

THE MASS—INTRODUCTORY RITES

April 19, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

The focus of our next series will be the structure and meaning of the Mass.

The Mass consists of four main sections. They are:

- Introductory Rites;
- Liturgy of the Word;
- Liturgy of the Eucharist and;
- Concluding Rites

Personal Preparation for Mass

A quiet time for reflection and prayer. This time helps us to focus on the upcoming celebration and to remove distractions from our mind.

Introductory Rites

The introductory part of the Mass sets the tone and theme of the Mass. It unifies the diverse members of the faithful into one community of faith, properly preparing us to hear God's Word and celebrate the Eucharist.

July 26, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Introductory Rites

The introductory rites of the liturgy are intended to remind us of who we are and what we are about to do. The introductory rites of the Mass include:

The entrance procession
The sign of the cross and greeting
The act of penitence
The Glory to God
The opening prayer (collect)

- **Entering the Church.** Holy water fonts are located at all of the entrances of the church. Upon entering, we dip our fingers into the holy water. With the dipped hand, we make a sign of the cross over ourselves as a reminder of our baptism. At SJV we should try to use the main font at the front right entrance. Before entering the pew at SJV, we should make a profound bow instead of a genuflection since the Blessed Sacrament is not present in our worship space. We only genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament and at Christmas during the Nicene Creed.

The Entrance Procession

- We begin with an **opening song** which unites the people in community of worship and introduces the people to the celebration of the day.
- **Entrance Procession.** One of the main actions that we see during the liturgy is processing, or moving towards or away from the sanctuary. During the entrance procession, the cross bearer leads, followed by two altar servers with lit candles, then the readers, one of whom carries the Book of the Gospels (a deacon's role when he's present), then any concelebrants and finally the priest.
- **Bowing.** To bow is a sign of reverence for persons and things. In Mass, the priest will reverence the altar with a profound bow when he comes to the altar at the beginning of Mass. All reverences during the Mass are made to the altar where the Mass takes place. The altar represents Christ.
- **Veneration/Kissing the altar.** The altar is a symbol for Christ. Kissing the altar at the beginning and end of Mass is showing reverence to Christ and also to the altar as a liturgical object itself, because it is the place where the Holy Sacrifice is made present. (Traditionally, there are relics of a saint in an altar, and the priest kisses the altar in the spot where those relics are stored.)

THE MASS—INTRODUCTORY RITES

August 2, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Introductory Rites - The introductory rites of the liturgy are intended to remind us of who we are and what we are about to do. The introductory rites of the Mass include:

- The entrance procession
- The sign of the cross and greeting
- The act of penitence
- The Glory to God
- The opening prayer (collect)

The Sign of the Cross and Greeting

- **The sign of the cross.** The Priest stands at the presider's chair and, together with the whole assembly, signs himself with the sign of the cross. The sign of the cross is reminding ourselves that we gather in the name of the Trinity and under the symbol of the cross. The prayer is both a true blessing and a demonstration; we invoke the blessing of God as we demonstrate with a visible sign that we belong to Christ. **The prayer is both spoken and gestured, both must be done with reverence and respect.** As Catholics, we make the sign of the cross many times during the day, but we must never become complacent in how we make the sign of the cross. We're praying, not shooing flies! When we make the sign of the cross, we use our right hand as we say "In the name of the Father (right hand touches your forehead), and of the Son (right hand touches your chest), and of the Holy (right hand touches your left shoulder) Spirit (right hand touches your right shoulder). Amen."
- **A simple greeting** such as "The Lord be with you" begins the dialogue between the presider and the assembly that will continue throughout the liturgy and signifies the prayer that the Lord will be present in the assembled community. By this greeting and the people's response "and with your spirit", the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest. The "spirit" of the ordained priest is one of leading us in the very person of Christ himself.

Today we also celebrate the Feast of St. John Vianney, our patron saint.

August 9, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Introductory Rites—The introductory rites of the liturgy are intended to remind us of who we are and what we are about to do. The introductory rites of the Mass include:

- The entrance procession
- The sign of the cross and greeting
- The act of penitence
- The Glory to God
- The opening prayer (collect)

The Act of Penitence—A penitential rite can easily be misunderstood. It is not primarily a time to focus on our sins but a reminder that we are sinners. More importantly, it reminds us that our God is merciful. We can come into God's presence to share in worship because God has forgiven us. The penitential rite thus is not a reason to feel bad about ourselves but a reason to be grateful to God because he has forgiven us.

After a short period of silence to call to mind our sins, the priest will use one of three forms of this rite:

- **Form A** of the Act of Penitence is to recite the *Confiteor*, or the "I confess to Almighty God" prayer. This is a very traditional prayer of expressing sorrow for our sins, not just in action, but in thought, word, and in failing to act. We then in turn ask God, His Saints, and our brothers and sisters for mercy and forgiveness.
- **Form B** is called the *Penitential Verses*, and comes from the prophet Baruch and Psalm 85. The dialogue begins:
 - ◇ **Priest:** Have mercy on us, O Lord. Baruch 3:2a
 - ◇ **Congregation:** For we have sinned against you. Baruch 3:2b
 - ◇ **Priest:** Show us, O Lord, your mercy. Psalm 85:7a
 - ◇ **Congregation:** And grant us your salvation. Psalm 85:7b
- **Form C** is the "Lord have mercy" or *Kyrie* and uses a series of invocations calling us to remember the mercy of the Lord, to which we acclaim "Lord have mercy" or "Christ have mercy."

At the end of the act of penitence, the priest says, "May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life." This prayer, called the *absolution prayer* does not take the place of sacramental confession for mortal sins. If Form A is used, continue with the "Lord have mercy."

THE MASS—INTRODUCTORY RITES

August 16, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Introductory Rites—The introductory rites of the liturgy are intended to remind us of who we are and what we are about to do. The introductory rites of the Mass include:

The entrance procession
The sign of the cross and greeting
The act of penitence
The Glory to God
The opening prayer (collect)

The Glory to God

- We sing or recite the **Gloria** (Glory to God) at all Sunday Masses, solemnities, and feasts except during Advent and Lent.
- We are reminded of God's goodness shown to us through all of our many blessings, graces and gifts. The Glory to God infuses us with an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving.
- The Glory to God is a hymn of praise echoing the angels at the birth of the Lord, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will." (Luke 2:14) The text elaborates on this message of the angels, recognizing the goodness and mercy of the Lord God through his Son, Jesus Christ. This prayer dates back to the sixth century.
- It is a hymn of pure praise of God for God's goodness and glory and as such, our voices should be lifted in praise as we say it!

August 23, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Introductory Rites—The introductory rites of the liturgy are intended to remind us of who we are and what we are about to do. The introductory rites of the Mass include:

The entrance procession
The sign of the cross and greeting
The act of penitence
The Glory to God
The opening prayer (collect)

A lot takes place in the first five minutes of Mass. First, we gather as a community. We bless ourselves with the sign of the cross, connecting us not only with each other but with the greater community of all Catholics, living and deceased. We acknowledge our mutual sinfulness and need for mercy and give praise to God for His goodness and glory to all of us. The first priestly prayer of the Mass is called the "**Collect**"! This opening prayer takes all of our individual needs and focuses them, collects them, into a common purpose for celebrating that day's Mass.

- When the priest is leading the people in prayer, he will hold out his hands in a way that indicates he is praying the prayer for everyone present. This gesture has a special name – it is called the *orans* position.
- While the priest is the one saying the prayer, the prayer belongs to all of us.
- The introduction to the prayer is "Let *US* pray".
- After the introduction, there is a brief period of silence to help us to focus and recognize Christ's presence through whom we address our needs to the Father. The silence is deliberate and not the result of simply waiting for the server to bring the missal over!
- The people, joining in this petition, make the prayer their own by means of the acclamation "Amen."