

MASS PREPARATION

July 12, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

A Four-Part Structure - It's important to understand the relationship between the different parts of the liturgy. **It draws on basic human activities** to create symbols and ritual patterns.

- The first is simply **the gathering** itself – The gathering involves more than just arriving at the same place. People greet one another, exchange pleasantries, and reconnect their lives. “Wherever two or three gather in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” Mt. 18:20

Imagine you've received an invitation to a dinner party. The host took the time to decide the guests to invite. The invitation states that dinner is at 8:00. You decide that dinner is never on time so you arrive 5 minutes late and to your surprise, the guests are already seated at the table. You're embarrassed, you take your seat and apologize for the disruption.

MASS STARTS ON TIME

- Then there is a time for verbal sharing. At a party this may be “catching up”, at a dinner it may be a speech, at Christian Liturgy, it is a **proclamation of the Word of God**.

The host wanted to make a big announcement but was polite enough to wait until you arrived. You're still flustered and embarrassed for coming late, so he doesn't really have your undivided attention.

TODAY'S READINGS ARE GOD'S PROCLAMATION TO YOU

- Most gatherings of people also involve some sharing of food and drink. At the Eucharistic Liturgy, this corresponds to **the sharing of consecrated bread and wine in Communion**.

Now imagine that the host tells everyone that they can order absolutely anything they want off the menu. Price is not an object. What meal have you been longing for but could never afford?

JESUS HAS GIVEN YOU HIS OWN BODY AND BLOOD

- Finally, as the gathering ends, people disperse. In worship, we call this **the dismissal**.

Dinner is complete and you take the opportunity to slip out without being noticed, missing the departing message from your host. No opportunity to personally say good-bye and thank you.

GOD SENDS YOU THIS INVITATION EVERY WEEK TO COME TO MASS.

HOW ARE YOU RESPONDING TO HIS INVITATION?

Excerpts taken from **How We Worship The Eucharist, The Sacraments, and The Hours** By Reverend Lawrence E. Mick

July 19, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

From the time of the apostles, the Mass has been the central act of Christian worship. For the Mass is nothing less than the celebration of the Eucharist that Jesus Christ instituted at the last supper when he commanded His apostles “*do this in memory of me*”.

Sacristan – The role of the sacristan is to prepare the church for the Eucharistic celebration.

Preparation for Mass

- The altar is covered with an **altar cloth**
- Candlestick holders are on either side of the altar
- The **lectionary** (the book of readings from the Bible) is placed on the **ambo** (the stand from which the readings and homily are proclaimed – when more elaborate in design it's called the pulpit)
- The **Roman Missal** (the altar book containing prayers for Mass) is placed near the **presider's chair** (the chair on which the celebrant sits)
- The **chalice** (the priest's cup used at Mass to hold the blood of Christ), **corporal** (a white cloth used to catch crumbs on the altar), **purificator** (a cloth used to clean vessels at Mass and to wipe the chalice during Communion), water and bowl for washing hands, additional Communion chalices and **ciboria** (the cup or bowl used to hold the body of Christ) are all on the side table
- In the back of the church are the bread and wine to be carried to the altar during the offertory procession
- If the blessing and sprinkling of water occurs, the vessel containing the holy water and sprinkler (**aspergillum**) should also be available in the **sanctuary** (the area which the priest and ministers use like a stage during the Mass).

MASS PREPARATION

June 14, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Meaning of Liturgy – In Christian tradition, the word liturgy means the **participation** of the People of God in the work of God. Liturgy is not something done for a passive audience by the priest or other ministers, rather it is the work of all gathered, who engage in the worship of God together. An assembly is made up of individuals who have gathered to become part of something larger than themselves. The assembly has an essential role to play. The only audience at the liturgy is God, to whom the liturgy is offered.

- Liturgy is a ritual action, composed of symbolic objects, movements, and gestures along with spoken and sung words;
- Symbols are important in worship because they communicate realities that seem impossible to adequately express in words. Even a single symbol is often an action rather than an object;
- Because the liturgy is a gift from God, **it is not our own possession to shape as we wish**;
- The liturgy must remain faithful to the activity of God that it celebrates, retaining its historical roots, because ritual always has a traditional character.

Excerpts taken from *How We Worship The Eucharist, The Sacraments, and The Hours* by Reverend Lawrence E. Mick

June 21, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Gathering God's People – The first thing necessary for any liturgy is the assembly of the faithful. Liturgy is a **communal activity** with the intention of worshipping together. We tend to approach liturgy as a product we consume or as something provided by the priest, rather than as an activity that we help create.

- Liturgy is a communal activity which often requires setting aside our individual likes and dislikes, our wishes and desires;
- We are gathered to be part of one communal act, which means none of us really gets to have our own way with it;
- We need time for private prayer, but the liturgy is communal prayer and not intended to provide all of our prayer time for the week;
- To say that the liturgy is communal prayer, however, is not to say that it is not personal prayer, as the liturgy prescribes various brief periods of silence to help us interiorize what is being said, sung or done;
- We need to make the communal prayer intensely personal by entering into it fully.

An assembly is made up of individuals who have gathered to become part of something larger than themselves. In the liturgy, each person brings their personal relationship with God and with the community of faith and melds it into one great act of worship to praise God as the gathered assembly of God's holy people.

Excerpts taken from *How We Worship The Eucharist, The Sacraments, and The Hours* by Reverend Lawrence E. Mick

June 28, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Building – Though we often speak of the building as “the Church”, it might more properly be called “the home of the Church.” The Church is the assembly of God's people; the church building is where the Church gathers for worship.

Music – Music serves a number of functions in the liturgy.

- The most obvious is that it unifies the assembly voice;
- Music helps us move from the individual mode of action, to the communal mode necessary for the liturgy;
- Music adds elements of joy and other emotions that mere words cannot provide.

We don't have to be great singers to take part in the liturgy. God has given us our voice, so it's okay to give it back to God in song. It is the effort of each member of the assembly to praise God in song that matters more than perfect harmony.

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MASS PREPARATION

July 5, 2015

WHAT'S THIS?

Arriving at Church – When we arrive at church, we need to remember who we are and why we are gathering. When we come to Mass, a common error is to think of ourselves as an audience, waiting for the actors up front to perform for us.

- In the liturgy, there is no audience or actors. We are all charged with the responsibility of carrying out the liturgy;
- Good liturgy requires presiders, preachers, and musicians, but it also depends on the contributions of each member of the assembly to make the liturgy a full and rich experience of God's presence;
- The *whole* assembly is the primary minister of the liturgy offering the communal act of praise to God.

At liturgy, we enter into intimate communion with one another.

Here we are all equal before God.

Here we are all gifted.

Here we are all blessed.

Here we are all special in God's eyes.

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