacious' that is, it not only tells us of God and God's will for us, but it also helps us to put that will of God into practice in our own lives. How, then, do we respond to this wonderful gift of God's Word? We respond in word and song, in posture and gesture, in silent meditation and, most important of all, by listening attentively to that Word as it is proclaimed. Following each reading we express our gratitude for this gift with the words "Thanks be to God" or, in the case of the Gospel, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ," and it is appropriate that a brief period of silence be observed to allow for personal reflection. Following the first reading we sing the Responsorial Psalm, a meditation on God's word through the inspired words of one of the psalms from the psalter, the Bible's prayer book.

¹⁷ 1 Cor 16:4, Ps 42:4, 95:2, Col 2:7, 4:2, Rom 7:25, 1 Cor 15:57, 2 Cor 2:14

7. The Responsorial Psalms (pgs 61 – 63) **SIT – may be sung**

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 sacred hymns used for private devotion and public worship in the Temple Liturgy as a *Liturgical Dialogue*. A Cantor would recite a *refrain* that would be used throughout the discourse. The people would recite the refrain after each section of the discourse.¹⁹ It is a biblical AND a heavenly model for worship!

The response equates to the excitement we feel when we hear someone say something that we wholeheartedly and passionately agree. It is a *joyful* agreement. Imagine all the angels and saints in heaven and on earth in a celestial [dance with the Holy Trinity](#). Our response to the Psalms is like the first steps in the dance.²⁰

The Psalms that we proclaim at Mass come from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. From the time of the Jews, Psalms were a regular part of worship — you could even call the book of Psalms the Bible's song book! The early Christians continued this practice of singing psalms in their worship, although now with a clearer understanding of how those psalms spoke of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine even wrote a series of homilies on the Psalms, showing their importance in the early church. In the middle ages, the psalms were shortened to just a couple of verses and were used after the reading and known as **the gradual**. The chants used for the graduals are some of the most complicated chants used in the older form of the Mass, difficult even for the choirs to sing.

With the current lectionary, the psalms have been restored to a longer, more complete format, with the use of antiphons to allow the assembly also to participate. There is also the option of using a seasonal psalm, or a psalm setting that fits with the tone of a particular church season, in place of the assigned responsorial psalm. This option allows for the people to meditate on the meaning of that season. When singing the psalms, the goal is for the text of the psalm to come through as clearly as possible. The musical setting of the psalm should help the psalmist convey the tone and meaning of the psalm to the congregation, engaging the mind in another way to help the community pray the text.²¹

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The Responsorial Psalm is sung between the readings. The psalm helps us to meditate on the word of God.

¹⁹ *Antiphonal* movements

In the Bible: Ex 19:8, Neh 8:6, Rv 5:11-1

During Mass

Cantor: **The Lord be with you.**

People: **And with your spirit.**

Cantor: **The Word of the Lord**

People: **Thanks be to God**

Cantor: **Lift up your hearts**

People: **We lift them up to the Lord**

²⁰ *If your Mind Wanders at Mass* Thomas Howard, 74-5

8. The Second Reading (pg 64) **SIT**

This reading comes from the one of the epistles, Acts of the Apostles or the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Often it is independent of the First Reading and the Gospel and is meant to help us draw out the practical applications of our life in Christ and turn away from sin. Since Vatican II, the Roman rite of the Catholic Church follows a 3-year cycle for Sunday and holy day Mass readings (referred to as Year A, B, or C) and a 2-year cycle for daily Mass readings (referred to as Cycle I or II). ... To determine the current Sunday Mass cycle year, divide the number of the year by 3.

At the beginning of the reading:

Lector: "A reading from...."

At the end of the reading:

Lector: "The Word of the Lord..."

People: "Thanks be to God"

THE SECOND READING ²¹

The tradition of semi-continuous reading of the Bible at Mass goes back to the earliest centuries of the church. In fact, it's the origin of our response "Thanks be to God" at Mass! When a bishop would preside at a Mass, one of the younger clerics would read the Epistle (another word for Letter, in reference to the New Testament Letters), starting where he left off the previous week. When the bishop had heard enough of the Epistle, he would exclaim "Deo Gratias!" (Thanks be to God!) When we, too, reach the end of the reading, our response should be filled with joy at hearing God's Word: "Thanks be to God!"

The Second Reading is a semi-continuous reading taken from the Letters in the New Testament of the Bible. Because the second reading follows a semi-continuous pattern, the second reading doesn't always tie in with the first reading or the Gospel. Why, then, do we proclaim this reading at Mass? The Letters in the New Testament were written to the early church by St. Paul and the Apostles. These letters offered support, encouragement, correction and guidance to a young church finding its way in a society that did not support them. We also need the direction of the Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, as we make our way through a society that doesn't always support us in living our faith! Listen to the second readings as you would listen to the sage advice of a grandparent, mentor, or teacher.

The only exception to the semi-continuous second reading is during the seasons of Advent, Lent and Easter. During these seasons, the readings are selected to highlight the theme of the season. A second reading during Advent may talk about the need to watch and prepare, while a second reading during Easter might talk about the glory of the Resurrection.

²¹ <http://www.verdekc.org/explainingthemass.html>

9. The Gospel (Pgs. 65 - 67) **STAND**

The Gospel reading is the principal source for the life and teaching of Jesus. Some things are done differently to reflect the distinction of this reading:

- Everyone stands to welcome the Lord Jesus who is about to be proclaimed; it is a way of expressing our reverence and our readiness to *listen to Him* ²².

- Everyone says (or sings) *ALLELUIA* which is a Hebrew expression of joy meaning ***Praise Yahweh*** or ***Praise the Lord***²³; found at beginning of many Psalms and sometimes used by angels in heaven to praise God for His work of salvation and announce coming of Christ to His people in Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:1-90)
- Priest or Deacon processes to take Book of Gospels from the altar to the lectern to be read; altar servers carry candles (and for some occasions incense) to underscore solemnity of what is about to happen; priest prays *"Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel."*²⁴
- Sign of the Cross:
 Priest/Deacon: *The Lord be with you*
 People: *And with your spirit*
 Priest: *A reading from the holy gospel according to...*

The Priest traces Sign of the Cross on his forehead, mouth, breast and on the Book of Gospels. The people also make the same sign as a ritual to consecrate their thought, words and actions to the Lord, asking that His word in the Gospel be always on their minds, on their lips and in their hearts.

All of these things are preparing us for a most sacred moment in the Mass. We listen to the inspired Word of God. Jesus speaks personally to each of us; we *hear* Him calling us to repent and follow Him.²⁵

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The Gospel is the highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word. The readings from the Old Testament tell us of God's promises and his preparation of his people for the coming of his Son; the epistles and other pre-Gospel New Testament readings offer the reflections of St. Paul and other contemporaries of the Lord on the life and message of Christ; in the Acts of the Apostles, we have a history of the early Church. We believe that all Scripture, the Old and New Testaments, is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the Church has always given special honor to the Gospel because in the Gospel we have not simply the preparation for and prefiguring of Christ, nor reflections on his message, but the words and deeds of Christ himself. The proclamation of the Gospel is surrounded with marks of respect and honor: the Gospel is read by an ordained minister, the deacon, or, when no deacon is present, by a priest; the Book of the Gospels is carried aloft with honor in the entrance procession and placed on the altar until the Gospel reading to show the unity of Scripture and Eucharist, of the table of the Word and the table of the Christ's body and blood; just before the Gospel is read the Gospel book is carried in procession to the ambo to the accompaniment of an acclamation sung by the people; it may be incensed before the reading and is kissed at its conclusion; finally, all stand as the Gospel is proclaimed. Through this posture and through the honor paid to the book containing the Gospel, the Church pays homage to Christ who is present in his Word and who proclaims his Gospel.

²² Neh 8:5: not used during Lent; other options "Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." Or "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory."

²³ Ps 104-106, 111-113, 115 – 117, 146-150

²⁴ If Deacon is reading the Gospel, priest will say similar prayer for him; recalls how prophet Isaiah's lips needed to be purified before he proclaimed the Word of the Lord to Israel (Is 6:1-9)

²⁵ Mt 4:17, Jn 8:11

10. The Homily (Pgs 68 – 70) **SIT**

The Word of God has always been accompanied by a homily (*explanation* in Greek). This did not begin with Christianity but is an ancient Jewish custom.²⁶ Jesus practiced this custom. The Homily is crucial for the instruction of the faithful and should hold a *pride of place* among all forms of Christian instruction. Only an ordained minister (priest, deacon or bishop) can read the *Gospel of the Mass*. They have the responsibility AND the authority to proclaim the Gospel and pass on all that Christ taught the apostles (Mt 28:18-20)

The purpose of the homily at Mass is not a matter of eloquence or insight but a sign, or “guarantee” that the preaching is passing on “the Church’s apostolic Faith and not merely the private thoughts and experiences of an individual.”²⁷

While the entire congregation is to give witness to the faith of the Church, it is utmost responsibility of the bishop as a successor of the apostles to teach the *apostolic faith*.

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After the Scripture readings, the celebrant preaches the homily. In the homily, the preacher focuses on the Scripture texts or some other texts from the liturgy, drawing from them lessons that may help us to live better lives, more faithful to Christ's call to grow in holiness.

²⁶ Neh 8:7, Neh 8:8, Lk 4:18-30), Mt1:21, Lk 4:15

²⁷ *What Happens at Mass* Jeremy Driscoll, 51.

USCCB (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

What, then, must we do to properly receive the Word of God proclaimed at Mass? The *General Instruction* tells us that “the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone” (no. 29), and it provides that those who read the Scriptures at Mass must be “truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture” (no. 101). The key word in all of this is *listening*. We are called to *listen* attentively as the reader, deacon or priest proclaims God's Word. Unless one is unable to hear, one should not be reading along with a text from a missal or missalette. Rather, taking our cue from the *General Instruction* itself, we should *listen* as we would if Christ himself were standing at the ambo, for in fact it *is* God who speaks when the Scriptures are proclaimed. Carefully following along with the printed word can cause us to miss the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit, the message that the Spirit may have for us in one of the passages because we are anxious to “keep up,” to move along with the reader. Perhaps the best way to understand the readings at Mass and our response to them is offered by Saint John Paul II in his Instruction **Dies Domini**. He encourages “those who take part in the Eucharist—priest, ministers and faithful... to prepare the Sunday liturgy, reflecting beforehand upon the word of God which will be proclaimed” and adds that if we do not, “it is difficult for the liturgical proclamation of the word of God alone to produce the fruit we might expect” (no. 40). In this way we will till the soil, preparing our souls to receive the seeds to be planted by the Word of God so that seed may bear fruit. The Word of God, then calls for our listening and our response in silent reflection, as well as in word and song. Most important of all, the Word of God, which is living and active, calls each of us individually and all of us together for a response that moves beyond the liturgy itself and affects our daily lives, leading us to engage fully in the task of making Christ known to the world by all that we do and say.

11. The Creed (Pgs. 71 – 78) **STAND**

After the Homily on most Sundays and Holy Days, we stand and recite the Creed. The creed that we pray at Mass originated in Jerusalem as a profession of faith before baptism. This was formalized in 325 AD at the Council of Nicaea and further developed at the Council of Constantinople in 381. This creed is known as the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, or more commonly as the Nicene Creed.²⁸

A creed is a statement or summary of belief. The structure of the creed reinforces our belief in the Holy Trinity, first addressing the Father, then the Son, and then the Holy Spirit, stressing that the three persons are one God. At the heart of our faith is our belief that God became one of us at the birth of Christ. To highlight our belief in this truth, we are asked to bow at the words "By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

On Easter Sunday or on Sundays when we have baptisms, we are asked to renew our baptismal promises. We are asked about our belief, to which we respond "I do" to each statement of our faith. The renewal of our baptismal promises is also a creed, a statement of belief, based on the Apostle's Creed.

The Creed is a statement of the truths which we hold as Catholics. When we recite this prayer together, we express not only our individual belief but the faith which all of us hold in common. We return to these familiar "words of faith" week after week to remind and refocus ourselves on the truth. The creed is a very important prayer! When we pray the creed together, be sure to join in the prayer. You may want to even memorize the prayer to make it truly your own!

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In many Masses, the Profession of Faith then follows the homily, either the Nicene or Apostles' Creed. The **Nicene Creed** is a statement of faith dating from the fourth century, while the Apostles' Creed is the ancient baptismal creed of the Church in Rome. If baptismal promises are renewed, from a formula based on the Apostles' Creed, this takes the place of the Creed.

²⁸ [Explanation of Nicene Creed](#)

12. Prayer of the Faithful (Prayers of Intercession) (Pgs 58 – 60) **STAND**

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercession_of_saint)

Roman Catholic Church doctrine supports intercessory prayer to saints. Intercessory prayer to saints also plays an important role in the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. In addition, some Anglo-Catholics believe in saintly intercession. This practice is an application of the Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Some of the early basis for this was the belief that martyrs passed immediately into the presence of God and could obtain graces and blessings for others. A further reinforcement was derived from the cult of the angels which, while pre-Christian in its origin, was heartily embraced by the faithful of the sub-Apostolic age. According to St. Jerome, "If the Apostles and Martyrs, while still in the body, can pray for others, at a time when they must still be anxious for themselves, how much more after their crowns, victories, and triumphs are won!" The Catholic doctrine of intercession and invocation is set forth by the Council of Trent, which teaches that "...the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their own prayers to God for men. It is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help for obtaining benefits from God, through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour." Intercessory prayer to saintly persons who have not yet been canonized is also

practiced, and evidence of miracles produced as a result of such prayer is very commonly produced during the formal process of beatification and canonization.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

(956 The intercession of the saints. "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. . . . They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus So, by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped.")

Some Catholic scholars have reinterpreted invocation and intercession of the saints with a critical view toward the medieval tendencies of imagining the saints in heaven distributing favors to whom they will and instead seeing in proper devotion to the saints a means of response to God's activity in us through these creative models of Christ-likeness (https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism)

2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners.¹¹² He is "able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."¹¹³ The Holy Spirit "himself intercedes for us . . . and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."¹¹⁴

2635 Since Abraham, intercession - asking on behalf of another has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ's, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks "not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others," even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.¹¹⁵

2636 The first Christian communities lived this form of fellowship intensely.¹¹⁶ Thus the Apostle Paul gives them a share in his ministry of preaching the Gospel¹¹⁷ but also intercedes for them.¹¹⁸ The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries: "for all men, for kings and all who are in high

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The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Universal Prayer, also called the Prayer of the Faithful. The gathered assembly intercedes with God on behalf of the Church, the world, and themselves, entrusting their needs to the faithful and loving God.

Part 4: The Liturgy of the Eucharist (Pgs 85 – 86) (SIT)

Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross is made present sacramentally by the priest, who carries out the mission of Jesus when He said,

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you."
John 6:51, 53

There are three principal parts to the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

PART A: The Preparation of the Gifts

PART B: The Eucharist Prayer

PART C: The Communion Rites

PART A: The Preparation of the Gifts

13. The Presentation of the Gifts (Pgs 86-88) **SIT**

OFFERTORY: *offer* (Latin to *present, to bring or to offer*); symbolic of individual giving of himself to God; a personal sacrifice

As early as 155 AD, gifts were presented by the faithful after the prayers of intercession. Gifts included the ritual bread and wine but also included oil, honey, wool, fruit, wax or flowers. While the bread and wine represented the sacramental offering, everything else was for support of the priest and the poor. Today we *tithe* of money and expresses not only contributing to support of parish needs but the hours of our lives and hard work.

"Fruit of the earth and work of human hands.."

Bread and wine and monetary offerings are given back to God as gifts of creation and results of our labor; symbolizes giving our entire lives to God; helps us grow in *sacrificial love*; we unite them with Christ's perfect sacrifice. **We place these into the hands of the Jesus (represented by priest) who brings to altar to be united with His sacrifice as offering to the Father.**

Importance of BREAD for ancient Israelites²⁹:

- Most basic food to sustain life
- "Staff of Life"
- Regularly offered as personal sacrifice
- Recalls hard work, time and sweat of plowing, sowing, reaping, thresher, baker to prepare
- With WINE, expressed individual's giving of himself to God

Importance of WINE for ancient Israelites

- Common part of Israelite meals
- Often consumed with bread
- Served at feasts and for guest
- One of first fruits presented to Temple as a *tithe*
- Poured out as a drink offering (a libation) in thanksgiving and *expiatory* (amend guilt) sacrifices
- Recalls hard work, time and sweat of planting, tending, harvesting, preparation,
- With BREAD, symbolized offering of one's self to God

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Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts and the altar. As the ministers prepare the altar, representatives of the people bring forward the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The celebrant blesses and praises God for these gifts and places them on the altar, the place of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In addition to the bread and wine, monetary gifts for the support of the Church and the care of the poor may be brought forward. The Prayer over the Offerings concludes this preparation and disposes all for the Eucharistic Prayer.

²⁹ Sir 29:21, 39:26; Gn 32:54, 37:25; 1Kgs 13:8-9; Lv 26:26; Ps 105:16, Ex 4:16, 5:16; Ex 29:2, Lv 2:4-7, 7:13; Lv 23:15-20

³⁰ Tithe - one tenth of annual produce or earnings, formerly taken as a tax for the support of the Church and clergy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Fourth Cup

Jesus and Jewish Roots of Eucharist

14. Mixing Water and Wine, Washing Hands (Pgs 88-90)



Mixing Water and Wine

"...By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity..."

Wine diluted with water was common practice in ancient world but in the Eucharistic celebration, it **symbolizes the uniting of Christ's divinity and our humanity; points to mystery of God becoming man and to become "partakers of the divine nature."** (2 Pt 1:4)

Priest uses Jewish meal blessing from Jesus' time:

"Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you; fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine offered you; fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink...

Not a *thing* we are offering but ourselves

*...with humble and contrite heart may **WE be accepted by you**, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God."*³¹

We now ask that our "humble spirit" and "contrite heart", be accepted as a pleasing sacrifice

Washing Hands (Pgs 90-91)

"Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity (wickedness) and cleanse me from my sin." Ps 51:2

The Washing of the Hands indicates something special is about to happen and dates back to the rites of priests of Old Testament. The priest is about to stand in a holy place (Ex 40:34; 1Kgs 8:10-11). Through the priest hands, the bread and wine offering will be changed into Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and God is with us in a very intimate way as we receive Him in Holy Communion. They were required to undergo ritual washing *BEFORE* they could work in the Temple sanctuary or drawing near to table of incense (Ex 30:17-21; Ps 24:3-4). "Clean hands are associated with a pure heart and ritual hand washing symbolizes the internal cleansing of heart required before a person could draw near to God's presence." The priest's hand washing denotes

Liturgical washing of the fingers by a priest before Mass and after Mass (which is not prescribed); and washing the fingers at the Offertory (which is part of the Eucharistic liturgy), symbolizes the purity of conscience expected of the celebrant at Mass and the respect due to the Eucharistic elements handled during Mass. The hands are also washed by a bishop after using chrism in confirmation and holy orders, and by a priest after using the holy oils at baptism and anointing of the sick.

<https://www.catholicculture.org>

The lavabo³² is a standard part of every Mass and has been so since the fourth century. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal — the "rulebook" for celebrating the liturgy — says: "*Then the priest washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite in which the desire for interior purification finds expression*" (No. 76). No option is offered for skipping this prayer and ritual action.

Sometimes a rationale is offered for eliminating the lavabo — namely, that the gesture stems from the days when loaves of baked eucharistic bread were carried to the altar at the offertory and the priest needed to cleanse his hands of crumbs before proceeding with the sacred eucharistic prayer.

Since premade hosts are now used instead, this argument runs, the washing of the fingers has become unnecessary and obsolete. It may sound like a plausible argument, but it has the disadvantage of being wrong: Far from being just a practical and physical washing, the gesture has always been more about the interior need of the priest for purification. <https://catholicphilly.com>

Prayer over the Offerings (Pgs 91- 93) **STAND**

PRIEST: *"Pray, brethren, that **my** sacrifice and **yours** may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father."*

The "**my**" sacrifice is Christ's sacrifice through priest's hands *in persona Christi* (in person of Christ) and the "**yours**" is the entire Church offering itself in union with Christ in the Mass.

PEOPLE: *"May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name for our good and the good of all His holy Church"*

We recognize how both sacrifices (Christ and our own) are united and offered to God the Father through [hands of the priest](#).

³¹ Recalls petition from Daniel 3 when three Hebrew men were thrown into a fiery furnace by Babylonian King and God heard their cry and rescued them

³² **lavabo** is a device used to provide water for the washing of hands. It consists normally of an [ewer](#) or container of some kind to pour water, and a bowl to catch the water as it falls off the hands. In ecclesiastical usage it refers to all of: the basin in which the priest washes his/her hands; the ritual that surrounds this action in the [Catholic Mass](#); and the architectural feature or fitting where a basin or place for one is recessed into the side wall of the sanctuary, or projects from it. If this last includes or included a drain, it is a [piscina](#) (bowl) used for washing the church plate and other fittings, though the terms are often confused. In secular usage, it is an obsolete term for any sink or basin for washing hands, especially in a [lavatory](#).

PART B: The Eucharist

Early Eucharistic prayers had roots in Jewish table prayers where bread and wine. The blessing³³ had three parts:

1. **PRAISE** of God for His creation
2. **THANKSGIVING** for His redemptive work in the past – haggadah³⁴(Giving of Covenant, Land, Law)
3. **SUPPLICATION** for the future (that He would continue to be in their lives and restore Davidic Kingdom)

USCCB <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts and the altar. As the ministers prepare the altar, representatives of the people bring forward the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The celebrant blesses and praises God for these gifts and places

them on the altar, the place of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In addition to the bread and wine, monetary gifts for the support of the Church and the care of the poor may be brought forward. The Prayer over the Offerings concludes this preparation and disposes all for the Eucharistic Prayer.

15. The Preface (Pgs 95-101) **STAND**

St Hippolytus (215 AD) was first to write about this dialogue and today we are united with the ancient Church using the same words. This is a serious moment in the Mass as we look toward the consecration

The LORD be with you (pgs 95-96)

PRIEST: *The Lord be with you.*

PEOPLE: *And with your spirit.*

Also used in Introductory Rites and before reading of the Gospel. In the Bible, often used as a special blessing before setting out on a mission of God; appropriate to use as we embark on most sacred part of the Mass.

Lifting up our HEARTS and giving our fullest attention (pgs 96-98)

PRIEST: *Lift up your hearts.*

PEOPLE: *We lift them up to the Lord.* (Lam3:41)

We are summoned to focus full attention with our minds, wills, emotions (our hearts) and actions on the Eucharistic Prayer We are to be drawn away from worldly distractions to ponder the wonder of what is going to happen. [We are to remember...](#)

The GREAT THANKSGIVING (pgs 98-99)

PRIEST: *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

PEOPLE: *It is right and just.*

God wants to give us His blessing and we are thankful. Thanksgiving is a common biblical response to God love, goodness, and saving works. The ONLY thing we can offer to our Father that He does not have is *THANKSGIVING!* There is much to be thankful for and fitting for us to affirm by responding to the priest invitation to give thanks. **The peoples' affirmation is a signal that the priest should begin the Eucharist.**

PREFACE PRAYER (pgs 99-101)

"It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy."

Throughout Scripture, we have seen God's love and mercy and care. It is only fitting we thank Him for all creation, for His provisions in our lives, for His loving deeds, and for His saving acts. [Psalm 136](#) sets the pattern for this prayer. While there may be variations depending on the liturgical calendar or special event, our focus is always on the His plan of salvation through His Son.

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a) The *thanksgiving* (expressed especially in the Preface), in which the Priest, in the name of the whole of the holy people, glorifies God the Father and gives thanks to him for the whole work of salvation or for some particular aspect of it, according to the varying day, festivity, or time of year.

16. The *Sanctus*: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord (Pgs 102-104) **KNEEL**

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Looking through the eyes of the angels, we use the words that take us *spiritually* to heaven. (Isaiah 6:1-33, 5)

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts,

Isaiah reports the seraphim (which means "*burning ones*") who covered their faces in the presence of God and used this ecstatic hymn of praise. *Holy, holy, holy* expresses highest form of praise in Hebrew and praise God for His splendor throughout creation (Ps 8:1, 19:1-6, 24:1-3). We are joining our voices with the angels and saints in their praise and we mystically enter the heavenly throne room. We are preparing to encounter the all-holy divine LORD who will become present on the altar! We fall to our knees in reverence!

The Sanctus: (Latin for *Holy*)

*Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest*

This is from Psalm 118, a pilgrimage hymn recited on the way to the Temple for major feasts. The word *Hosanna* is a *transliteration*³³ of Hebrew word meaning “Save us” and was used by the crowds welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday. It is fitting to use these words here as welcome Jesus as He is about to become present in the Eucharist on our altars.

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b) The *acclamation*, by which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the *Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)*. This acclamation, which constitutes part of the Eucharistic Prayer itself, is pronounced by all the people with the Priest.

³³ A translation tells you the meaning of words in another language. A transliteration doesn't tell you the meaning of the words, but it helps you pronounce them. Transliteration changes the letters from one alphabet or language into the corresponding, similar-sounding characters of another alphabet. It is a type of conversion of a text from one script to another that involves swapping letters in predictable ways, such as Greek ⟨α⟩ → ⟨a⟩, Cyrillic ⟨д⟩ → ⟨d⟩, Greek ⟨χ⟩ → the digraph ⟨ch⟩, Armenian ⟨ւ⟩ → ⟨n⟩ or Latin ⟨æ⟩ → ⟨ae⟩.

17. The *Epiclesis* (Pgs 105-106) KNEEL

“Make holy, therefore, these gifts we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” (Eucharistic Prayer II)

“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eucharistic Prayer III)

The word *Epiclesis* means “invocation upon”. Just as the ancient Jews pleaded for the Messiah, the priest is praying that the Father will send the Holy Spirit so that the gifts of bread and wine will be changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord and unite us more deeply in His Church: **“Grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with His Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.” (Eucharistic Prayer III)**

USCCB <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>)

The Eucharistic Prayer is the heart of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In this prayer, the celebrant acts in the person of Christ as head of his body, the Church. He gathers not only the bread and the wine, but the substance of our lives and joins them to Christ's perfect sacrifice, offering them to the Father. The introductory dialogue, establishes that this prayer is the prayer of the baptized and ordained, is offered in the presence of God, and has thanksgiving as its central focus. Following this dialogue, the celebrant begins the Preface.

The Eucharistic Prayers make clear that these prayers are offered, not to Christ, but to the Father. It is worship offered to the Father by Christ as it was at the moment of his passion, death and resurrection, but now it is offered through the priest acting in the person of Christ, and it is offered as well by all of the baptized, who are part of Christ's Body, the Church. *This* is the action of Christ's Body, the Church at Mass.

The priest offers the Eucharistic Prayer in the first-person plural, for example, "Therefore, O Lord, **we** humbly implore you..." This "we" signifies that all the baptized present at the Eucharistic celebration make the sacrificial offering in union with Christ and pray the Eucharistic Prayer in union with him. And what is most important, we do not offer Christ alone; we are called to *offer ourselves*, our lives, our individual efforts to grow more like Christ and our efforts as a community of believers to spread God's Word and to serve God's people, to the Father in union with Christ through the hands of the priest. Most wonderful of all, although our offering is in itself imperfect, joined with the offering of Christ it becomes *perfect* praise and thanksgiving to the Father.

18. The Words of Institution and Consecration (Pgs 107-113) **KNEEL**

"Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my body, which will be given up for you..."

"Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this in memory of me."

The ordinary communion bread now becomes the consecrated *HOST* and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is *transubstantiation* and the physical does not change but the chemical becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (See *Miracles of the Eucharist*)

The Last Supper took place in the context of the Passover meal when God freed the Israelites from Egypt. They were instructed to:

- Sacrifice an unblemished lamb
- Mark the doorposts with the blood of the lamb (to spare their first-born sons from death)
- Eat the lamb

Every year they were to re-live (**memorial**) that night in a mystical way as if each of them were walking out of Egypt. (Seder Meal)³⁴ For Catholics, this *memorial* becomes *transubstantiation* where the chemical elements do not change but the substance becomes Christ Body and Blood to nourish the soul and unite us with Christ's sacrifice for our sins...the unblemished Lamb of God offered only once for us.

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d) The *Institution narrative and Consecration*, by which, by means of the words and actions of Christ, that Sacrifice is affected which Christ himself instituted during the Last Supper, when he offered his Body and Blood under the species of bread and wine, gave them to the Apostles to eat and drink, and leaving with the latter the command to perpetuate this same mystery.

*The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called **transubstantiation.**"*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transubstantiation>

19. The *Mystery of Faith* (Pgs 114-115) **KNEEL**

PRIEST: *"Let us proclaim the Mystery of Faith."*

PEOPLE:

"When we eat this bread and drink this Chalice, we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again."

OR

"Save us, Savior of the World, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free."

OR

"We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection until you come again."

The priest now genuflects to reverence the real presence of Jesus Christ on the altar. St Paul stated For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1Cor 11:26)

20. The *Anamnesis, Offering, Intercessions, and Final Doxology* (Pgs 116-121)

Anamnesis

Memorial Prayer (pgs 116-117)

This "memorial" (Anamnesis in Greek), helps us better understand what is happening in the Mass and the priest expresses to the Father that we have been faithful in fulfilling this command. It is our chance to share with our Father our joyful participation in these sacred mysteries. We did what He asked us to do.

"Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of His Death and Resurrection..."

The Offering Prayer (pgs 117-118)

"We offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice."

We unite ourselves with Christ's sacrifice in the Mass as our gifts of bread and wine have now become the Body and Blood of Christ that is offered to the Father in the perfect self-giving love of His son on the cross.

Three Model Sacrifices (pgs 118-119)

"Accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the fits of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim."

1. Abel (Gn 4:4) brings God his best (unlike his brother Cain who only brought from the ground)
2. Melchizedek offered bread and wine (prefiguration of Christ's offerings); God was pleased
3. Abraham willing to offer his only son to God – several parallels
 - Took son Isaac to Mt Moriah/God took His son to Jerusalem, a city associated with Mt Moriah
 - Rode donkey to destination, Isaac carried wood for sacrifice up the mountain and was bound to the wood, Abraham secured worldwide blessing for his willingness to sacrifice his son
 - Jesus travels to Jerusalem by donkey, carries wood of the cross to Calvary, and sacrifice brings about whole world blessings.

Intercessory Prayers (pg 119)

Priest prays for:

1. All who will soon be nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ

"...that they may become one body, one spirit in Christ." (1 Cor 10:17; Rom 12:1)
2. For the Church universal (all bishops, clergy, and entire people of God, both living and dead) and advance peace and salvation of the world; for all who seek Him with a sincere heart.

Final Doxology (pgs. 120-121)

The expression of praise concludes the Eucharistic Prayer as we respond "AMEN." The word "Amen" is used often throughout the Bible and in liturgical events. Even the angels and saints in heaven cry out this form of validity and affirmation.

PRIEST:

*"Through Him, with Him and in Him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever."* (Rom 11:36; Eph 4:3)

PEOPLE:

'AMEN.'

While the priest has been representing the Church throughout the prayers, the people now give their "YES!" to all he has prayed. St. Jerome calls this great affirmation a "*celestial thunderclap*."

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e) The anamnesis, by which the Church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the Apostles, celebrates the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.

f) The oblation, by which, in this very memorial, the Church, in particular that gathered here and now, offers the unblemished sacrificial Victim in the Holy Spirit to the Father. The Church's intention, indeed, is that the faithful not only offer this unblemished sacrificial Victim but also learn to offer their very selves, and so day by day to be brought, through the mediation of Christ, into unity with God and with each other, so that God may at last be all in all.

g) The intercessions, by which expression is given to the fact that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church, of both heaven and of earth, and that the oblation is made for her and for all her members, living and dead, who are called to participate in the redemption and salvation purchased by the Body and Blood of Christ.

h) The concluding doxology, by which the glorification of God is expressed, and which is affirmed and concluded by the people's acclamation "Amen."

³³ *Barakah* - Berakah, also spelled Berakha, or Berachah (**Hebrew: "blessing"**), plural Berakoth, Berakot, Berachoth, or Berachot, in **Judaism**, a benediction (expression of praise or thanks directed to God) that is recited at specific points of the synagogue liturgy, during private **prayer**, or on other occasions

³⁴ *Haggadah* - the text recited at the Seder on the first two nights of the Jewish Passover, including a narrative of the Exodus.

PART C: The Communion Rite

The bread and wine have been consecrated and Jesus is truly present before us. These final preparations ensure we are truly ready to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

21. The Lord's Prayer (Pgs 123-129) **STAND**

NOTE: Some people may choose to hold hands or uplift their hands while saying the prayer

PRIEST: *"At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say..."*

At this point, we address God as *FATHER* as an affectionate term that highlights the intimate relationship we now have with God because of Jesus' work of salvation. The word *OUR* points to deep unity we have together by virtue of our common heavenly Father united in Christ in the covenant family.

The *OUR FATHER* is divided into seven petitions:

Focus on God the Father

1. “**thy name**” be treated as HOLY
2. “**thy kingdom come**” that all believe and accept Him
3. “**thy will be done**” God’s name, will and reign are accepted in Heaven and we pray for the same on earth

Focus on ourselves and others

4. “**Give us this day our daily bread**” Focus on our daily needs and our need for the Bread of Life (the Eucharist)
5. “**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**” - Focus on forgiving our sins to purify us so we might be holy tabernacles for Jesus who will soon dwell within us and to forgive those who have sinned against us.
6. “**Lead us not into temptation**” – Praying that God will not allow us give into the sinful temptations of life
7. “**Deliver us from evil**” - this refers to Satan, the fallen angel who opposes God’s will and leads others to join him in his rebellion of lies, evil works and entrapments.

Final prayer

PRIEST:

“Deliver us, O Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant us peace in our days,

Peace (Shalom) is about inner wholeness or well-being that is a gift from God flowing from faithfulness to God’s covenant. It is a way of life that flows into the world through right-ordered, harmonious relationships with others.

that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress,

...“as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We pray that God delivers us from any distress or anxieties that keep us from experiencing the deep peace God wants for us. (Titus 2:13)

“For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.”

While not a part of the original prayer Jesus taught us, it is biblical. (Rv 5:12, 19:1, 1 Chr 29:10-11) They are from a prayer of thanksgiving used in the celebration of the Eucharist in first generation Christianity after the apostles and most famously by the great king David at the end of his reign when he recognized that everything, everything in his life came from God.

“For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.”

22. The Rite of Peace (Pgs 130-131)

PRIEST in PRAYER

*“Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles, **PEACE I LEAVE YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE YOU** (Jn14:27), look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accord with your will.”*

PRIEST to people

“The peace of the Lord be with you always.” (Rom 1:7, 1Cor1L3, Gal 1:3)

PEOPLE to PRIEST

“And with your spirit.”

The peace of the world is fleeting but the peace of the Lord is at the heart builds unity within marriages, families, communities, parishes, and nations.

SIGN OF PEACE

PRIEST to PEOPLE

“Let us offer each other the sign of peace.”

PEOPLE to EACH OTHER

The people now turn to those around them and offer some token of friendship with a shake of the hand, hug or kiss or nod of the head. This relates back to the ancient Christian practice as described as a “*holy kiss*” (Rom 16:16, 1Cor

16:20, 2 Cor13:12, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Pet 4:14) and documented as early as 155 AD. We think of it as connecting us to the Father with the reception of Holy Communion and express the unity as a covenant family.

23. *Agnus Dei*: The Fraction, Commingling, and the “*Lamb of God*” (Pgs 132-137) **KNEEL**

It is almost universally recognized that the rite of breaking the bread is one of the four actions that make up Christian Eucharistic liturgies

- taking bread and wine (the offertory)
- giving thanks to God over the bread and wine (*blessing* and consecration)
- breaking the bread (the fraction)
- distributing the bread and wine (the communion)

Breaking of the Bread (pgs 132-134)

This was common practice at the start of every early Christian meal and was associated with the Eucharist. The multiplying of the bread recorded in all four Gospels foreshadows the greater miracle of the Eucharist.³⁵ While the multiplying of the loaves for the 5,000 and the 3,000 was regular bread, the multiplying of the spiritual bread was to enable to feed the entire world forever. The *breaking of the bread* on the road to Emmaus indicated the importance of *breaking the bread* and eating it in order to recognize Jesus.

The priest offers thanks for the *fruit of the vine and work of human hands* and breaks a small piece of the piece of the *HOST*.

The ¹*breaking of the bread* was one of the four characteristics of the lives of the first Christians (²devotion to the apostles’ teachings, ³prayer and ⁴fellowship). When priest breaks the Eucharist, it brings to mind the grand tradition of breaking bread from the Old Testament Jews, to Jesus’ practice, to the apostles and the early Church to the present day.

The Commingling (pg 134)

“May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.”

The small piece of the consecrated *HOST* is now placed inside the chalice as a symbol of Christ’s resurrection.

The *Agnus Dei* (pgs 134 – 136)

“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.”

With this prayer, we join the myriad of angels who worship Jesus as the victorious Lamb in the *heavenly Liturgy* (Rev 5:11-12; Rev 5:13). The New Testament reveals Jesus as the new Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for our sake (1Cor 5:7, Rev 5:6, 12: 13:8; Rev 7:14; Rev 12:11). Even the hyssop branches the soldiers offered Jesus on the cross was the same kind of branch God instructed the Israelites to use to spread the blood of the unblemished, sacrificed lamb on the doorpost of their homes (Ex 12:22). Jesus body remained unblemished and unbroken just as God had instructed the Israelites to choose their sacrificial lamb.

NOTE: The last line of the *Agnus Dei* is changed to a petition of peace and links this to the *Sign of Peace* just given and anticipates the unity that will be forged in receiving the *Eucharist*.

Behold the Lamb of God (pgs 136 – 137)

Holy Communion is like a marriage, an *intimate union* with our divine Bridegroom, Jesus, in the Eucharist. (Rev 19:9)
PRIEST

“Behold the Lamb of God; Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to His supper.”

While the priest breaks the consecrated *Host*, he speaks the very words from John the Baptist who was the first to recognize Jesus as the *Lamb of God* (Jn 1:29, 36) and the *Suffering Servant* who would be sent to rescue Israel from sin (Is 53:7, 10-11).

While there was the sacrificing of the lambs for the many, Isaiah focused on the one’s self-offering of redemptive power *to make all righteous*. The three repetitions of the *Agnus Dei* echo the *Confiteor* (where we admit our guilt), the *Kyrie* (when we cry out for God’s mercy), the *“Holy Lord”* in the *Sanctus* and now, just before receiving Communion, we again plea for mercy and peace from the Lamb of God.

The Eucharist as a Wedding Feast

“Hallelujah!” (*praise Yahweh*) is mentioned often in Old Testament but only four times in New Testament and all in same place in Rev 19:1-6. Similar to the “*Hallel Psalms*” of the Old Testament (Psalms 113 – 118) and were sung by the Jews during the Passover; the same ones Jesus would have sung at the Last Supper:

“Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. (Rv 19:6-7)”

In Rev 19:6-9, the Bridegroom is Jesus, and the Church is His bride and represents the final consummation between Christ and His Church (Rev 21:22; Eph 5:21-33). The Eucharist is like a wedding feast and as we walk down the aisle to receive Holy Communion, as a member of the Church, you are coming to be united to your Bridegroom, Jesus. It is a very intimate spiritual union just as a husband and wife become one.

PEOPLE

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

Our response to the Lamb slain yet alive, and the grace of being called to supper with him here and forever is modeled on the words of a Roman centurion asking for the healing of his servant in the Gospel: “As he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, ‘Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress.’ And he said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ But the centurion answered him, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed’” (Matthew 8:5 - 8).

The centurion was not even Jewish, yet he believed that Our Lord with just a word could heal his servant without a visit, a ritual, or a gesture. In addition to healing his servant the Lord marveled at his faith in comparison to even the Jews (see Matthew 8:10 -12).

Just as the celebrant prayed that the reception of Communion be fruitful, we now have our opportunity to express the same faith. Our response to the Lamb we are contemplating should be the same faith and humility as the centurion. Our Lord doesn’t owe us anything, yet He offers us everything. With enough faith in Him and in His grace, we could be healed, happy, and holy in an instant. For now, weak and undeserving, let’s content ourselves with all the graces He will shower on us in a moment when we receive the Lamb in Holy Communion. (rcspirituality.org)

³⁵ Mt 14:19, 15:36; Mk 6:41, 8:6; Lk 9:16; Mt 14:19; Mt 26:26, Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19; 1Cor 11:24; Lk 24:30

24. Holy Communion (Pgs 138-143) **KNEEL**

As we reverently bow, genuflect, or kneel and Jesus is placed on our tongue or our open hand, let us reflect on Mary's first communion. She welcomed Jesus into her virginal womb and after the institution of the Eucharist, His return to her body into her soul where her heart again beat in unison with her son Jesus.

Let us strive to return to our seats and ardently welcome Jesus and contemplate the intimate union that has taken place inside us. (See Exodus 33). Take the time to close your eyes and concentrate on His Body and Blood flowing through every part of our bodies. Kneel in awe, thanksgiving and praise for this extraordinary gift and intimate friendship of our loving God.

After distribution of the Eucharist

The priest now cleanses/purifies the vessels used and offers a *Prayer after Communion* that the spiritual fruits of the Eucharist will have an effect on our lives as we go out into the world.

Part 5: The Concluding Rites (Pgs 147-148)

25. Greeting, Blessing, and Dismissal (Pgs 147-148) **STAND**

Greeting

Priest: ***The Lord be with you***

People: ***And with your spirit.***

Dismissal

Priest: ***Go forth, the Mass has ended.***

People: ***Thanks be to God***

The Mass ends the way it began with the priest saying the words "***The Lord be with you.***" While blessing the people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, he makes the sign of the cross over them. This final blessing was being used as early as the fourth century.

The final instruction is to "***Go forth, the MASS has ended.***" The word MASS is from the Latin word *MISSA* which means "sending". It is not an aimless dismissal but a *sending* forth of God's people to bring the mysteries of Christ into the world.

The priest and other altar servers exit the altar to song and gather for a final reverent bow to the tabernacle and processed down the aisle to the church exit or the Narthex where the priest gathers to meet with the people.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Summary of the Holy Mass

Introductory Rites

To prepare ourselves to enter into the sacred mystery of the Mass, we first consecrate ourselves to God.

Entrance/Veneration of the Altar

Sign of the Cross – we are invoking God’s presence as we begin our celebration of the Mass; we consecrate ourselves to God (Ezekiel 8: 9-18, 9:3-6)

Greeting: **STAND** “*The Lord be with you*” - it is God’s call and our response to His purpose and plan

Act of Penance: “*I Confess...*” – we are called to recognize and confess our sins with heartfelt contrition, and we ask the Blessed Mother Mary, all the angels and saints in heaven, our brothers and sisters to pray for us to imitate Jesus Christ’s radical love in the world.

“Lord have mercy.” - we ask Our Father to forgive us, to help us set things right with Him and pray He sees our heart and responds with great love

Gloria: A biblical mosaic saturated with worlds from Sacred Scripture and tells the story of Jesus in three acts: 1. His coming, 2. His redeeming death, 3. His triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven. We join with all the angels and saints in heaven to praise God for His work of salvation and for His own glory.

Collect: The celebrant invites the gathered assembly to pray and, after a brief silence, proclaims the prayer of the day. The Collect gathers the prayers of all into one and disposes all to hear the Word of God in the context of the celebration.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading **SIT** - Generally readings from the Old Testament

Responsorial Psalm - We praise, thank or call out to God as the lector and the people recite lines from the Old Testament

Second Reading - Generally from the Old Testament; usually chosen independently of the First Reading and the Gospel, but sometimes correspond to the themes particular season such as Christmas or Lent.

Gospel **STAND** - From the New Testament and may often correlate with the First Reading

- **Homily** - (“*explanation*” in Greek) priest/deacon’s explanation of and expounding upon the biblical texts proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word; has roots not only in the early Church but also in the Scriptures.)

Profession of Faith **STAND** - The Nicene Creed has deep biblical roots in the ancient Hebrew *Shema*, Prayer of the Faithful; it states our Catholic beliefs especially in *consubstantial* (of same substance) as the Father. (Council of Nicaea 325 AD)

Prayer of the Faithful **STAND** - We unite with one another to pray for today’s needs in the Church and in the world.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

A. **PREPARATION of the GIFTS** **SIT**

- Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts - rooted in early church liturgy as early as 255 AD

- **Offertory procession** – a collection is taken up and bread, wine, monetary/other offering are brought up in a procession and given to priest; symbolizes individual giving of self to God
 - **Mixing water and wine** – priest mixes small amount of water with wine and prays the “*fruit of the vine and work of human hands*” will become the bread of life; expresses our union with Christ’s offering to the Father (Wine symbolizes Christ’s divinity; water symbolizes our humanity).
 - **Washing hands** – priest washes his hands to reflect ancient biblical practice that signified interior, spiritual cleansing necessary for one to enter a sacred place and perform a sacred duty.
 - **Prayers over the Offering** **STAND** – priest prays that we may be accepted as a pleasing sacrifice with a “humble and contrite heart” (Daniel 3:15-16)
- NOTE:** It is now time for God’s people to connect with Him in a very intimate way. (Psalm 51:2); prayers recognize that Christ and the people’s sacrifices be united and offered to the Father through the *hands* of the priest (*See Hands of the Priest pg 47 below*)

B. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER Has roots in Jewish table prayers recited at every meal (BWTM pgs 93-101)

- **Preface** – three-part dialogue recited since 215 AD (focus on thanking God for Jesus’ life-giving death and resurrection)
- **“Holy, Holy, Holy Lord (Part 1)** – (Isaiah 6:1) – we join our voices with the angels and saints in jubilant praise; we are mystically entering the heavenly throne room
- Santus** (Latin for *holy*) **(Part 2)** – Psalm 118 – just as crowds in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus into the Holy City, we welcome Him into our churches, for He is about to become present in the Eucharist on our altar
- **Epiclesis:** (“invocation upon”) – priest asks for the Father to send the Holy Spirit so that the gifts of bread and wine will be changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord.
- **Words of Institution and Consecration** **KNEEL** (pgs 107 – 113 BWTM) – just as Last Supper took place in of Passover meal as a biblical memorial that allowed them to **relive** the Exodus, so we **relive** (or *memorialize*) and spiritually/sacramentally enter into the Son’s intimate, loving gift of Himself to the Father.
- **Mystery of Faith** – In reverence, the priest genuflects in silent adoration before the says “*The mystery of Faith*” and people proclaim the story of salvation in Jesus’ death and resurrection
- **PRAYERS** after consecration – gives us a moment to comprehend what has happened
 - **Anamnesis** (*memorial*) –identifies what is happening at Mass “Do this in memory of me.”
 - **Offering** - expresses how in the Mass we have the awesome privilege of offering what Jesus offered on Good Friday; we unite ourselves with this sacrifice of Christ
 - **Intercessions** – priest prays for all who will receive communion and we all become one body in Christ; he prays for the universal church, the people of God both living and dead and for peace and salvation of the world
 - **Final Doxology** **STAND** – *The Great AMEN* used since second century; affirms validity of all that has been said and done; has many biblical references; we respond with the angels; St Jerome called it the a “*celestial thunderclap*”

C. COMMUNION RITES - meant to lead the people to the sacred point of Holy Communion and ensure they are properly disposed to receive the Body and Blood of Christ (pg 122 BWTM)

- **Lord’s Prayer** – We address God as *FATHER* and underscores the intimate relationship we now have with God because of Jesus
- **Rite of Peace** – we offer each other a sign of peace (ancient Christian practice as early as 155 AD; connects the Father with the reception of Holy Communion as we share with each other become one with the Trinity)

- **Fraction** **KNEEL** *Breaking of the Bread* – ritual of Jewish meals later associated with Eucharist; biblical reference to multiplication of loaves for 5,000 and 4,000
- **Commingling**: The priest breaks small piece of the HOST (communion bread after consecration) and prays for unity of all who receive; Jesus' body and blood were separated in His death, but the *commingling* expresses the reunion of both in His resurrection
- **Agnus Dei**: "*Lamb of God*" - we join the angels described in Rev 5:11-12 and the *Paschal Lamb* (1Cor 5:7) and the *Lamb who was slain* (Rev 5:6, 12; 13:8), whose blood *washed the garments of saints* (Rev 7:14) and conquers even Satan (Rev 12:11)
- **Behold the Lamb of God** (John 1:29, 36) – we join John the Baptist in recognizing Jesus as the Servant-Lamb of Isaiah 53 *who offers His life as a sacrifice for sin*
- **Holy Communion** **KNEEL** – (pgs 138 – 143 BWTM): Likened to a wedding feast by exploring Revelations 19:6-7; Hallelujah = praise *Yahweh*; brings to mind great *Hallel* Psalms of Passover meal and Jesus would have sung at Last Supper; it is quiet, intimate time to spend with Jesus who now dwells *sacramentally* and *spiritually in us*
- "**Lord I am not worthy to receive you...**" – we acknowledge our unworthiness to receive our Lord and express confidence that Jesus calls us and can heal us (Matt 8:8)
- **Prayer after Communion** – priest purifies/cleanses vessels and prays for the spiritual fruits of the Eucharist to take effect in our lives.

Concluding Rites

Announcements (May be done at beginning of Mass)

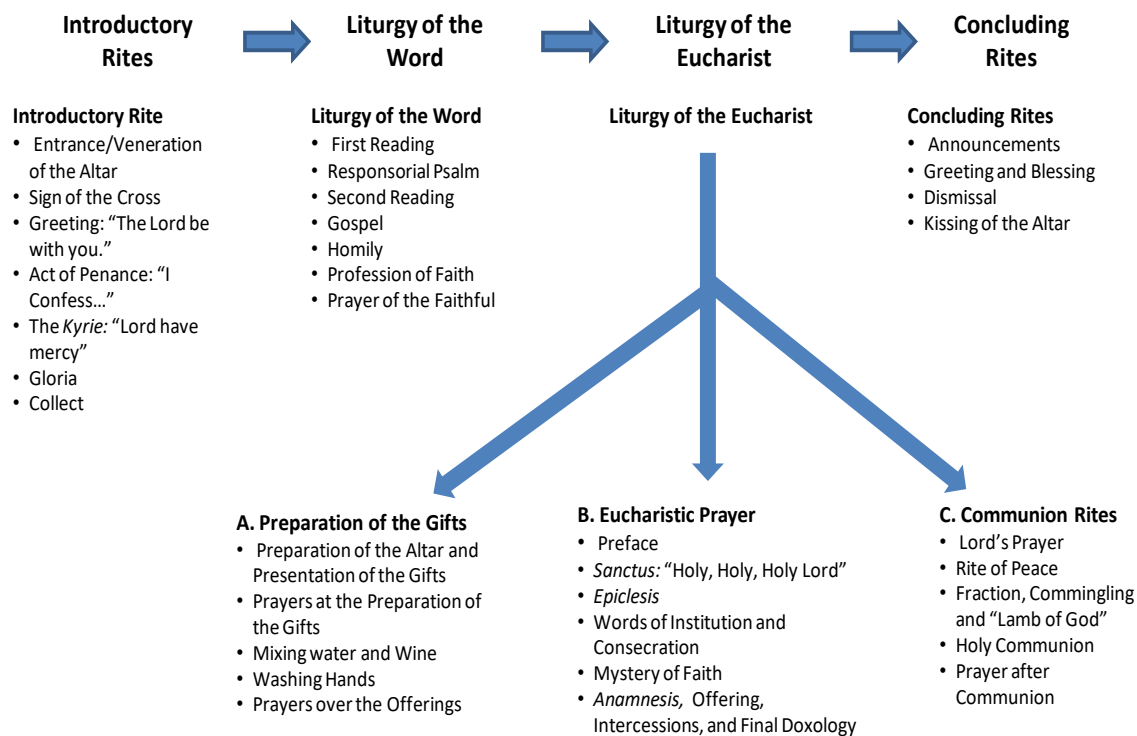
Greeting and Blessing **STAND** - *The Lord be with you* – same words used at beginning of Mass to alert us that God has something He wants us to do; the priest performs a final blessing by making the Sign of the Cross over the entire congregation

Dismissal - a formal dismissal rooted in the fourth century liturgy that concludes with sending forth (*missio*); the more we unite ourselves with Jesus, the more we will radiate His life and His love in the world around us therefore is a *dismissal with a mission*

Kissing of the Altar – The priest reverently kisses the altar just as he did at the beginning

Closing Song – most times a closing song is sung as the priest processes off the altar toward back of the church to greet attendees

NOTE: The entire Liturgy is called "the Mass" and is derived from the Latin word *Missa* meaning *dismissal or sending*; it is often referred to as *Holy Mass* because it is what the mystery of salvation is accomplished with the sending forth or *misso* of the faithful to fulfill God's will in their daily lives. (pgs 147 – 148 BWTM)



Four Main Sections of a Catholic Mass

Adapted from Ascension Press:

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass: Understanding what we say /do in the Liturgy Dr Edward Sri

Preparing to attend a Catholic Mass

Proper dress (See attached pg 58)

Think modest and conservative when picking out your outfit. While church is a social gathering, it's not a party or a night out with your friends. Families of all different ages attend church, and many churches are still conservative, so make sure to dress appropriately. You should eliminate backless or low-cut dresses, spaghetti straps, tank tops, or anything that shows your midriff. Just because it must be modest, does not mean it can't be fashionable. Just make sure to not leave a lot of your skin exposed. Overly glitzy jewelry or expensive accessories should also be avoided.

The Gathering Place (Narthex)

This is usually an anteroom or entryway that may or may not be enclosed. When enclosed, it may contain information and welcome ministers for the congregates. Not all churches have a narthex and entry is made directly into the sanctuary

Entering the Church

When entering the Church, you may find a small bowl of water (water blessed by the priest and considered Holy). Many people will dip their fingers into the bowl and make the Sign of the Cross.

Holy Water

Holy Water is used as a reminder of baptism, Catholic Christians dip their fingers in the holy water and make the sign of the cross when entering the church. ... This use of holy water and making a sign of the cross when entering a church reflects a renewal of baptism, a cleansing of venial sin, as well as providing protection against evil.

Bulletins

You may be given a handout from a greeter or usher that provides information about various activities and information about the parish.

Genuflecting

Because Catholics believe the real presence of Jesus is in the Tabernacle on the Altar, we genuflect (right knee to the ground and bow head and/or before entering the pew (seat) is to allow the worshipper to engage his whole person in acknowledging the presence of and to honor Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. It is customary to genuflect whenever one comes into or leaves the presence of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle.

Kneelers

Traditionally, altar rails often have built-in knee cushions to facilitate reception of Holy Communion while kneeling. A kneeler is also a part of the prie-dieu prayer desk. ... Kneeling was not part of the Mass in early Christianity and has been part of the Catholic Mass only since the 16th century. Since then, some churches have been built without kneelers. The debate is part of the argument among Catholics between tradition and change. Traditionalists see it as the ultimate posture of submission to and adoration of God; modernists view kneeling as the vestige of a feudal past they would like to leave behind.

Pew

Pew comes from the Middle English word "*pewe*" that comes from the Old French *puye* or *puie*, meaning balcony or elevation. This, in turn, came from the Latin *podia*, the plural of podium. In the churches, there were elevated sections for people of rank (ladies, rich gentlemen, etc...).

Announcements

May be given before or after Mass; provides additional parish information to congregate.

The Nicene Creed

Historical Introduction

We call the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed is professed every Sunday at Mass in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. In the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church and in our separated Orthodox brethren, this same Creed is professed in its original formulation.

The only difference between the Creed of the East and West is the later addition of the phrase “and the Son” to the paragraph on the procession of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, this disagreement has caused great difficulty and division between Eastern and Western Christianity.

The Nicene Creed arose from the first two ecumenical councils of the Church. The first ecumenical council is the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. and the second is the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. This Creed is ancient, and it has preserved the faithful from a variety of heresies for over 1,600 years. To understand it is to understand what we believe as Catholics.

Walking through the Creed

Let’s take a quick walk through the Creed and try to understand it a bit more in depth. Of course, each word in the phrase is packed with meaning and endless depth. Truly, the reality of our Faith is that we are diving into the mysteries of an infinite God. So, there is always more to learn.

Paragraph 1 – God the Father

*“I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible...”*

We believe in one God in three Persons. We do not believe in three gods. Our one God is not only our king and Lord, He is our Heavenly Father. We are His children. He created everything that we can see, but He also created all the things that we cannot see. For example, we believe in the angels, in our own souls, and in the demons. God is Lord over all of it and has all might.

Even though He is tremendously powerful, our God and Father draws us into a relationship with Him and invites us to share eternal blessedness in another invisible reality: Heaven.

Paragraph 2 – The Lord Jesus

*“...I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through Him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven...”*

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the Word of God, the Son. This Word of God, Jesus Christ, proceeds from the Father. He was “born” and “begotten” but not made. This is a mystery that is very difficult to understand. Much ink has been spilled in theology on how Jesus can be both God and man. In other words, Jesus is fully God and He is eternal, just as the Father is eternal. This paragraph emphasizes that there is one God but the Father is nonetheless distinct as a Person from the Person of the Son. The Council Fathers went to great length to combat the Arian heresy which claimed that Jesus was created and was not truly God. We believe that Jesus is fully God and fully man. As the Word of God, He was existed forever and will always exist. He proceeds from the Father as God from God and Light from Light, true God from true God. I will go into more detail on this in the fifth paragraph on the Holy Spirit. There is also the realization that it is through the Word of God that all things were made. God reveals to us in Genesis God speaks in order to create. He says, “Let there be light.” And there was light. Jesus Christ, the

Word of God, was sent on a mission by the Father to come down from heaven in order to redeem humanity and offer us salvation.

Paragraph 3 – The Incarnation and The Virgin Mary

***“...and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man...”***

By the free choice of Mary, our Mother, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God took on flesh. Jesus Christ, the uncreated Word through which all things were made, condescended to share in our humanity. The almighty God emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave, to use the language of St. Paul.

In the Latin Rite, there is a tradition of bowing during this paragraph in honor of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is literally the “enfleshment” of Jesus; it is what we celebrate at Christmas. This paragraph marks one of the most important moments in human history. Our God became one of us.

Paragraph 4 – The Paschal Mystery

***“...For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end...”***

This paragraph is directly connected to the previous. Jesus became man in order to accomplish the work of our salvation. It was for us that Jesus was crucified. The Council Fathers include, “under Pontius Pilate” to show that this was a historical reality. It really happened. So too, Jesus truly rose from the dead on the third day after being buried.

Forty days after rising from the dead, He lifted Himself up into Heaven in a mysterious fashion and He now reigns in Heaven as King at the right hand of the Father. We believe that He will come again in glory. This is what we call the Second Coming. At the second coming of Christ, we will all be judged; everything we have done will be laid bare and true justice will be accomplished.

This second coming will result in the passing away of the old Heaven and the old Earth and the establishing of Jesus’ everlasting kingdom.

Paragraph 5 – The Holy Spirit

***“...I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets...”***

We believe in one God in three Persons. The third Person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit, who we also rightly call Lord and the giver of life. God breathed life into the first man, after all. This holy breath of God is the Spirit which gives life and sustains life. He is glorified and loved as God, along with the Father and the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit, preceding the Incarnation as well as after, inspired the prophets. The Trinity is the mystery of God, as He is. It is difficult to wrap our minds around this mystery in any meaningful way. Our metaphors are usually material, like a three-leaf clover or the states of water as ice, liquid, or vapor, and because they are material, they always fall short. God is spiritual, not material. The best explanation I have heard of the Blessed Trinity is from St. Augustine’s Analogy of the Mind. I will try my best to offer a simplified version. Though, it is far from simple.

In our own minds, we have intellect and will. We know things and act freely. When we learn or know things, we have a procession of the intellect. When we act freely upon ourselves or the world, we have a procession of the will. If we analogously apply this understanding to the “mind of God,” we see a

procession of the intellect and a procession of the will. God is perfect and so these processions must be infinite and perfect.

The procession of the intellect, within the mind of God, is God the Father's perfect knowledge of Himself. This perfect image of Himself is the Son. The Son, in return, perfectly loves the Father. God is love. Therefore, the procession of His will is perfect love which proceeds as the love shared between the Father and the Son. This is the Holy Spirit. However, we must understand that He does not proceed in time, as He is as eternal as the Father and the Son.

Paragraph 6 – The Church

***“...I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come...”***

The Church of Jesus Christ is His Mystical Body. Therefore, the Church is holy, even if the human beings who compromise it are not always holy. The Church is one because Christ is one. The Church is catholic because the Church is “universal.” Catholic means universal. And the Church is apostolic because Christ founded it upon the Apostles.

We enter into this Church through the one Baptism of Christ, by which we are cleansed of original sin, are grafted onto Christ, and become adopted sons and daughters of God.

We believe that when Christ comes again, we will be reunited with our bodies in a glorified way, similar to Christ's resurrected Body. We do not know exactly what this will look like.

And we look forward to the life of the world to come which is eternal blessedness in the company of the angels and the saints in constant praise and love of God. We will want for nothing and all suffering will be no more.

Conclusion – Amen

“...Amen.”

And finally... amen! Amen means “yes,” “so be it,” and “I believe.” It is the only ending to the Creed that we can offer as human beings. God has revealed all He is and all that He has done for us, and our confident and faithful “Amen” is the response of our heart.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, (1) the Father Almighty,
Maker of Heaven and Earth,(2)

And in Jesus Christ,(3)
His only Son,(4)
our Lord,(5)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,(6)
born of the Virgin(7) Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,(8)
was **crucified**,(9)
dead(10)
and **buried**.(11)

He descended into Hell.(A)

The third day(12)
He arose from the dead,(13)
He ascended into Heaven(14)
and is seated at the right hand
of God,(15) the Father Almighty.

From thence He shall come
to judge the quick* and the dead.(16)

I believe in the Holy Spirit,(17)
the church universal,(18)
the communion ** of saints,(19)
the forgiveness of sins,(20)
the resurrection of the body,(21)
and life everlasting.(22)

* "quick" means "spiritually alive"

** "communion" refers to "coming together"

BIBLE REFERENCES

1. Isaiah 44:6; 45:5
2. Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15
3. Luke 2:11; John 20:28
4. John 3:16; Proverbs 30:4
5. John 20:28
6. Luke 1:35
7. Luke 1:27
8. Luke 23:23-25
9. John 19:20; Acts 4:10; all Gospels
10. 1 Corinthians 15:3
11. 1 Corinthians 15:4
- A. 1 Peter 3:18; Luke 23:43
12. 1 Corinthians 15:4
13. 1 Corinthians 15:4
14. Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:11
15. Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3
16. 2 Timothy 4:1; John 5:22
17. John 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-14; Acts 13:2
18. Galatians 3:26-29
19. Revelation 19:14; Hebrews 10:25
20. Luke 7:48
21. 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 6:39
22. John 10:28; 17:2-3

Consubstantial with the Father

Q: In the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, why has "one in being with the Father" been changed to "consubstantial with the Father?"

A: The new translation is more in keeping with the ancient Latin text of the Creed and a more accurate translation.

The bishops at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), in order to ensure that Jesus was professed as the eternal Son of God, equal to the Father, stated that he is "the Son of God, begotten from the Father, the only-begotten, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, the same substance (*homoousion*) with the Father..." The Creed of the Council of Constantinople (381), which is professed at all Sunday Masses and Solemnities within the Catholic Church, similarly stated: "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same substance (*homoousion*) with the Father."

When these two ancient creeds were translated into Latin, the term " *homoousion*" was rendered as " *consubstantialem*," that is, "the same substance of the Father." Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Latin " *consubstantialem*" was rendered as "consubstantial" within the English translation of the Creed. Many theologians and the Holy See thought that the term "consubstantial" was more in keeping with the Latin tradition and a more literal and accurate translation than the more recent "one in being."

This is in keeping with the mind of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, which published an Instruction, entitled *Liturgiam Authenticam*. It stated: "Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible" (no. 56).

Why does the priest kiss the altar?

January 8, 2018 by Fr. Brian Gross <https://bismarckdiocese.com>

The practice of reverencing the altar with a kiss is one of the most ancient liturgical traditions and can be dated back to the 4th century with certainty.

In the pagan Roman empire, it was customary to kiss the door of a temple before entering to venerate the various pagan gods. Families at home would also reverence the family table by kissing it before sitting down for a meal. The early Church took these customs and “baptized” them by incorporating them into worship of the true God as we gather around his altar from which Jesus offers Himself to the Father and feeds us with His Body and Blood. During this time of the church there were many people converting from pagan worship to the worship of the True God and those joining with their fellow Catholics would have immediately recognized this symbolism from their former pagan lives.

As the custom has continued to this day at each Mass that is celebrated, we recognize two primary reasons the priest, and the deacon if one is present, kisses the altar.

First, the altar is a symbol of Christ. Preface V of Easter declares, “By the oblation of his Body, he brought the sacrifices of old to fulfillment in the reality of the cross and, by commending himself to you (Father) for our salvation, showed himself the Priest, the Altar, and the Lamb of sacrifice.” In her liturgy, the Church tells us that Jesus “showed” himself as a type of altar.

This makes sense in a number of ways. Jesus is the center, source and goal of our worship and the altar is the center point of the celebration of the Mass, so when the priest reverences the altar with a kiss, he is showing his love for Christ who is the center of life and worship.

Another reason that Jesus is the altar pertains to the materials used to build the altar in many churches, especially cathedrals throughout the world. An altar that is made of marble gives the impression that it will never be moved from its prominent position within the church. Jesus on the cross does not waver from His commitment to offer Himself for our salvation and remains steadfast as the rock upon which our hope is built.

Another reason pertains to the relics of the saints that are contained within each altar. During the first centuries, the altar was often a stone slab placed over the tomb of a martyr. Typically, this took place in the catacombs which you can still visit in Rome to this day. Could the memorial of the death of the Savior be anywhere more fittingly celebrated than on the tombs of the faithful who had died for Christ? This is the origin of the custom of setting in the altar-stone a cavity in which relics of martyrs or other saints are enclosed.

St. John, in the Book of Revelation, says, “I saw beneath the altar the souls of all who had been slain for love of God’s word” (6:90). Some people think that this statement refers to the habit of saying Mass over a martyr’s tomb on certain occasions early in the life of the Church. This tradition goes all the way back to the time of the Apostle John.

The next time you see the priest reverence the altar with a kiss remember these two reasons for the action and thank the Father for the gift of his Son, Jesus and the many saints that have given their lives of Christ and intercede for us daily, especially as we gather for the worship of Christ, the Eternal Priest.

Dance of the Holy Spirit

A sermon by Clayton Harrington, *seminarian*

<https://www.cathedralatl.org/Sermons/the-dance-of-the-trinity/>

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

In the name of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dancing has a way of bringing people together, as those who join the dance must move together as one, in order for the dance to continue. I think that watching people dance can actually help us understand this somewhat tricky concept of the Trinity.

Throughout history, the Church has used words like coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial, to explain the Christian belief that God is “one God in three persons” – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Needless to say, the doctrine of the Trinity has confused and confounded people throughout the centuries. To say “One plus One plus One equals One” goes against our rational and mathematical minds.

I have no intention of attempting a complete and full explanation and defense of the Trinity. However, on this Trinity Sunday, I would like to offer one word that may help us to better understand the Trinity and how it might actually apply to us as a community. That word is “perichoresis” [Pe-ri-cho-reysis].

Perichoresis is a Greek word that comes from the prefix “peri” meaning “around,” and “choreo” meaning “contain.” As such this word is often translated as “rotation.” Theologians used the term “perichoresis” in regard to the Trinity to provide an image for the concept, rather than a rhetorical formula or analogy. In this understanding, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit not only embrace one another, but they also permeate, contain, and exist in one another.

I think it is no coincidence that by changing one letter in perichoresis, the word changes to mean “dance around.” Picture a circle dance in which members join hands and slowly begin to spin about the room, each maintaining their own identity, but becoming inseparably part of the dance that is taking place. The Triune God is an eternal circle dance of the Father, Son, and Spirit. In this dance, the three divine persons of the One God have loved one another and been in relationship with one another for all eternity. Through this never-ending dance, “the divine persons exist so intimately with one another, for one another, and in one another, that they constitute a single, unique, and complete unity by themselves.”

So, why is the Trinity important and why have we set aside a whole day to talk about this concept? What does it all matter? C.S. Lewis says, “It matters more than anything else in the world. The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his [or her] place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made.”

So, how do we join this eternal dance? Paul says in today’s epistle, that it is “through Jesus Christ, [that] we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.” So, we see, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in God becoming human, God invites us into the dance.

By taking on our humanity, God invites us to join in the dance of divinity. And we come into this dance, just as God participates in the dance—as community—with others that are seated here today all around us and “with Christians across time and across the world.” We cannot dance on our own, but we dance with one another, in Koinonia, the blessed community. In this dance of fellowship and love, we do not give up our own identities or personalities but come together in common unity to further God’s Kingdom on earth. Every week we affirm our many-ness and our oneness when we send forth Eucharistic visitors saying, “We who are many are one body, because we are one in Jesus Christ.”

Our dance together in God, our community as the Body of Christ will allow us to do things together that we could never imagine on our own. Jesus gave us the great mission of our Christian community— to

“make disciples of all nations” and to invite others into the great dance by “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” In this dance we will learn to love God and to love one another, and together we can make a difference in this world.

Of course, we will occasionally step on someone else’s foot or step out of line in the dance. But the beauty of the dance is that God is in control and always invites us back. Allowing the love of God to bind us together, just as it binds the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together, will bring more joy and fullness to lives and our ministries than anything else. All we have to do is accept the invitation of the Triune God and step out onto the dance floor.

Jesus sings to us in the words of the English songwriter Sydney Carter: “I danced in the morning when the world was begun. I danced in the moon, and the stars, and the sun. And I came down from heaven and I danced on the Earth. At Bethlehem I had my birth. Dance, then, wherever you may be. I am the Lord of the Dance said he. And I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be. And I’ll lead you all in the Dance, said he.” Amen.

USCCB LITURGY OF THE WORD

Most of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of [readings from Scripture](#). On Sundays and solemnities, there are three Scripture readings. During most of the year, the first reading is from the Old Testament and the second reading is from one of the New Testament letters. During Easter Time, the first reading is taken from the Acts of the Apostles which tells the story of the Church in its earliest days. The last reading is always taken from one of the four Gospels.

In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church feeds the people of God from the table of his Word (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 51). The Scriptures are the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures, God speaks to us, leading us along the path to salvation.

The Responsorial Psalm is sung between the readings. The psalm helps us to meditate on the word of God.

The high point of the Liturgy of the Word is the reading of the Gospel. Because the Gospels tell of the life, ministry, and preaching of Christ, it receives several special signs of honor and reverence. The gathered assembly stands to hear the Gospel and it is introduced by an acclamation of praise. Apart from Lent, that acclamation is “Alleluia,” derived from a Hebrew phrase meaning “Praise the Lord!” A deacon (or, if no deacon is present, a priest) reads the Gospel.

After the Scripture readings, the celebrant [preaches the homily](#). In the homily, the preacher focuses on the Scripture texts or some other texts from the liturgy, drawing from them lessons that may help us to live better lives, more faithful to Christ’s call to grow in holiness.

In many Masses, the Profession of Faith then follows the homily, either the Nicene or Apostles’ Creed. The [Nicene Creed](#) is a statement of faith dating from the fourth century, while the Apostles’ Creed is the ancient baptismal creed of the Church in Rome. If baptismal promises are renewed, from a formula based on the Apostles’ Creed, this takes the place of the Creed.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the [Universal Prayer](#), also called the Prayer of the Faithful. The gathered assembly intercedes with God on behalf of the Church, the world, and themselves, entrusting their needs to the faithful and loving God.

Intercessory Prayers: Miscellaneous Prayers for Life

For our nation, that the values of life and liberty may truly be our watchwords;
We pray to the Lord

That the good seed of the Gospel of Life, may take root in our land and grow to the glory of God;
We pray to the Lord

For those who are mentally disabled, that we might cherish the gifts God has given them, and in their lives hear the voice of our loving God;
We pray to the Lord

For every person who suffers from violence, and especially for women whose pain breaks their hearts, that through the intercession of she whose heart was pierced with a sword, they might know peace and strength;
We pray to the Lord

For those who mourn the death of a child, they may be given the strength and courage to face the future, and that they may be understood and blessed;
We pray to the Lord

For all who work in abortions clinics: that through the intercession of the Mother of God, they might come to love the unborn child;
We pray to the Lord

For all who do not embrace the rights of the unborn that, in love, they may come to know and treasure the infinite value of every human person;
We pray to the Lord

For those who provide or cooperate in abortions,
that by our love for the truth and for them, they might turn from darkness and death;
We pray to the Lord

For all who are tempted to sin against life, that they might turn from darkness and embrace the infinite love and light of God;
We pray to the Lord

For all who are very sick, and especially those afflicted by HIV/AIDS, that we might care for them with the compassion and love of Christ;
We pray to the Lord

The Hands of a Priest

Following is the prepared text from Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted's homily for the Chrism Mass.

Diocese of Phoenix **March 26, 2018**

"...the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at Him. He said to them,

"Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." Lk 4:20

Before Jesus spoke a word in the synagogue of Nazareth, the people had their eyes fixed on Him, noticing what He did with His hands, with what reverence He handled the Sacred Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, and only then taking note of His words. St. Luke tells us: **"He...was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..."** – Lk 4:16-18. After telling us this, the evangelist Luke again draws attention to Jesus' hands, **"Rolling up the scroll, He handed it back to the attendant and sat down...He said, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."**

At the Chrism Mass each year, all the priests renew their Commitment to Priestly Service, remembering and reinvigorating their intention to be faithful servants of Jesus and good stewards of the mysteries of God. In the Chrism Mass, too, the blessing of Holy Oils takes place, Oils that priests will take in their hands and use to confer Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Anointing of the Sick. As these Sacraments are conferred through the priests' hands, Jesus' words spoken in Nazareth's synagogue again come to life: **"Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."**

It is worthwhile, at this Chrism Mass, then, to recall all the many ways that Jesus heals and brings life through the hands of His priests. And it is good for us priests to remember that sacred moment, on the day of Ordination, when our hands were anointed by Christ, and when He, acting through the Bishop, placed His hands upon us and gave us a share in His Eternal Priesthood.

The ancient rite of the laying on of hands, whose roots reach far back into the Old Testament, was chosen by Jesus to be the way He takes possession of a priest's entire life. By the laying on of hands, Jesus says in a symbolic but very real way, *"You belong to me;" "Under my hands, you are protected from the evil one."* *"Look, I have carved you in the palm of my hand."* *"Remain in me as I remain in you."* *"Place your hands in mine."*

My brother priests and dear sons in Christ, today, we will consecrate the Oil of Chrism and it will, in turn, be used to ordain, in several weeks, three of our brothers to the priesthood. With the Sacred Chrism, their hands will be anointed as ours have been, as a sign of the Holy Spirit who confers the sacred power to sanctify, to shepherd, and to teach. After I have laid hands upon them and said the Prayer of Ordination, each of you, in turn, will lay hands upon them, reminding everyone of the sacramental brotherhood we share in Jesus and our fraternal participation in the one Eternal Priesthood of the living Christ.

Because we priests so frequently use our hands to serve our people, it can be deeply meaningful for us to say the Prayer of Abandonment, composed by Blessed Charles de Foucauld, since it allows us to place ourselves anew in the hands of our merciful Father. Please join with me in your hearts, then, as I say this prayer: *"Father, I abandon myself into your hands. Do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you. I am ready for all. I accept all. Let only your will be done in me and in all your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul. I offer it to you with all the love of my heart. For I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve and with boundless confidence for you are my Father."*

Remember, my brother priests and dear sons in Christ, it is Jesus who laid His hands upon us, just as it is He who takes the bread, using our hands, and says, using our voices, **"This is my Body... This is my Blood."** He is the one eternal Priest whom we serve and who serves others through our hands and voices. If, at any time, we become disheartened, let us ask Him to take our hands and hearts in His, to heal and renew them for the service of His Kingdom. And let us place the work of our priestly hands in His with a spirit of reverence and fear of the Lord. Recall how St. Peter, after the miraculous catch of fish, instead of being overcome with joy was frightened by the immensity of what Jesus had accomplished through his hands as he tossed the net into the sea, being keenly aware of his own inadequacies compared with the miraculous

work of the Lord. Peter, no longer feeling worthy even to be Jesus' follower, cried out (Luke 5:8), **"Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man."** But Jesus, with great kindness, took Peter by the hand, and said, **"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."**

My brother priests, you and I know well the truth of those words we pray at every Mass, *"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed."* Let us allow Jesus to take all our unworthiness into His hands, just as we placed our own hands in those of the bishops on the day of Ordination. Within Jesus' hands, we find the strength to be true to our promises made at Ordination. At this Chrism Mass, how good it is to lay our hands again in the wounded hands of Christ, entrusting to Him our priestly ministry, together with all the people whom we have the privilege to serve, including all those who seem far removed from God's Kingdom but are so dear to the Good Shepherd who always seeks the lost sheep. Into your hands, heavenly Father, we place our destiny, our future, our priestly ministry. Father, do with us what you will.

Do This in Memory of Me by **Bishop William Murphy**

DESCRIPTION

Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Centre issued the following pastoral letter on May 9, 2008, to the priests of the diocese regarding the proper celebration of the Eucharist and the distribution of Holy Communion.

LARGER WORK (www.drvc.org) **PUBLISHER & DATE:** Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY; 05/09/08

This reflection on the Eucharist, along with some pastoral directives, has been sent to you in order that you can know both the pastoral directives that it contains and the faith perspective of the church, which guides and determines the decisions I have made. I ask you as a brother priest to use this reflection of mine in whatever way it can help the people of God of our diocese to understand the Eucharist, the "greatest gift" the Lord left us, and to observe the pastoral directive and instruction this letter contains.

For your own reference, may I commend to you the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the recent pontifical documents *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of John Paul II and *Redemptionis Sacramentum* of the Congregation for Divine Worship and *Sacramentum Caritatis* of Benedict XVI.

The Church's Teaching

On the night before he died, the Lord took bread, said the blessing and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body for you." Afterward he took the cup and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my blood to be shed for you; do this in memory of me."

What Jesus did at the Last Supper has become the central action of the church. We are called into the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord. "As often as we do this, we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes in glory." The whole life of the church flows from the Eucharist and flows back to the sacrifice of the Mass.

The centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the church is manifest from the very beginning as witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles, the writings of Paul and the early church fathers. Most recently, Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* added another chapter onto the clear and unchanged teaching that the Eucharist is the greatest gift Jesus left us. The celebration of the Eucharist gives us our identity as well as our life.

As we read the Gospels, we recall so many instances in which Jesus shows us that "doing this in memory of me" is the action and the activity par excellence by which Jesus gives himself to us, and we in turn are called to act as he did, to do what he enjoined.

The story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the feeding miracles, the Last Supper itself: All these show us that it is in the action of the Eucharist that Christ manifests his presence. The shape of the Eucharist involves the four actions of taking (the presentation of the gifts), blessing (the eucharistic prayer), breaking (the fraction rite) and giving (Communion). To celebrate the Eucharist means to do what Christ did, namely, offering to God the Father these actions that together form the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We read in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 72: "For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat and drink: This is my body; this is the cup of my blood. Do this in memory of me.' Accordingly, the church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ."

Thus, when the church celebrates the Eucharist, the action of the priest and community in union with the Holy Spirit brings about what is proclaimed and makes real what has been promised. The celebration of every Eucharist not only represents the one and unique sacrifice of the cross, it brings the kingdom of heaven into the world and joins us ever more deeply into the one body of Christ in union with the "cloud of witnesses," Mary and the angels and the saints.

Nothing we do can ever replace the celebration of the Eucharist. This is the heart of the community which makes real the gift of divine life that constitutes the community of faith which is the body of Christ here on earth.

The one sacrifice of Christ's death on the cross cannot be isolated from what went before it and after it. Christ's whole life was a gift to the Father. Jesus' whole life was totally given over to God in every way at every moment.

His death on the cross was the culmination of that life; it was also the beginning of his exaltation. Insofar as death leads to new life, the resurrection is the "mirror image" of the cross. Thus, it's all one basic movement, most powerfully manifest in the cross. This is what we mean by *the paschal mystery*. This mystery is the very life of God since Jesus is the Son of God. The eternal life of God contains the sacrifice of Christ.

So much follows from this. So much of who we are is built upon this. Without attempting to write a theology of the Eucharist, allow me to underline some important elements to illustrate what I mean.

In the celebration of Mass, the eucharistic prayer constitutes the central proclamation through which the action of the Holy Spirit brings about the sacramental reality of the sacrifice on the cross, the gift Jesus makes of himself to the Father for the redemption of the world. The term we use for that central part of the liturgy, *anamnesis*, reminds us that his sacrifice enters our space and our time to take place here and now for us. It does not take place again; it happened only once, but through the prayer remembrance of the church and the action of the Holy Spirit, it is made a part of our space and time.

When the church remembers (anamnesis) the paschal mystery of Christ, we are allowing what is at the heart of the very life of God to reveal itself here and now and become a part of our space and time. The Eucharist "effects" the saving mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and renders it effectively present for us in our lives, in our space and time.

In the celebration of this remembrance, the church surrenders herself and is taken over by what is a part of God's eternal life. Thus, the bread and wine symbolize the sacrifices of ourselves. Our giving thanks in the eucharistic prayer is the action of surrendering ourselves.

Again, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 2, helps us:

"The sacrificial nature of the Mass, solemnly asserted by the Council of Trent in accordance with the church's universal tradition, was reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, which offered these significant words about the Mass: 'At the Last Supper our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood, by which he would perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the centuries until he should come again, thus entrusting to the church, his beloved bride, the memorial of his death and resurrection.'" The eucharistic prayer must be understood as being about more than only consecrating the bread and wine. Rather, that consecration must be seen within the context of the act of remembrance that is the prayer. In the eucharistic prayer the church recalls the saving activity of God as the church acknowledges the wonderful things God has done to redeem and save his people, culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We pray it so we can remember God's saving action in Jesus, and in that prayer of remembrance the saving power of that event is made present.

Thus, as the high point of the celebration, the eucharistic prayer is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving addressed to the Father. Two Greek words used for the eucharistic prayer are *anaphora* or *prosphora*, both meaning "offering." *Anaphora* literally means a "carrying up."

Again, allow me to cite the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 78:

"Now the center and summit of the entire celebration begins: namely, the eucharistic prayer, that is, the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; he unites the congregation with himself in the prayer that he addresses in the name of the entire community to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, *the meaning of the prayer is that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of sacrifice*" [emphasis added].

And in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 79, we read about the different elements that make up the eucharistic prayer, particularly the anamnesis and the offering:

"e. Anamnesis: In which the church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the apostles, keeps the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed passion, glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven.

"f. Offering: *By which, in this very memorial, the church — and in particular, the church here and now gathered — offers in the Holy Spirit the spotless victim to the Father. The church's intention, however, is that the faithful not only offer this spotless victim but also learn to offer themselves, and so day by day to be consummated, through Christ the Mediator, into unity with God and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all*" [emphasis added].

This is admirably expressed in the prayer over the gifts, Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper: "Lord, make us worthy to celebrate these mysteries. Each time we offer this memorial sacrifice, the work of our redemption is accomplished."

Within this vision of the centrality of celebrating the Eucharist, "doing this in memory of me," we can have a deeper and more satisfying understanding of what it means to receive holy Communion. The celebration of the Eucharist should find its consummation in receiving holy Communion.

The reception of holy Communion is never just passively "getting" or "receiving" holy Communion. Instead, the reception of holy Communion is the culmination of participating in the celebration (offering of the sacrifice). There is an inherent interconnection between sacrifice, real presence and communion.

We should never sever the connection between receiving the sacrament and celebrating the sacrifice; the two go hand in hand. Receiving the sacrament is the culmination of participating in the sacrifice. In this sense "receiving it" is a reciprocal reality: We receive Christ and in so doing, Christ receives us and presents us to the Father in the Spirit.

There is an inner dynamic of active participation in the Mass from the opening greeting and prayer to the Liturgy of the Word, through the eucharistic prayer to the rite of receiving holy Communion, which leads us all from the celebration out into the world to be witnesses of the one who has gifted us with his divine life. We leave the celebration of Mass to become missionaries to the world, announcing the good news by the way we live and manifest his life in ours.

Thus, the fruit of our active participation in the whole offering of the Mass will be found in an ethic of life that is not cultic or esoteric or sectarian. It is catholic and apostolic. It reveals itself in the unity that is ours as a community of communion with a life that is holy and striving for holiness, a life that is sent into the world from the celebration "that the world might believe."

Therefore, *sacrifice* is given new meaning as well. Sacrifice is existential; it is a sacrifice of one's life for the kingdom of God. It is not a cultic but an ethical ideal. True sacrifice is not centered in a formal act of cultic or external ceremonial worship but rather is celebrated to become incorporated in the everyday practical life of Christian virtue, in the apostolic and charitable work of being a good Christian, i.e., of being "for others" as Christ is "for us."

Our sacrifice is our totally free and loving response to Christ's act of self-giving love by the way we live life, carried out on the practical level of human existence. The celebration of the Eucharist should transform us to live such a life of self-offering, i.e., self-giving love.

In this way we come closer and closer to the full and active participation in the Mass which was the aim of the Vatican Council and which makes our life of worship in the Eucharist the wellspring of our daily living life "in Christ Jesus."

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 95, again helps us understand this:

"In the celebration of Mass, the faithful form a holy people, a people whom God has made his own, a royal priesthood, *so that they may give thanks to God and offer the spotless victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, and so that they may learn to offer themselves*. They should, moreover, endeavor to make this clear by their deep religious sense and their charity toward brothers and sisters who participate with them in the same celebration" [emphasis added].

Pastoral Issues

There are practical implications that flow from this. One is that we need to take very seriously the instruction that the faithful should communicate from hosts that have been consecrated at the Mass being celebrated, and that, insofar as is possible, hosts should not be taken from the tabernacle for the communion of the faithful. This is an ideal I would hope could be transformed into reality as a regular practice in all our parishes. (cf. GIRM, 85)

But for our own purposes in this pastoral letter, it is even more central to recognize the connection between "offering" and "receiving" of ourselves that takes its form and its strength from the active participation in the Eucharist, which we "do in memory of him."

It is offering that differentiates Mass from a communion service, and it is offering that provides the context for full, conscious and active participation. The internal participation of offering, expressed and deepened by external participation (vocal responses, singing, postures, etc.), is the heart of what it means to "celebrate the Eucharist." Both internal and external participation are necessary, since each one deepens and reinforces the other.

In the popular mind, all too often the purpose of Mass is still seen as an action simply to consecrate hosts; some people think their participation in the eucharistic prayer is all about watching the priest and then receiving holy Communion. They do not understand the need to offer themselves with Christ to the Father in the Spirit during the prayer nor do they understand that their parts in the prayer (introductory dialogue, Sanctus, memorial acclamation and great amen) are the outward signs of their participation in the entire prayer.

With all this in mind, we turn now to some pastoral issues that I wish to clarify for the good of our church here on Long Island.

The Holy See has published guidelines for the celebration of the word with the distribution of holy Communion on Sundays and feast days for those missionary areas where the absence of a priest makes the celebration of Sunday Mass a rare occurrence. In our diocese some committed priests began to have such celebrations with the distribution of holy Communion on weekdays when they would be absent from the parish for a day off.

In 1997, realizing that this initiative was problematic, Bishop John McGann issued a moratorium stating that those parishes who had these could continue until the matter was studied but that no new parishes could initiate such celebrations with the distribution of holy Communion until the matter could be resolved. The study was begun but never completed.

Well over a year ago I asked the diocesan Advisory Committee on Canonical Affairs to review this issue and give me their advice. They informed me that such weekday celebrations are not envisaged in any legislation of the church. In fact, liturgical legislation since Bishop McGann's moratorium has clarified that while celebrations of the word, especially the use of the church's Liturgy of the Hours is encouraged, the distribution of holy Communion is not a part of such service nor should it be.

The clarification of this matter is found in the instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, Nos. 164, 165 and 166, published in 2004.

Paragraph 164 calls for the bishop to provide for celebrations of the word with the possibility of holy Communion on Sundays, which are "however to be considered altogether extraordinary."

Paragraph 165 reminds us that "it is necessary to avoid any confusion between this type of gathering (celebration of the word with holy Communion on Sundays) and the celebration of the Eucharist."

The instruction goes on to insist that the bishop must act very prudently to discern if such celebrations ought to take place on Sundays. Paragraph 166 adds, "The diocesan bishop, to whose exclusive competence this matter pertains, must not easily grant permission for such celebrations to be held on weekdays, especially in places where it is possible or would be possible to have the celebration of Mass on the preceding or following Sunday. The priest is therefore earnestly requested to celebrate Mass daily for the people in one of the churches entrusted to his care."

In light of this clear instruction, after having heard the advice and counsel of the Advisory Committee on Canonical Affairs and brought this matter to the diocesan presbyteral council for their discussion, counsel and advice, I as bishop am declaring that no weekday celebrations of the word with the distribution of holy Communion will be allowed in this diocese, thereby bringing our diocese into conformity with the liturgical norms of the church.

In those parishes where there have been such weekday celebrations, the distribution of holy Communion is to cease as of July 1, 2008. This should give ample time for pastors to explain the change and the reason for the change to their parishioners.

I am well aware that priests' right to a day off was the principal reason for providing such services in the past. Taking such legitimate time off means that there will be parishes where Mass is not celebrated every weekday. These pastors should publish in their bulletins the times of weekday Masses in neighboring parishes so that the faithful who wish to participate in Mass daily may do so.

This new policy must not be seen as "taking something away" from the laity. All of us are called to offer our proper roles in the liturgy, and none of us is other than servant of the church when we fulfill any role in the liturgy.

Those persons, lay and religious, who have led such celebrations in their parishes are to be thanked for the reverent way they have conducted these services. As leaders of prayer, they have brought many graces to the people whom they served by the generous and reverent commitment they manifested in these celebrations. They will continue to have this opportunity whenever the pastor invites them to lead celebrations of the word such as at morning and evening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.

The centrality of the Liturgy of the Hours in the life of the church should inspire parishioners eagerly and willingly to gather daily to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, which is the official prayer of the church. The Liturgy of the Hours is the preferred liturgy to be prayed when Mass is not available during the week. May I encourage pastors and parishes to develop the wider and more frequent celebration of morning and evening prayer as an integral part of parish life and devotion.

At baptismal ceremonies, funeral rites celebrated outside Mass and marriage ceremonies when either a priest or deacon officiates, holy Communion is not to be distributed. If there is preference for a ceremony outside Mass and the participants wish to receive holy Communion, they should be encouraged to participate in the Eucharist the day of the baptismal, funeral or wedding ceremony.

With good reason and good intent, a few of our educational, social and charitable institutions have developed a custom of making holy Communion available for the students or staff or others by means of communion services at certain times of the day. Without any criticism of the good intention and good fruit of such initiatives, they fall outside what the church foresees as acceptable. These too must end as of July 1, 2008.

It is of course legitimate to give Communion to the sick outside Mass, following the proper ritual for communion for the sick (found in "Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum").

Conclusion

For 2,000 years the church in her wisdom has, with a sense of her authority and responsibility, regulated the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* is a profoundly important truth of our faith. While each of us has his or her role and responsibility through active participation in the Eucharist and the sacraments, no one of us can relegate to him- or herself a role that is other than service: service of worship to the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, service to the community of faith which is Christ's body, to be loved and embraced in the same spirit we show when we love the Lord and embrace him on the cross.

The words of Jesus to his disciples after washing their feet during the Last Supper must always be in our hearts and on our minds to guide our prayers and our actions: "If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

This instruction is to be published as of this date. After proper pastoral catechesis, the instruction is to be implemented throughout the Diocese of Rockville Centre no later than July 1, 2008.

Psalm 136

Praise the LORD, for he is good; for his mercy endures forever;

2Praise the God of gods; for his mercy endures forever;

3Praise the Lord of lords; for his mercy endures forever;

II

4Who alone has done great wonders,^b for his mercy endures forever;

5Who skillfully made the heavens,^c for his mercy endures forever;

6Who spread the earth upon the waters,^d for his mercy endures forever;

7Who made the great lights, for his mercy endures forever;

8The sun to rule the day, for his mercy endures forever;

9The moon and stars to rule the night,^e for his mercy endures forever;

III

10Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,^f for his mercy endures forever;

11And led Israel from their midst, for his mercy endures forever;

12With mighty hand and outstretched arm,^g for his mercy endures forever;

13Who split in two the Red Sea, for his mercy endures forever;

14And led Israel through its midst, for his mercy endures forever;

15But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea,^h for his mercy endures forever;

16Who led the people through the desert,ⁱ for his mercy endures forever;

IV

17Who struck down great kings,^j for his mercy endures forever;

18Slew powerful kings, for his mercy endures forever;

19Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his mercy endures forever;

20Og, king of Bashan, for his mercy endures forever;

21And made their lands a heritage, for his mercy endures forever;

22*A heritage for Israel, his servant, for his mercy endures forever.

V

23The Lord remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endures forever;

24Freed us from our foes, for his mercy endures forever;

25And gives bread to all flesh, for his mercy endures forever.

VI

26Praise the God of heaven, for his mercy endures forever.

* **[Psalm 136]** The hymn praises Israel's God ("the God of gods," **Ps 136:2**), who has created the world in which Israel lives. The refrain occurring after every line suggests that a speaker and chorus sang the Psalm in antiphonal fashion. A single act of God is described in **Ps 136:4–25**. God arranges the heavens and the earth as the environment for human community, and then creates the community by freeing them and giving them land. In the final section (**Ps 136:23–25**) God, who created the people and gave them land, continues to protect and nurture them.

* **[136:22]** A heritage for Israel: the land was given to Israel by God to be handed on to future generations.

a. **[136:1]** **Ps 100:5**; **118:1**.

b. **[136:4]** **Ps 72:18**.

c. **[136:5]** **Gn 1:9–19**.

d. **[136:6]** **Ps 24:2**.

e. **[136:9]** **Jer 31:35**.

f. **[136:10]** **Ex 12:29**, **51**; **14:22**, **27**; **15:22**; **Ps 78:51–52**; **135:8**.

g. **[136:12]** **Dt 4:34**.

h. **[136:15]** **Ex 14:21f**.

i. **[136:16]** **Dt 8:2**, **15**.

j. **[136:17–22]** **Ps 135:10–12**.

Psalm 118

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,^a
his mercy endures forever.

2Let Israel say: His mercy endures forever.

3Let the house of Aaron say, His mercy endures forever.

4Let those who fear the LORD say,^b His mercy endures forever.

II

5In danger I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free.

6The LORD is with me; I am not afraid; what can mortals do against me?^c

7The LORD is with me as my helper; I shall look in triumph on my foes.

8Better to take refuge in the LORD^d than to put one's trust in mortals.

9Better to take refuge in the LORD than to put one's trust in princes.

III

10All the nations surrounded me; in the LORD's name I cut them off.

11They surrounded me on every side; in the LORD's name I cut them off.

12They surrounded me like bees;^e they burned up like fire among thorns;
in the LORD's name I cut them off. 13I was hard pressed and falling,
but the LORD came to my help.^f 14The LORD, my strength and might,
has become my savior.^g

IV

15The joyful shout of deliverance is heard in the tents of the righteous:

"The LORD's right hand works valiantly;

16the LORD's right hand is raised; the LORD's right hand works valiantly."

17I shall not die but live and declare the deeds of the LORD.

18The LORD chastised me harshly but did not hand me over to death.

V

19Open the gates of righteousness; I will enter and thank the LORD.^h

20This is the LORD's own gate, through it the righteous enter.

21I thank you for you answered me; you have been my savior.

22*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.ⁱ

23By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.

24This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.

25LORD, grant salvation!* LORD, grant good fortune!

VI

26Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.^j We bless you from the house of the LORD.

27The LORD is God and has enlightened us. Join in procession with leafy branches
up to the horns of the altar. VII

28You are my God, I give you thanks; my God, I offer you praise.

29Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good his mercy endures forever.

* [[Psalm 118](#)] A thanksgiving liturgy accompanying a procession of the king and the people into the Temple precincts. After an invocation in the form of a litany ([Ps 118:1–4](#)), the psalmist (very likely speaking in the name of the community) describes how the people confidently implored God's help ([Ps 118:5–9](#)) when hostile peoples threatened its life ([Ps 118:10–14](#)); vividly God's rescue is recounted ([Ps 118:15–18](#)). Then follows a possible dialogue at the Temple gates between the priests and the psalmist as the latter enters to

offer the thanksgiving sacrifice ([Ps 118:19–25](#)). Finally, the priests impart their blessing ([Ps 118:26–27](#)), and the psalmist sings in gratitude ([Ps 118:28–29](#)).

* [\[118:22\]](#) The stone the builders rejected: a proverb: what is insignificant to human beings has become great through divine election. The “stone” may originally have meant the foundation stone or capstone of the Temple. The New Testament interpreted the verse as referring to the death and resurrection of Christ ([Mt 21:42](#); [Acts 4:11](#); cf. [Is 28:16](#) and [Rom 9:33](#); [1 Pt 2:7](#)).

* [\[118:25\]](#) Grant salvation: the Hebrew for this cry has come into English as “Hosanna.” This cry and the words in [Ps 118:26](#) were used in the gospels to welcome Jesus entering the Temple on Palm Sunday ([Mk 11:9–10](#)).

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. [118:1] Ps 100:5 ; 136:1f . | b. [118:4] Ps 115:9–11 . |
| c. [118:6] Ps 27:1 ; Heb 13:6 . | d. [118:8f] Ps 146:3 . |
| e. [118:12] Dt 1:44 . | f. [118:13] Ps 129:1–2 . |
| g. [118:14] Ex 15:2 ; Is 12:2 . | h. [118:19] Is 26:2 . |
| i. [118:22] Mt 21:42 ; Lk 20:17 ; Acts 4:11 ; Rom 9:33 ; 1 Pt 2:7 . | |
| j. [118:26] Mt 21:9 ; 23:39 . | |

How to dress to go to a church (www.wikihow.com)

Women

Think modest and conservative when picking out your outfit. While church is a social gathering, it’s not a party or a night out with your friends. Families of all different ages attend church, and many churches are still conservative, so make sure to dress appropriately. You should eliminate backless or low-cut dresses, spaghetti straps, tank tops, or anything that shows your midriff. Just because it has to be modest, does not mean it can’t be fashionable. Just make sure to not leave a lot of your skin exposed. Overly glitzy jewelry or expensive accessories should also be avoided.

Do not wear anything that rises above the knee. When picking out a dress, consider one that’s a bit longer. Although, dresses do not have to be down to the ankle like they were expected to be in times past. While there is not any exact measurement that’s appropriate, make sure to avoid showing too much of your body or dressing in a way that would send signals that go against your tenets of the faith.

Refrain from wearing anything transparent. Wearing darker, non-lace tops can prevent you from wearing something that’s see through.

Wear black pants if you don’t like dresses. While it is expected in certain faiths that women wear dresses, a pair of dark pants will typically also work.

You can pair your black pants with a dark top and blazer to stay stylish but conservative.

Avoid wearing stretch pants/leggings or jeans.

Wear heels or flats when attending service. Sneakers are not appropriate shoes for Sunday morning services. Pick out your best pair of heels when going to church, just make sure the heel is lower than 3 inches (not high stilettos-type). Pumps compliment pencil skirts or pants. If heels aren’t your thing, flats are also appropriate. Coordinate your shoe color with your outfit but avoid loud colors like a deep red or bright pinks and greens. The focus should not be on you, but on the Lord.

Be aware of specific traditions in certain faiths. Some denominations or sects have specific traditions and customs that women must follow when attending service. For instance, in the Apostolic Church, women are required to wear hats while they are in church. While it may not get you kicked out of the church, violating these customs can be disrespectful to the people who practice that faith. Research the denomination online or on your church's website if you are unsure on what the appropriate attire is.

Men

Choose your best clothes and make sure they are clean. While standards on clothing for church have become more lax over time, it is still usually expected that you dress in your nicest garments when attending Sunday morning worship service.[6]

Having nice clothes does not mean you have to spend a lot of money on them. Just make sure that they are clean and presentable.

Avoid drawing attention to yourself or wearing things that would stand out.[7]

Wear a button-down shirt that has been pressed. While many men prefer to wear a suit and tie, if you don't have one, a button-down shirt will suffice. Make sure it is free of stains or wrinkles and remember to tuck it into your pants.

Wear wrinkle-free slacks. Black dress pants are the best option for a person attending a church service. If you don't have a pair, you can wear clean and wrinkle free casual slacks or khakis as an alternative.[8]

Avoid shorts. Even if it's hot, you should refrain from wearing shorts. Jeans are too casual for Sunday morning service. And you do wear jeans, do not wear ones with patches or holes.

Avoid things that have a drawstring or too many zippers or clips.

Remember to wear a black or brown belt with your pants, at least when not wearing a sport coat or blazer.

Wear leather loafers, oxfords, or slip-on dress shoes. Wear your best pair of dress shoes when attending service to show respect to the God and his church. Avoid sneakers or sandals in church. Black or brown colored shoes are preferred. But, again, if you can't afford dress shoes, wear the best that you have.

Avoid wearing white socks because they don't match with many outfits and can be tacky.

Be aware of specific traditions and customs in certain faiths. In times past, in Western culture, wearing a hat indoors was a sign of disrespect, but even today it applies to church services. In 1 Corinthians 11:7 the apostle Paul says, "man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God." Members of the military are allowed to wear hats as part of their uniform in some religions like Christianity.

Go to your church's website to see if they have a dress code. Many contemporary churches now have websites that will display the dress code for church goers to read. Before you attend service, make sure to research the church online and see if you have clothes that meet the dress-code. Many churches will have photos of service on their site. If people in the photos are dressed casually, there's a good chance that the church has a loose dress code.

Stay conservative your first time but examine how others dress. There are many contemporary churches that encourage their congregation to "come as you are" or "dress how you choose." Dress up the first time you attend a new church and determine how you should dress based on the majority of people around you. In some contemporary churches, dressing casually is completely acceptable, although some may still frown upon it. Dressing casually the first time you go to a new church could mean that you stand out and look silly among the rest of the dressed-up church goers.

Talk to others in your congregation about appropriate dress. If you attend church with your family, you can try to get their opinion on the dress code for your specific church. If not, then you can ask other people, after service is over, to get a better feeling for how your specific church expects its members to dress. Try to meet new people by opening up conversation. Try to work the questions about dress code into the conversation. If you have friends who go to the same church, you can ask them via text or give them a call on the phone.

Call the church and ask them about appropriate dress code. The best source of information about dress codes is someone that works in the church. Your clergy leader will be able to tell you what they think appropriate dress is. Many churches will list their phone number on their website. If you have the opportunity, try to speak to your faith leader before or after service.

Jewish Passover: The Seder Meal

A Passover Seder (pronounced "Sa- der")

A Passover *Seder* is a service held at home as part of the Passover celebration. It is always observed on the first night of Passover and in many homes, it is observed on the second night as well. Participants use a book called a *Haggadah* to lead the service, which consists of storytelling, a *Seder* meal, and concluding prayers and songs.

The Passover Haggadah

The word [*haggadah*](#) (הַגָּדָה) comes from a Hebrew word meaning "tale" or "parable," and it contains an outline or choreography for the *seder*. The word *seder* (סֵדֶר) literally means "order" in Hebrew, and there's a very specific "order" to the *seder* service and meal.

Steps in the Passover Seder

There are many components to the [Passover](#) *seder* plate, and you can read about them [here](#). To learn how to set up the *seder* table with all of the necessary components, read the [Passover Seder How-To Guide](#). Below is a brief description of each of the 15 parts of the Passover *seder*. These steps are observed to the letter in some homes, while other homes may choose to observe only some of them and focus instead on the Passover *seder* meal. Many families will observe these steps according to their family's tradition.

1. Kadesh (Sanctification): The *seder* meal begins with [kiddush](#) and the first of [four cups of wine](#) that will be enjoyed during the *seder*. Each participant's cup is filled with wine or grape juice, and the blessing is recited aloud, then everyone takes a drink from their cup while leaning to the left. (Leaning is a way of showing freedom, because, in ancient times, only free people reclined while eating.)

2. Urchatz (Purification/Handwashing): Water is poured over the hands to symbolize ritual purification. Traditionally a [special hand washing cup](#) is used to pour water over the right hand first, then the left. On any other day of the year, Jews say a blessing called [netilat yadayim](#) during the handwashing ritual, but on Passover, no blessing is said, prompting the children to ask, "Why is this night different than all other nights?"

3. Karpas (Appetizer): A blessing over vegetables is recited, and then a vegetable such as lettuce, cucumber, radish, parsley or a boiled potato is dipped in salt water and eaten. The salt water represents the tears of the Israelites that were shed during their years of enslavement in Egypt.

4. Yachatz (Breaking the Matzah): There is always a plate of [three matzot](#) (plural of *matzah*) stacked on the table — often on a [special matzah tray](#) — during a *seder* meal, in addition to extra [matzah](#) for the guests to eat during the meal. At this point, the *seder* leader takes the middle *matzah* and breaks it in half. The

smaller piece is then put back between the remaining two *matzot*. The larger half becomes the [afikomen](#), which is placed in an [afikomen bag](#) or wrapped in a napkin and is hidden somewhere in the house for the children to find at the end of the *seder* meal. Alternatively, some homes place the [afikomen](#) near the *seder* leader and the children must try to "steal" it without the leader noticing.

5. Maggid (Telling the [Passover Story](#)): During this part of the *seder*, the [seder plate](#) is moved aside, the second cup of wine is poured, and participants retell the Exodus story. The youngest person (usually a child) at the table begins by asking [the Four Questions](#). Each question is a variation of: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" Participants will often answer these questions by taking turns reading from the [Haggadah](#). Next, the four types of children are described: the wise child, the wicked child, the simple child and the child who doesn't know how to ask a question. Thinking about each kind of person is an opportunity for self-reflection and discussion. As each of the 10 plagues that struck Egypt is read aloud, participants dip a finger (usually the pinky) into their wine and put a drop of liquid onto their plates. At this point, the various [symbols on the seder plate](#) are discussed, and then everyone drinks their wine while reclining.

6. Rochtza (Handwashing Before the Meal): Participants wash their hands again, this time saying the appropriate [netilat yadayim blessing](#). After saying the blessing, it is customary not to speak until the recitation of the [ha'motzi](#) blessing over the *matzah*.

7. Motzi (Blessing for the Matzah): While holding the three *matzot*, the leader recites the [ha'motzi](#) blessing for bread. The leader then places the bottom *matzah* back on the table or *matzah tray* and, while holding the top whole *matzah* and the broken middle *matzah*, recites the blessing mentioning the [mitzvah](#) (commandment) to eat *matzah*. The leader breaks pieces from each of these two pieces of *matzah* and provides for everyone at the table to eat.

8. Matzah: Everyone eats their *matzah*.

9. Maror (Bitter Herbs): Because the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, Jews eat bitter herbs as a reminder of the harshness of servitude. Horseradish, either the root or a prepared paste, is most often used, although many have taken on the custom of using the bitter parts of romaine lettuce dipped into [charoset](#), a paste made of apples and nuts. Customs vary from community to community. The latter is shaken off before the recitation of the commandment to eat bitter herbs.

10. Korech (Hillel Sandwich): Next, participants make and eat the "Hillel Sandwich" by putting *Maror* and *charoset* between two pieces of *matzah* broken off of the last whole *matzah*, the bottom *matzah*.

11. Shulchan Orech (Dinner): At last, it's time for the meal to begin! The Passover *Seder* meal usually begins with a hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water. Then, the rest of the meal features *matzah* ball soup, brisket, and even *matzah* lasagna in some communities. Dessert often includes ice cream, cheesecake, or flourless chocolate cakes.

12. Tzafun (Eating the Afikomen): After dessert, participants eat the [afikomen](#). Remember that the *afikomen* was either hidden or stolen at the beginning of the *seder* meal, so it has to be returned to the *seder* leader at this point. In some homes, the children actually negotiate with the *seder* leader for treats or toys before giving the *afikomen* back. After eating the *afikomen*, which is considered the *seder* meal's "dessert," no other food or drink is consumed, except for the last two cups of wine.

13. Barech (Blessings after the Meal): The third cup of wine is poured for everyone, the blessing is recited, and then participants drink their glass while reclining. Then, an additional cup of wine is poured for Elijah in a special cup called [Elijah's Cup](#), and a door is opened so that the prophet can enter the home. For some families, a special [Miriam's Cup](#) is also poured at this point.

14. Hallel (Songs of Praise): The door is closed, and everyone sings songs of praise to God before drinking the fourth and final cup of wine while reclining.

15. Nirtzah (Acceptance): The *seder* is now officially over, but most homes recite one final blessing: *L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim!* This means, "Next year in Jerusalem!" and expresses the hope that next year, all Jews will celebrate Passover in Israel.

[Additional Information: http://jewishfederation.org/images/uploads/holiday_images/39497.pdf](http://jewishfederation.org/images/uploads/holiday_images/39497.pdf)
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/passover-food-meal-jewish-seder-feast-matzah-salt-water-festival-a9450311.html>

The SEDER Plate

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-to-conduct-a-seder/>

The seder plate

www.chabad.org



Why do we have Holy Water?

Traditionally, we have placed fonts of Holy Water near the entrances of our Churches. This placement and usage correspond to the Old Testament Jewish practices of purification: The Book of Leviticus prescribed various ritual purifications using water to remove the “uncleanness” associated, for instance, with coming into contact with a dead body, menstruation, childbirth, or leprosy (*cf. Leviticus 12-15*). A person also purified himself with water before entering the Temple precincts, offering prayer and sacrifice, and eating. For this reason, in the Courtyard of the Priests (the area before the actual Temple building) was the Laver, an immense bronze basin filled with water. Here the priests purified their hands and feet before offering sacrifices at the nearby altar, bathed before entering the Temple itself, and also drew water for other purifications prescribed in Jewish rituals. Interestingly, the Qumran community, located near the Dead Sea and responsible for producing the Dead Sea scrolls, also had purification pools for the cleansing not only of external “uncleanness” but also of sin.

We too have fonts filled with Holy Water for blessings for **three reasons**: 1. as a sign of **repentance** of sin, 2. for **protection** from evil, and as a **reminder** of our Baptism. The repentance of sin symbolized in the washing with water is reflected in Psalm 50: *“Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me. Cleanse me of sin with hyssop that I may be purified; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”* (3-4, 9). (Hyssop is a small bush used for sprinkling water). Remember too how St. John the Baptizer called all to conversion used a ritual washing of water to signify the repentance of sin and purification.

These actions have been incorporated into our own Mass. In the Penitential Rite, one of the options is the **Asperges**, which includes the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water. As the priest passes through the congregation sprinkling them with the Holy Water, they customarily chant the *Asperges Me*, which is based on **Psalm 50**. In all, each person again makes an act of repentance of sin.

Second, the Holy Water protects us against evil. In the prayer of blessing of water in the *Sacramentary*, we read: *“Lord, God Almighty, creator of all life, of body and soul, we ask you to bless this water: as we use it in faith forgive our sins and save us from all illness and the power of evil. Lord, in your mercy give us living water, always springing up as a fountain of salvation; free us, body and soul, from every danger, and admit us to your presence in purity of heart.”*

Finally, Holy Water reminds us of our Baptism, when by the invocation of the Holy Trinity and the pouring of Holy Water, we were set free from Original Sin and all sin, infused with sanctifying grace, incorporated into the Church, and given the title Son or Daughter of God. In making the sign of the cross with the Holy Water, we are mindful that we are called to renew those baptismal promises of rejecting Satan, all His works, and all his empty promises, and to profess our credal (Christian belief) faith. Once again, we repent of sin, so that we can offer our prayers and worship to God with pure and contrite hearts. Just as water and blood flowed from the Sacred Heart of our Lord as He hung upon the cross—signifying the great sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, the taking of Holy Water and making the sign of the cross remind us of our Baptism in preparation for the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

Never should we doubt the power of this great sacramental. St. Teresa of Avila in her autobiography, *The Book of Her Life*, wrote of the power of Holy Water: *“I was once in an oratory, and [the devil] appeared to me in an abominable form at my left side. Because he spoke to me, I looked particularly at his mouth— which was most frightening. It seemed that a great flame, all bright without shadow, came forth from his body. He told me in a terrifying way that I had really freed myself from his hands but that he would catch me with them again. I was struck with great fear and blessed myself as best I could; he disappeared but returned right away. This happened to me twice. I didn’t know what to do. There was some Holy Water there, and I threw it in that direction; he never returned again. ...I often experience that there is nothing the devils flee from more— without returning— than holy water”* (Chapter 31). Upon the testimony of such a great saint, we see the importance not only of pausing to bless ourselves with Holy Water as we enter and leave Church but also of having Holy Water available in our homes.

Ten Commandments

1. I am the LORD your God. You shall not have strange gods before me

Do I give God time every day in prayer?

Do I seek to love Him with my whole heart?

Have I been involved with superstitious practices (horoscopes or Ouija boards) or have I been involved with the occult?

Do I seek to surrender myself to God's Word as taught by the Church?

Have I ever received Communion in the state of mortal sin?

Have I ever deliberately told a lie in Confession or withheld a mortal sin from priest in Confession?

2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain

Have I used God's name in vain; lightly or carelessly?

Have I been angry with God?

Have I wished evil upon any other person?

Have I insulted a sacred person or abused a sacred object?

3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day

Have I deliberately missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation?

Have I not kept Sunday as a family day and a day of rest?

Do I do needless work on Sunday?

Do I make others work on Sunday?

4. Honor your father and your mother

Do I honor and obey my parents?

Have I neglected my duties to my spouse and children?

Have I given my family good religious example?

Do I try to bring peace into my home life?

Do I care for my aged and infirm relatives?

Do I respect my elders?

Do I respect my pastor, bishop and the Pope?

5. You shall not kill

Have I had an abortion or encouraged anyone else to have an abortion?

Have I physically harmed anyone?

Have I abused alcohol or drugs?

Have I been angry or resentful?

Have I harbored hatred in my heart?

Have I been sterilized for reasons of birth control?

Have I encouraged or condoned sterilization?

6. You shall not commit adultery

Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?

Have I engaged in any sexual activity before marriage or outside marriage?

Have I used any method of contraception or artificial birth control?

Has each sexual act in my marriage been open to the transmission of new life?

Have I respected all members of the opposite sex, or have I thought of other people as objects?

Have I been guilty of any homosexual activity?

Do I seek to be pure in my thoughts, words and actions?

Am I careful to dress modestly, so as not to tempt others?

Have I been guilty of masturbation with myself?

7. You shall not steal

Have I stolen what is not mine?

Have I returned or made restitution for what I have stolen?
Do I waste time at work, school or at home?
Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying my family of their needs?
Do I pay my debts promptly?
Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

8. You shall not bear false witness

Have I lied?
Have I gossiped?
Have I harmed someone's reputation?
Have I spoken behind someone else's back?
Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others?
Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

9. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife

Have I consented to impure thoughts?
Have I caused them by impure television, movies, books, magazines or internet?
Do I pray at once to banish impure thoughts and temptations?
Do listen to, or engage in, impure conversations or jokes?

10. You shall not desire your neighbor's goods

Am I jealous of what other people have?
Do I envy other people's families or possessions?
Am I greedy or selfish?
Are material possessions the purpose of my life?
Do I trust that God will care for all my material and spiritual needs?

The Ten Commandments with explanation

Authored By: Michael Hains <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/ten-commandments-10336>

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I AM THE LORD THY GOD: THOU SHALT NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.

COMMANDS: faith, hope, love, and worship of God; reverence for holy things; prayer.

FORBIDS: idolatry; superstition; spiritism; tempting God; sacrilege; attendance at false worship.

2. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.

COMMANDS: reverence in speaking about God and holy things; the keeping of oaths and vows.

FORBIDS: blasphemy; the irreverent use of God's name; speaking disrespectfully of holy things; false oaths and the breaking of vows.

3. KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY.

COMMANDS: going to church on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

FORBIDS: missing church through one's own fault; unnecessary servile work on Sunday and holy days of obligation.

4. HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

COMMANDS: love; respect; obedience on the part of children; care on the part of parents for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children; obedience to civil and religious superiors.

FORBIDS: hatred of parents and superiors; disrespect; disobedience.

5. THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

COMMANDS: safeguarding of one's own life and bodily welfare and that of others.

FORBIDS: unjust killing; suicide; abortion; sterilization; dueling; endangering life and limb of self or others.

6. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

COMMANDS: chastity in word and deed.

FORBIDS: obscene speech; impure actions alone or with others.

7. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

COMMANDS: respect for the property of rights and others; the paying of just debts; paying just wages to employees; integrity in public office.

FORBIDS: theft; damage to the property of others; not paying just debts; not returning found or borrowed articles; giving unjust measure or weight in selling; not paying just wages; bribery; graft; cheating; fraud; accepting stolen property; not giving an honest day's work for wages received; breach of contract.

8. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHOUR.

COMMANDS: truthfulness; respect for the good name of others; the observance of secrecy when required.

FORBIDS: lying; injury to the good name of others; slander; talebearing; rash judgment; contemptuous speech and the violation of secrecy.

9. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHOUR'S WIFE.

COMMANDS: purity in thought.

FORBIDS: willful impure thought and desires.

10. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHOUR'S GOODS.

COMMANDS: respect for the rights of others.

FORBIDS: the desire to take, to keep, or damage the property of others.

MIRACLES OF THE EUCHARIST

The Amazing Science of Recent Eucharistic Miracles: A Message from Heaven?

Jeannette Williams <https://media.ascensionpress.com>

The Vatican International Exhibition: The Eucharistic Miracles of the World catalogs over one hundred purported Eucharistic miracles that have been recorded and venerated since the earliest days of the Church to the present. The exhibit tours the world, drawing attention to the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. When we think about Eucharistic miracles, we may be tempted to think that most of them are unsubstantiated stories that only happened in the “old days” and couldn’t happen today in our age of science. The last few decades, however, have seen a surge in Eucharistic miracles which cannot be explained by science. And in most of these recent miracles, the Eucharist turns into human flesh and blood. The consistency among the scientific results is startling. Let’s begin with the oldest-known verifiable case of the Eucharist transforming into physical flesh and blood—the Miracle of Lanciano, which took place in 750 AD and underwent testing in the 1970s. The facts of this case are stunning.

The Most Remarkable Miracle of the Middle Ages

In 750 AD, a priest experienced a terrible temptation to doubt the True Presence while he was saying Mass. As he pronounced the words of consecration, the bread and the wine transformed into what appeared to be flesh and blood. In 1970, more than 1,200 years later, scientists began a thorough examination of the miraculous substances, and in 1973, the World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations began their own barrage of five hundred tests, which took fifteen months. The scientific tests revealed: The coagulated substance is human blood, AB blood type, with the same protein distribution as found in normal, fresh blood. The Host is human muscular striated tissue of the myocardium, left ventricle (heart); arteries, veins, the branch of the vagus nerve and adipose tissue all can be identified.

Like the blood, the flesh is also fresh, living tissue, because it “responded rapidly to all the clinical reactions distinctive of living beings.” Most remarkably, the blood is divided into five unequal-sized parts, and yet each part weighs exactly 15.85g, and all parts together also weigh the same 15.85g. After their tests, the Medical Commission of WHO and UN reportedly published results in 1976, stating: “Science, aware of its limits, has come to a halt, face to face with the impossibility of giving an explanation.” It’s hard to imagine that the UN would get involved with a religious miracle nowadays, let alone admit defeat in explaining it away.

The Miracles in the Age of Science

Until the 1990s, Lanciano was the only proven case of the Eucharist turning into human flesh. Other cases have not been tested with modern scientific equipment, nor have the many dozens of bloodstains on corporals and chalices that have been preserved and are venerated as having come from bleeding hosts. But in 1992, the miracles started happening again.

1992 and 1996, Buenos Aires, Argentina: In 1992, consecrated particles left on the corporal were put into water to dissolve and locked in the tabernacle, as the Church prescribes for disposing of consecrated hosts. One week later, they had changed into a red substance. Then again in 1996 after a consecrated host fell to the ground and was also put in water to dissolve, it was found a few days later to have turned into a bloody substance. Both cases were sent to be tested by the archbishop of Buenos Aires, who was none other than our future Pope Francis.

2006, Tixtla, Mexico: During a retreat, a religious sister who was distributing Communion looked down and noticed that one of the Hosts had begun to bleed and transform.

2008, Sokolka, Poland: A consecrated Host fell to the ground during Communion and was put in water and locked in a tabernacle to dissolve. A week later, most of the Host was dissolved except for a red “clot” that remained.

2013, Legnica, Poland: A consecrated Host fell and was put in water and locked in a tabernacle. Two weeks later a red spot covered one-fifth of the undissolved Host.

Startling Scientific Results

Each of these occurrences received intensive study with highly advanced technology. In several cases, doctors did not know the source of the material. And yet, in all the cases, the same results were found, and are consistent with the results of Lanciano, providing even more details due to more advanced science: The blood is human, AB blood type; human DNA was found; white blood cells, red blood cells, hemoglobin, and mycrophages were present, indicating fresh blood; in the Tixtla miracle, the blood clearly emanated from within, because the blood on the surface had begun to coagulate but the interior blood was still fresh, as with a bleeding wound. The flesh is human myocardium tissue of the left ventricle of an inflamed heart; in the miracles from Argentina and Poland, there was evidence of trauma from the presence of thrombi, indicating repeated lack of oxygen; lesions present showed rapid cardiac spasms typical in the final phases of death.

In the Sokolka miracle, the remaining host is tightly interconnected with the fibers of human tissue, penetrating each other inseparably – as if the bread were transforming into flesh. “Even NASA scientists, who have at their disposal the most modern analytical techniques, would not be able to artificially recreate such a thing,” affirmed Dr. Sobaniec-Lotowska, one of the examining experts.

Dr. Frederick Zugibe, a forensic doctor at Columbia University who examined the Argentinean miracle, did not know the source of the sample and told the doctor who brought it to him:

“If white blood cells were present (in the heart tissue), it is because at the moment you brought me the sample, it was pulsating.”

When he learned the source of the sample, he was shocked and deeply moved. ?

Why has the Lord suddenly multiplied Eucharistic miracles in the last few decades? Are we, like Doubting Thomas, refusing to believe unless we see, touch, and feel for ourselves? Jesus in his love for Thomas

condescended to let him see, touch, and feel his wounds in order to believe. Perhaps he is now doing the same for us. So many young people have rejected religion as “unscientific.” So, here’s the science to prove our faith. Others say they don’t believe in religion because it’s just opinion or contrary to “reason.” Here’s quantifiable, measurable, physical evidence.

But more is going on here. The Church teaches (CCC 1374)

“in the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*’”

Scripturally, we see this in [John 6:48-58](#) and [1 Corinthians 10:16](#) and [11:27](#). Yet the Eucharist is transforming into human heart only.

It’s as if Jesus, by transforming into a human heart, is crying out to us, “I’m here! I love you! My heart yearns for you! Was not my crucifixion enough to prove my love for you? See, then, and believe. I have remained hidden in the Eucharist for these two thousand years that I may remain close to you. Please, approach me. Receive me. Quench my thirst for your love.”

How Shall We Respond to This Plea from Heaven?

If our Lord has condescended to make himself so evident to us in order to be heard above the noise of our modern world, gratitude alone should impel us to respond. In the words of St. Gemma Galgani:

“Let us go to Jesus. He is all alone and hardly anyone thinks of him. Poor Jesus.”

¹Go to confession. ²Receive him in Communion. ³Spend time in Adoration. ⁴Learn more about the Mass and the Eucharist so that you may appreciate him more. On the Cross, Jesus cried out, “*I thirst.*” As many saints have told us, it was not water he was thirsting for—it was you. Quench his thirst.

Praying the Names of God

God is infinitely far above our ability to fully understand, He tells us through the Scriptures very specific truths about Himself so that we can know what He is like and be drawn to worship Him. The following is a list of 30 names and attributes of God. Use this guide for 30 days to enrich your time set apart with God by taking one description of Him and meditating on that for one day, along with the accompanying passage. Worship God, focusing on Him and His character.

Day 1

God is Jehovah. The name of the independent, self-complete being—“I AM WHO I AM”—only belongs to Jehovah God. Our proper response to Him is to fall down in fear and awe of the One who possesses all authority.—[Exodus 3:13-15](#)

Day 2

God is Jehovah-M’Kaddesh. This name means “the God who sanctifies.” A God separate from all that is evil requires that the people who follow Him be cleansed from all evil.—[Leviticus 20:7,8](#)

Day 3

God is infinite. God is beyond measurement—we cannot define Him by proportions or magnitude. He has no beginning, no end, and no limits.—[Romans 11:33](#)

Day 4

God is omnipotent. God is all-powerful. He spoke all things into being, and all things—every micro-organism, every breath we take—are sustained by Him. There is nothing too difficult for Him to do.—[Jeremiah 32:17,18](#); [Jeremiah 32:26,27](#)

Day 5

God is good. God is the embodiment of perfect goodness. He is kind, caring, and full of favor toward all of creation.—[Psalm 119:65-72](#)

Day 6

God is love. God's love is so great that He gave His only Son to bring us into fellowship with Him. God's love not only encompasses the world but embraces each of us personally and intimately.—1 John 4:7-10

Day 7

God is Jehovah-jireh. This name means "the God who provides." Just as He provided yesterday, He will also provide today and tomorrow. He grants deliverance from sin, the oil of joy for the ashes of sorrow, and eternal citizenship in His Kingdom for all those adopted into His household.—Genesis 22:9-14

Day 8

God is Jehovah-shalom. This name means "the God of peace." We are meant to know the fullness of God's perfect peace, or His "shalom." God's peace surpasses understanding and sustains us even through difficult times. It is the product of fully being what we were created to be.—Judges 6:16-24

Day 9

God is immutable. All that God is, He has always been. All that He has been and is, He will ever be. He is ever perfect and unchanging.—Psalms 102:25-28

Day 10

God is transcendent. God is not merely eminent, the highest being. He is transcendent—existing beyond and above the created universe.—Psalms 113:4,5

Day 11

God is just. God is righteous and holy, fair and equitable in all things. We can trust Him to always do what is right.—Psalms 75:1-7

Day 12

God is holy. God's holiness is not simply our best image of perfection. God is utterly and supremely untainted. His holiness stands apart—unique and incomprehensible.—Revelation 4:8-11

Day 13

God is Jehovah-rophe. This name means "Jehovah heals." God alone provides the remedy for mankind's brokenness through His son, Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the physical, moral, and spiritual remedy for all people.—Exodus 15:22-26

Day 14

God is self-sufficient. All things are God's to give, and all that is given is given by Him. Everything we give Him was initially given to us by Him.—Acts 17:24-28

Day 15

God is omniscient. This means God is all-knowing. God's knowledge encompasses every possible piece of information regarding anything that currently exists, existed in the past, or will exist in the future.—Psalms 139:1-6

Day 16

God is omnipresent. God is everywhere—in and around everything, close to everyone. "'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord."—Psalms 139:7-12

Day 17

God is merciful. God's merciful compassion is never ending and does not run dry. Through His provision in Christ, He took the judgment that was rightfully ours and placed it on His own shoulders. He waits and works now for all people to turn to Him and to live under His justification.—Deuteronomy 4:29-31

Day 18

God is sovereign. God presides over every event, great or small, and He is in control of our lives. He rules all creation with all knowledge and power.—1 Chronicles 29:11-13

Day 19

God is Jehovah-nissi. This name means "God our banner." Under His banner we go from triumph to triumph and say, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).—Exodus 17:8-15

Day 20

God is wise. God knows and acts with perfect wisdom in all things. He always acts for our good, which is to conform us to Christ.—Proverbs 3:19,20

Day 21

God is faithful. Out of His faithfulness God honors His covenants and fulfills His promises. Our hope for the future rests upon God's faithfulness.—Psalms 89:1-8

Day 22

God is wrathful. Unlike human anger, God's wrath is never capricious, self-indulgent, or irritable. It is the right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil.— Nahum 1:2-8

Day 23

God is full of grace. Grace is God's good pleasure that moves Him to grant value where it is undeserved and to forgive debt that cannot be repaid.—Ephesians 1:5-8

Day 24

God is our Comforter. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the "Comforter," and the apostle Paul writes that the Lord is "the God of all comfort."—2 Corinthians 1:3,4

Day 25

God is El-Shaddai. This name means "God Almighty," the God who is all-sufficient and all-bountiful, the source of all blessings.—Genesis 49:22-26

Day 26

God is Father. Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9), and the Spirit of God taught us to cry, "Abba, Father.," an intimate Aramaic term similar to "Daddy." The Creator of the universe cares for each one of us as if we were the only child He had.—Romans 8:15-17

Day 27

God is the Church's head. God the Son, Jesus, is the head of the Church. As the head, the part of the body that sees, hears, thinks, and decides, He gives the orders that the rest of the body lives by.—Ephesians 1:22,23

Day 28

God is our intercessor. Knowing our temptations, God the Son intercedes for us. He opens the doors for us to boldly ask God the Father for mercy. Thus, God is both the initiation and conclusion of true prayer.—Hebrews 4:14-16

Day 29

God is Adonai. This name means "Master" or "Lord." God, our Adonai, calls all God's people to acknowledge themselves as His servants, claiming His right to reign as Lord of our lives.—2 Samuel 7:18-20

Day 30

God is Elohim. This name means "Strength" or "Power." He is transcendent, mighty and strong. Elohim is the great name of God, displaying His supreme power, sovereignty, and faithfulness in His covenant relationship with us.—Genesis 17:7,8

Sources: *The Knowledge of the Holy*, by A.W. Tozer; *Names of God*, by Nathan Stone; and *God of Glory*, by Kenneth Landon.

For more info on the Mass from the US Catholic Congress of Bishops

THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL (usccb.org)

Introduction 1

Testimony of an Unaltered Faith 1
Uninterrupted Tradition 4
Accommodation to New Conditions 6

CHAPTER I

The Importance and Dignity of the Celebration
of the Eucharist 10

CHAPTER II

The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements, and Its Parts 14

I. The General Structure of the Mass 14

II. The Different Elements of the Mass 15

Reading and Explaining the Word of God 15

The Prayers and Other Parts Pertaining to the Priest 15

Other Formulas Occurring during the Celebration 17

The Manner of Pronouncing the Different Texts 18

The Importance of Singing 18

Gestures and Bodily Posture 19

Silence 21

III. The Individual Parts of the Mass 21

A. The Introductory Rites 21

The Entrance 22

Reverence to the Altar and Greeting of the

Assembled People 22

The Penitential Act 23

The Kyrie, Eleison 23

The Gloria in Excelsis 23

The Collect 24

B. The Liturgy of the Word 25

Silence 25

The Biblical Readings 26

The Responsorial Psalm 27

The Acclamation before the Gospel 27

The Homily 28

The Profession of Faith 29

The Universal Prayer 30

C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist 31

The Preparation of the Gifts 31

The Prayer over the Offerings 33

The Eucharistic Prayer 33

The Communion Rite 35

The Lord's Prayer 35

The Rite of Peace 35

The Fraction of the Bread 36

Communion 36

D. The Concluding Rites 38

CHAPTER III

Duties and Ministries in the Mass 39

I. The Duties of Those in Holy Orders 39

II. The Functions of the People of God 41

III. Particular Ministries 42

The Ministry of the Instituted Acolyte and Lector 42

Other Functions 42

IV. The Distribution of Functions and the

Preparation of the Celebration 44

CHAPTER IV

The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass 46

I. Mass with the People 47

Things to Be Prepared 48

The Liturgy of the Word 50

The Liturgy of the Eucharist 52

The Concluding Rites 59

B. Mass with a Deacon 60

The Introductory Rites 60

The Liturgy of the Word 61

The Liturgy of the Eucharist 62

The Concluding Rites 63

C. The Functions of the Acolyte 63

The Introductory Rites 64

The Liturgy of the Eucharist 64

D. The Functions of the Reader 65

The Introductory Rites 65

The Liturgy of the Word 65

II. Concelebrated Mass 66

The Introductory Rites 68

The Liturgy of the Word 69

The Liturgy of the Eucharist 69

The Manner of Pronouncing the Eucharistic Prayer 70

Eucharistic Prayer I, or the Roman Canon 70

Eucharistic Prayer II 71

Eucharistic Prayer III 72

Eucharistic Prayer IV 73

The Communion Rite 74 The Concluding Rites 77

III. Mass at Which Only One Minister Participates 77

The Introductory Rites 78

The Liturgy of the Word 78

The Liturgy of the Eucharist 79

The Concluding Rites 80

IV. Some General Norms for All Forms of Mass 80

Veneration of the Altar and the Book of the Gospels 80

Genuflections and Bows 81

Incensation 82

The Purification 83

Communion under Both Kinds. . . . 83

CHAPTER V

The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for
the Celebration of the Eucharist 87

I. General Principles 87

II. Arrangement of the Sanctuary for Sacred Synaxis 90

The Altar and Its Ornamentation 90

The Ambo 93

The Chair for the Priest Celebrant and Other Seats 93

III. The Arrangement of the Church 94

The Places for the Faithful 94

The Place for the Schola Cantorum and the

Musical Instruments 95

The Place for the Reservation of the

Most Holy Eucharist 95

Sacred Images 97

CHAPTER VI

The Requisites for the Celebration of Mass 98

I. The Bread and Wine for Celebrating the Eucharist 98

(For the first part of this section, see separate email titled *What will you see at Mass?*)

Alb - a long, white garment that can be used by all liturgical ministers; it is a reminder of the baptismal garment worn when the new Christian "puts on Christ."

Cincture (SINGK-sure) - a long cord used for fastening some albs at the waist; it holds the loose-fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to the proper length; it is usually white, although the liturgical color of the day may be used.

Stole - a long, cloth scarf; according to the manner in which it is worn, it is the mark of the Office of the priest or deacon. A priest wears it around the neck, letting it hang down in front. A deacon wears it over his left shoulder, fastening it at his right side.

Chasuble (CHAZ-uh-buhl) - the sleeveless outer garment, slipped over the head, hanging down from the shoulder covering the alb and stole of the priest; it is the proper Mass vestment for the main celebrant and its color varies according to the feast.

Green - worn during "Ordinary Time." Ordinary does not mean ordinary in the sense of common or normal. Ordinary means counting, as in the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Red - worn on Passion (Palm) Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, and on the Feast Days of Martyrs, including the Apostles and Evangelists.

White - worn during the Christmas and Easter seasons and celebration of Mary, the Angels, the Saints who were not martyrs, All Saints, Birth of John the Baptist, Chair of Peter, Conversion of Paul, and St. John the Evangelist.

Violet - worn during Advent and Lent

Rose - worn on the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).

PRAYERS DURING PRIESTLY VESTING AND THE MEANING OF VESTMENTS

As the priest prepares to dress himself in the sacred garments for Mass, it has been a long-standing tradition in the Church that he recites the following prayers:

Washing of hands

Give virtue to my hands, O Lord, that being cleansed from all stain I might serve you with purity of mind and body.

- 1 **AMICE** – a rectangular neck cloth which serves to protect the valuable chasuble and stole, but is used only if the alb does not cover the ordinary clothing at the neck.

Prayer

Place, O Lord, the helmet of salvation upon my head, to repel the assaults of the devil.

- 2 **ALB** – a long white garment worn by the priest to represent the new and immaculate vestment that has been received through baptism.

Prayer

Cleanse me, O Lord, and purify my heart, that washed in the Blood of the Lamb I may attain everlasting joy.

- 3 **CINCTURE** – a cord used as a belt to tighten the alb symbolizing the virtue of chastity and continence, and is the same color as the chasuble.

Prayer

Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity and quench in me the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may remain in me.

- 4 **STOLE** – a long narrow band, several inches wide and about 80 inches long (and of the same color as the chasuble) which is worn as a sign that the priest is serving in his official liturgical role.

Prayer

Return to me, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which I have lost in the sin of my first parent; and although I, unworthy, approach Thy sacred mystery, grant to me, nevertheless, everlasting joy.

- 5 **CHASUBLE** – the final vestment of the priest that is worn over all the others and symbolizes the virtue of charity and the yoke of unselfish love.

Prayer

O Lord, who hast said, My yoke is easy and My burden light; grant that I may be able so to bear it, that I may obtain Thy grace. Amen.



Illustration by Nathan Runda

Mitre, a pointed headdress worn by bishops since 1100. Perhaps inspired by descriptions of priests in the Hebrew Bible. Sample will take it off when he's praying. Underneath, he'll wear a silken skull cap, called a zucchetto.

Pectoral cross, worn around one's neck and resting close to the heart. It may include precious stones or the relics of a saint. Bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes often wear the cross when they are not wearing formal vestments.

Alb, a white garment symbolizing the sanctifying grace of baptism and purity of heart. Traditionally, albs are made of plain linen.

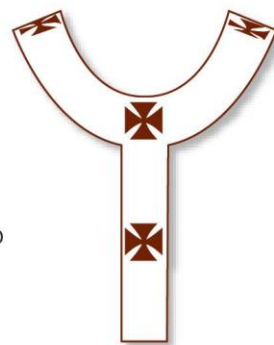
Crozier, a long staff that symbolizes a bishop or archbishop's role as a good shepherd, who leads his flock toward salvation, disciplining and protecting them along the way.

Chasuble, a cape worn over the other vestments, symbolizing the qualities that Jesus embodied. Sample will wear white vestments, trimmed in blue, according to the archdiocese.

Ring, a symbol of a bishop's jurisdiction within the church. In the old days, a ring was used to seal official documents. Like a wedding ring, it suggests a bishop is wedded to his diocese.

What's missing from this picture?

Sample will be presented with a pallium, a white woolen band that archbishops receive directly from the pope. Sample will travel to Rome in June to receive one from Pope Francis.



Sources: Archdiocese of Portland, Catholic Resource Education Center and the Vatican Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff.

DAN AGUAYO/THE OREGONIAN

The Best Way to Live

(Excerpt from the *MASS JOURNAL* and *The Best to Live* CD by Matthew Kelly, Dynamic Catholic.com)

The Origin of the MASS JOURNAL.

Many years ago, I was speaking to a group of young people and I encouraged them to get a small journal, take it to Mass with them, and ask God to show them one way they could become a-better-version-of-themselves in the coming week. couple of weeks later, I received a journal in the mail for one of the students who had heard me share the idea...and I started to use it. That small journal changed my whole experience of the Mass.



Each Sunday, when I walk into Mass I pray, *Dear God, show me one way in this Mass I can become the-best-version-of-myself this week!* God never fails to respond to this prayer. So, each week I write down the one way I sense God is challenging me to grow, change, and become all He created me to be.

Today, I can look back at several Mass Journals. If you name a month and a year, I can tell you what I was struggling with in my life at that time by picking up the Mass Journal for that year. I can also tell you how God brought me through that period in my life. This knowledge of where we have come from, this spiritual continuity is very powerful aid in my daily prayer. Often, I take it to daily prayers and reflect on several of the short entries, one at a time, slowly and thoughtfully. They become a starting point for my conversation with God in prayer.

Our Lives Change When Our Habits Change

A Mass Journal is a life-changing habit for an individual, a marriage, a family, a parish, and the whole Church.

As an individual, take it to Mass, write down the one thing you sense God is saying to you that week, and date your entry. Then use your Mass Journal in daily prayers and allow it to stimulate your conversation with God.

In your marriage, take a few minutes on Sunday night to discuss what you each heard God saying to you and what you are working on during the coming week. Then pray for each other, keeping these intentions, specifically in mind.

In your family, on the way home from church, ask your children, “What did God say to you at the church today?” Make it a habit – simply by asking the question you are teaching them to listen to the voice of God in their lives.

To test the idea, I asked a friend who is a Catholic school teacher to ask her second-grade students, first thing each Monday morning, what God said to them at church on Sunday. She said she couldn’t do that, explaining that most of the children don’t go to church on Sunday. I encouraged her not to worry about that and to ask the question anyway. Three months later, at the parent-teacher conferences, eight parents talked about how they had stopped going to Mass some time ago, but this year their children had started asking them to take them to church. They wanted to hear what God was going to say to them. They told their parents.

In your parish, get everyone a Mass Journal. Perhaps after the homily, your priest could encourage everyone to take a quiet moment and write down the one thing God said to them in the Mass so far. We could then spend the rest of the Mass praying about how you can begin to live that one thing in the coming week.

Listening to the Voice of God

It seems to me that our lives change for the better only when we listen to the voice of God and respond to what we hear with courage and generosity.

Imagine every person in your parish coming to church on Sunday with a Mass Journal, listening to the voice of God in their lives, looking for the one way they could become the best-version-of themselves in the coming week.

Imagine the conversations you would have with our children, your spouse, your friends, and your pastor about the one thing you are each working on. Imagine the energy. Imagine the renewal. Imagine the possibilities.

Now take it a step further: Imagine every Catholic in America coming to church on Sunday with a Mass Journal, actively seeking the one way they could become a better-version-of-themselves this week.

We do have problems as a Church – we are hypnotized by complexity – but I believe that one simple habit like this can turn the tide for the Catholic Church in America. Get people listening to the voice of God in their lives and something incredible will happen. Many will say that this idea is too simple. Others will say we need to focus on catechesis and the sacraments. These are important, but until people are listening to the voice of God in their lives, they are simply incapable of absorbing the Scriptures, the Sunday homily, CCD class, adult education courses, great Catholic books, and the phenomenal beauty of the sacraments.

But once people are listening to the voice of God in their lives, they become sponges for everything else the Church has to offer. Teaching people to listen to the voice of God in their lives is a game changer for the Church. The Mass Journal is a simple and practical tool to teach Catholics how to listen to the voice of God and become continuous learners in their spiritual lives.

Could one simple habit transform the Catholic Church in the United States? Could it also transform your life, marriage, parish, career, spiritual life, school, business, and your appreciation of Catholicism?

Yes. As disarmingly simple as it may seem, you could be holding the key to transforming the Catholic Church in America. I wonder if we are humble enough as a Church to embrace such a simple strategy as a way forward.

When seventy percent of American Catholics don't come to church on Sunday, isn't it time someone did something? We think it is, and we hope you will join us in our efforts.

I invite you to take this small journal to Mass with you each Sunday. On your way to church join me in this simple prayer,

*Dear God, show me one way in the Mass I can become a
better-version-of-myself this week!*

Avoid the temptation to write copious notes. Just write down that one way you sense God is calling you to grow, and date your entry.

After one year, you will be able to flick through the pages of this journal and see how you have grown. Ten years from now, you will have ten of these small journals and together they will tell the story of your spiritual journey throughout those years.

There is the genius in Catholicism. Let's rediscover it together.

- Matthew Kelly

Things to do and NOT to do at Mass

- Fast before Mass - Church law to fast at least 1 hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water and medicine may be consumed. WHY? - to help us prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist
- Dress modestly and appropriately - Wear your Sunday best; we believe that God comes down to meet us at every Mass so why would we not be at our best?
- Prepare your offering before Mass - as the collection is being taken is not the time to write a check or look for your offering; keeping the basket while rummaging for wallet can sometimes become quite a scene; please have it ready before Mass
- Arrive early - if for some reason you cannot be on time, try to sit in back so others are not disturbed; getting to Mass early allows you time to pray and prepare better for Mass.
- Cross yourself with Holy Water when entering and exiting the Sanctuary - pray "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." as you are making the sign of the cross as a reminder of your Baptism which made you a member of Christ's church.
- Genuflect/bow/reverence toward Tabernacle - when entering and leaving church or passing in front of Tabernacle; Remember Jesus Christ is present for our sake; when genuflecting and our right knee goes to floor, we acknowledge He is our Lord and God; bowing is acceptable if unable to genuflect
- Seating etiquette - if you sit down before others, be prepared to move to middle so others do not have to climb over and risk injury especially elderly; Good manners dictate that gentlemen should offer their seats to any lady (elderly, disabled, etc.) who must stand.
- Men take off hats - as a cultural norm, it is impolite to wear a hat into a church for a man. Why? - as a sign of respect just as we remove our hats for Pledge of Allegiance.
- Be quiet in church - upon entering Sanctuary, it is not the time or place to visit with those around you; if you must talk, do so quietly and as briefly as possible out of respect for others who are in prayer and for our Lord.
- Respect boundaries others may have - it is not required that everyone hold hands or even shake hands during Mass; do not make unnecessary judgment because others worship differently; they may even be sick and don't want to infect anyone.
- Communion and sickness - as an act of charity for others, refrain from receiving the Precious Blood when you are sick; you still receive the Body and Blood in the Host.
- Take loud children to the back - while it is always a joy to have children at Mass, every parent knows that sometimes children have a bad day; immediately take the child to the cry room area or out of the sanctuary out of respect for others and please return when the child is calm.
- Food or drink in church - bringing food or water into church is not appropriate; exceptions may be a drink for small children, water for the priest or choir (if discreet) and water for those who are ill. Our church is a place of prayer and reflection.
- Gum in church - it breaks your fast; it is considered impolite in formal settings and does not help us to pray better; it is distracting; imagine the Pope popping gum during Mass.
- Cell phones/texting at Mass - exceptions are emergencies only and walk out of sanctuary to take the call; if using for prayer or reading, be discreet. It is not a time to check emails, text or talk on the phone.
- Bulletins at Mass - imagine if you invited guests to your home and before (or during) dinner, they decided to read a magazine instead of visiting with you; that is what is happening in God's house when you read the bulletin.
- Refrain from leaving early - if at all possible, wait until the Celebrant has exited the Altar
- Pray after Mass - it is a good custom, though not required, to offer a prayer of thanksgiving after Mass is over; this is especially good example for families with children.
- Leaving the Sanctuary after Mass - you are encouraged to visit with each other but out of respect for others who are praying, leave quietly and visit once outside church.

What do you see when the priest elevates the host at the consecration during Mass? This isn't a trick question, but it's one that goes to the heart of how we, as Catholics, should view the world.

[In my last column](#), as I mused on the feast of Corpus Christi, I mentioned that Jerusalem is present in your hometown because Calvary is made present again on the altar of your local Catholic church at every Mass. That remark upset a reader enough that she emailed to inform us that, "There is only one Jerusalem [sic], and it is the capital of Israel!!! [sic]" (She prefaced that line with another that I can't reprint in a family-oriented paper.)

The reader's claim, of course, is literally false, since scattered across the United States (and, indeed, around the world), there are many towns named Jerusalem. And it is false in a much deeper sense, one that corresponds to the truth I was expressing in that column. In both Ezekiel and Revelation, Jerusalem, the actual city, is seen as a "type" — that is, a foreshadowing — of heaven, the New Jerusalem. And some of the Fathers of the Church extend that typology to refer to the Church itself. The New Jerusalem is here, present in our midst, in the form of the Church, whose members partake in the reality of heaven even as we make our pilgrimage on earth.

The loss of the Christian imagination is one of the great tragedies of the modern age. It's not that modern men and women take everything literally — we still talk about the sun rising in the east and setting in the west, after all — but that we tend to reduce everything to a single layer of meaning. The widespread loss of belief in the Real Presence, even among Mass-going Catholics, doesn't flow from only believing what we can see with our eyes so much as it does from being unable or unwilling to perceive layers of meaning that cut across time and space to reveal deeper truths through mundane objects, such as bread and wine.

Which takes us back to my question: What do you see when the priest elevates the host at the consecration during Mass? We should see bread, of course; but we should also "see," with the eyes of the imagination and the intellect, Christ breaking the bread at the Last Supper, surrounded by his disciples, including the one who would betray him. We should see Christ on the cross on Mount Calvary — with the good thief on one side and the unrepentant one on the other — and his mother and the disciple whom he loved at his feet. And we should see also, or perhaps hear in the words of Scripture, the sacrifices of Abel and Melchizedek, and the manna in the desert, and the bronze *saraph* Moses raised up so that the Israelites who were bitten by serpents might be cured. We should see the King of Glory sitting on his throne in the New Jerusalem, and the same King of Glory, the Son of Man, descending on the clouds at the end of time. We should see ourselves kneeling before him, as sheep or goats, asking, "When, Lord, did we see you?" (Mt 25:37) and trembling as we await his reply.

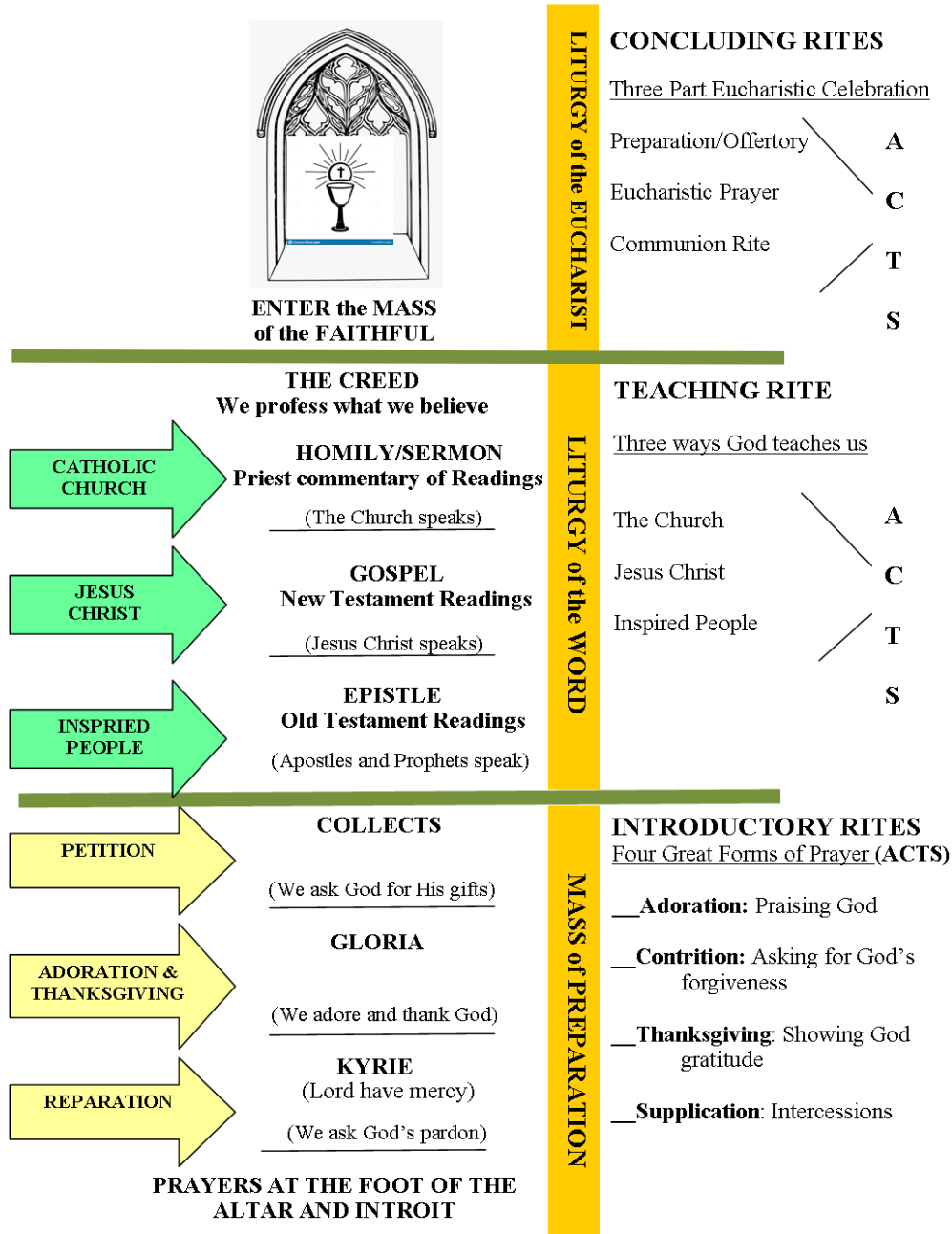
That one simple act — the elevation of the host — brings time past and time future into the present and presents all of salvation history in the form of a disk of unleavened bread.

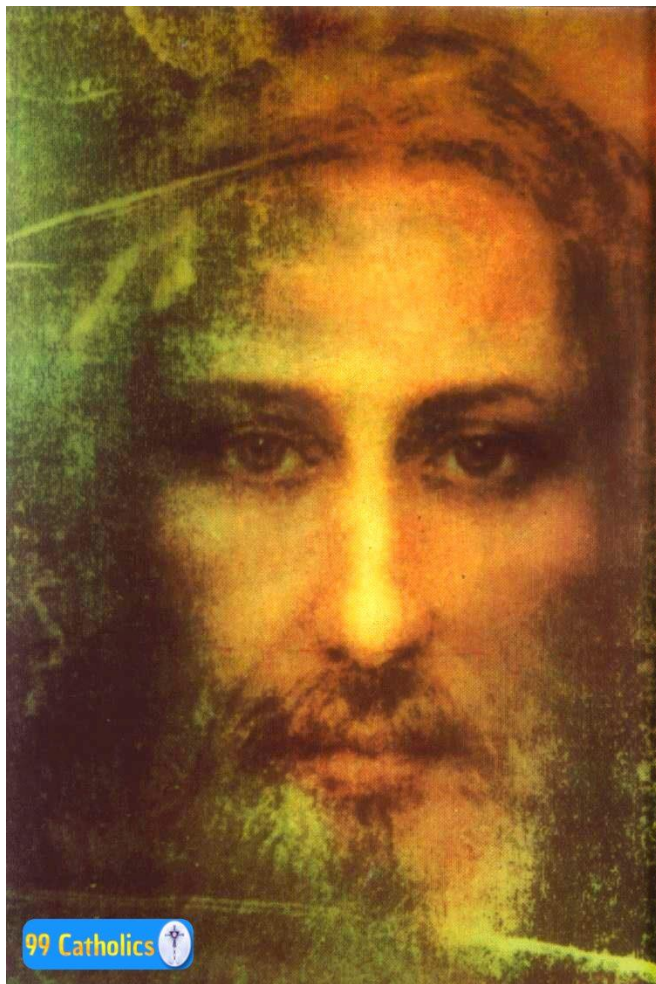
We can only see that, however, if we make the effort to cleanse our imaginations of all that is irrelevant to that moment, to rise above the considerations that make us see Jerusalem only in political terms, and to feed our imaginations instead on the words of Scripture and truths of our Faith handed down from the apostles through the means we call tradition.

We cannot see the manna in the host unless we know the story. We cannot see Jerusalem in our hometowns unless we understand that the Jerusalem of this world is just a foretaste and promise of the New Jerusalem of the next.

Saint John Vianney said, "If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy."

UNDERSTANDING THE MASS





MESSAGE OF JESUS

Why are you confused and agitated by the problems of life? Let Me take care of all your things and everything will go better. When you abandon yourself to Me, everything will be resolved calmly according to My designs. Do not despair, do not direct to Me an agitated prayer, as if you wanted to demand from Me the fulfillment of your desires. Close the eyes of your soul and tell Me calmly: JESUS, I trust in You.

Avoid anxious worries and thoughts about what can happen next. Do not spoil My plans, wanting to impose your ideas on Me. Let Me be God and act freely. Abandon yourself confidently in Me. Rest in Me and leave your future in My hands. Tell Me often: JESUS, I trust in You. What hurts you the most is your reasoning and your own ideas and wanting to solve things your way.

When you tell Me, JESUS I trust in You, do not be like the patient who asks the doctor to cure him, but suggests the way to do it. Let yourself be carried in My divine arms, do not be afraid. I love you.

If you think that things get worse or complicated despite your prayer, keep trusting. Close the eyes of your soul and trust. Keep telling Me at all times: JESUS, I trust in You. I need free hands to be able to act. Do not tie them with your useless worries.

Satan wants that: to agitate you, to distress you, to take away your peace. Trust only in Me. Rest in Me, abandon yourself in Me. I do miracles in proportion to the abandonment and trust that you have in Me. So do not worry, cast on Me all your anguish and sleep peacefully. Always tell Me: JESUS, I trust in You, and you will see great miracles. I promise you by My love.