

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

May 3, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

The Mass consists of four main sections. They are:

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

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

This part of the Mass corresponds to the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. Christ took bread and the cup, gave thanks, broke, and gave them to His disciples saying, "Take and eat, this is My Body. Take and drink, this is the cup of My Blood. Do this in memory of Me."

November 8, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, as the second main part of the Mass is called, is the major part of the Mass after the Liturgy of the Word and ending before the Concluding Rite. The priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did at the Last Supper and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. Christ took the bread and the chalice, gave thanks, broke and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat and drink: this is my Body; this is the chalice of my Blood. Do this in memory of me. Hence, **the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ**, namely:

- At the Presentation of the Gifts, bread and wine with water are brought to the altar, the same elements, that is to say, which Christ took into his hands
- In the Eucharistic Prayer, thanks is given to God for the whole work of salvation, and the offerings become the Body & Blood of Christ
- Through the breaking of the Bread and through Communion, we receive from the Lord's Body and the Lord's Blood in the same way that the Apostles received them from the hands of Christ himself.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist consists of three sections: the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and Communion. We might describe these as **setting the table for the meal, saying the blessing, and sharing the meal together.**

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

November 15, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts and the altar. The Preparation of the Gifts has rich symbolic meaning. Here the bread and wine and our monetary donations serve as symbols of our gifts and of ourselves. The collection gathered for the needs of the Church and the poor speaks of our willingness to follow the Lord in caring for those in need. It also reminds us that all that we have, not just the portion that we put in the basket, belongs to God. The donations we make symbolize all that we have and ultimately all that we are. Our giving symbolizes our commitment to give our whole lives to God and to use all the gifts God has given us according to God's will. As the servers prepare the altar, representatives of the assembly bring forward the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The presentation of the bread and wine (the gifts) from the assembly reminds us that we are all involved in this act of worship, presider and assembly together. The celebrant blesses and praises God for these gifts and places them on the altar. **Just as the gifts and the altar are prepared, so we prepare ourselves to enter into the great blessing prayer and the meal that is to follow.**

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

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

November 22, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Prayer over the Offerings

After the gifts and altar are prepared, the Prayer over the Offerings begins. This Prayer of Thanksgiving is the heart of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. If you watch very closely, you'll notice that the priest is moving his lips and praying some prayers very quietly during the Preparation of the Gifts. 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 silent prayers the priest says are:

"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."

As the priest pours wine and a little water into the chalice, he prays quietly:

"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."

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

Then the priest bows profoundly and says quietly: "With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, Oh Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God."

- The Rite of Hand Washing is a symbolic gesture of purification. The priest prays "Wash me, Oh Lord, from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."
- "Pray, Brethren" breaks the stillness and silence after the Lavabo, as an invitation to pray and claim ownership of the sacrifice. The priest invites us to pray that our offering may be worthy and acceptable before the Lord.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

November 29, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

Although this is the first week of Advent, we will be continuing our explanation of the Mass. Please refer to the SJV website at [www.stjohnv.org](http://www.stjohnv.org) for the What's This articles for Advent. They will be listed under Worship & Pray.

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

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### Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is the central prayer of the liturgy. The word "eucharist" comes from the Greek for "thanksgiving," and this prayer is primarily an act of praise and thanks to God for all that God has done for us through the ages. The prayer asks God to continue to bless us in our own time and concludes with words of praise (a doxology).

Many people find it difficult to sustain their attention through the length of this prayer. Probably the most important thing is for all of us to remember that we are offering this prayer together with the presider. The opening dialogue and the three acclamations that the assembly sings as part of the prayer (Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen) are reminders that this is a communal effort to give God proper praise and thanks.

In the Catholic tradition, we believe that this prayer is also consecratory. The prayer is said over the bread and wine that have been set aside for the sacred meal, and through this prayer, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The word "transubstantiation" has traditionally been used to express this change; it simply says that the substance or fundamental reality of the bread and wine change even though what we see and touch and taste, remain the same. What is more basic than the term, however, is the truth that the bread and wine are now the Body and Blood of the Lord, which means they are now a bodily means of his presence among us. He is present in the Eucharist just as fully as he was present in his human body during his thirty-plus years on earth. **He is present for a purpose. He is present in the Eucharist in order to be our spiritual food and drink.**

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

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

December 6, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Eucharistic Prayer Including:

- 1) Preface
- 2) Holy, Holy, Holy
- 3) First half of Eucharistic Prayer, including Consecration
- 4) Mystery of Faith
- 5) Second half of Eucharistic Prayer, ending with Doxology

### The Preface

"The Lord be with you," is the oldest set of text in the Mass and is exchanged between the priest and the assembly. We are then invited to turn to the Lord in prayer. The priest then asks us to lift our hearts to the Lord and to give thanks and praise to God. The Preface is an introductory prayer, which gives a specific reason for our thanksgiving. It is prayed by the priest alone, and it is the second longest prayer in the Mass after the Eucharistic Prayer, and it changes daily and by the season depending on the theme of the Mass.

### Holy, Holy, Holy

The Preface concludes with the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy) in which the whole assembly joins the song of the angels giving praise to the Father in heaven. It is one of the oldest elements of the liturgy. Like the prophet Isaiah, we fall on our knees in awe, for we realize the presence of something greater than ourselves.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

December 13, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Eucharistic Prayer Including:

- 1) Preface
- 2) Holy, Holy, Holy
- 3) First half of Eucharistic Prayer, including Consecration
- 4) Mystery of Faith
- 5) Second half of Eucharistic Prayer, ending with Doxology

### First half of Eucharistic Prayer, including Consecration

The first half of the Eucharistic Prayer, called the *Epiclesis*, is an invocation of God to send the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Specifically, and unambiguously God is called on to transform the offering of bread and wine into the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

### The Consecration

Here the elements are consecrated and transformed into the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. **This is the key moment of the Catholic Mass.** During the consecration, the priest takes the bread and then the wine and repeats over them the words and actions of our Lord during the Last Supper.

### Transubstantiation

During the *Epiclesis* or invocation, God is called upon to send the Holy Spirit and transform the bread and wine into the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. **During consecration, when the priest speaks, "This is my body," the substance of the bread is transformed into the Body of Jesus Christ.** The priest then shows the Host to the assembly and may place the consecrated Host on the paten. **When the priest speaks, "This is my blood," the substance of the wine is transformed in the Blood of Jesus Christ.** The priest shows the Chalice to the assembly and places the consecrated wine on the corporal. **The simple gifts of bread and wine are transformed into the real Body and Blood of Christ, not a representation or a symbol of Christ, but an actual transformation known as transubstantiation.**

### Mystery of Faith

After the Chalice has been shown to the assembly, the priest invites us to proclaim the Mystery of Faith. **The Mystery of Faith is the Eucharist.** The statement "The Mystery of Faith" is just that, a statement by the priest to the assembly about what just happened on the altar.

### Memorial Acclamation

Our proclamation is to acknowledge the great miracle that just occurred before us. **We are proclaiming that great mystery of faith of the bread and wine becoming the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.** We make our proclamation with one of the three memorial acclamations designated for the Mass.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

December 20, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Eucharistic Prayer Including:

- 1) Preface
- 2) Holy, Holy, Holy
- 3) First half of Eucharistic Prayer, including Consecration
- 4) Mystery of Faith
- 5) Second half of Eucharistic Prayer, ending with Doxology

### Second half of the Eucharistic Prayer

#### Remembrance

After the memorial acclamation, the priest invites us to "Call to mind" or remember the great events of our salvation, death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### Offering

In that memory, we *offer* the sacrifice, calling on God to offer the sacrifice in union with all the sacrifices in the past. In the offering, the miracle of transubstantiation is applied to our benefit when we receive the Risen Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

#### Intercessions

The priest intercedes with the Father. We pray for those who have departed and we pray "for us sinners."

#### Final Doxology

The priest lifts the Host and the Chalice proclaiming the doxology, the words of praise linking the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

#### Great Amen

Amen = **I** believe it. So be it. It is true. It is a truly magnificent and glorious, and a fitting way to conclude the Eucharistic Prayer in which the extraordinary miracle of the Transubstantiation just took place.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

December 27, 2015

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### The Lord's Prayer

The communion rite begins with the Our Father, which is **the principal prayer of the Church**. Jesus taught this prayer to his disciples when they asked how to pray (Mt 6:9-13, Lk 11:2-4). Matthew's version is most commonly used. It is a sign of our unity with Christ and one another and helps prepare us to receive Holy Communion. In this prayer, the assembly joins their voices to pray for the coming of God's kingdom and to ask God to provide for our needs, forgive our sins, and bring us to the joy of heaven. While there are no directions as to the posture of the faithful, the rubrics clearly direct the priest and any other concelebrants to pray the Our Father with hands extended. **The Our Father is the prayer of the entire assembly and not a priestly or presidential prayer.** In fact, it is perhaps the only case when the rubrics direct the priest to pray with arms extended in a prayer that he does not say alone or only with other priests. Therefore, in the case of the Our Father, the *orantes* posture (arms extended) expresses the prayer directed to God by his children. This posture was, after all, the normal way Christians prayed for a millennium.

The Lord's Prayer is concluded with the doxology (For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.) The doxology is not found in the original texts of the Bible. It is first found in the *Didache* (circa 70 A.D.), which is The Teaching of the Apostles. Catholics do not end the Our Father with the doxology, but separate it in the Mass, recognizing that the two prayers are distinct.

### The Lord's Prayer is *"truly the summary of the whole gospel."*

St. Therese of Lisieux, the nun best known as the "Little Flower of Jesus," states an excellent way to say the Lord's Prayer, *slowly*, to get the most out of it, rather than rattling it off on auto-pilot, as we all do sometimes!

Next week we will dissect the meaning of the Our Father.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

January 3, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Explaining the seven petitions of the Our Father

#### Why do we pray the Our Father each week?

One of the most frequently prayed prayers among Catholics and Christians of other denominations is the Our Father. For most Christians, it is one of the first prayers that everyone learns from a young age. One of the main reasons it holds primacy in our faith and is prayed each week in the liturgy is that Jesus himself taught us the prayer. When asked by his disciples about how to pray, Jesus taught his disciples the prayer traditionally known as the “Our Father” or “the Lord’s Prayer.” This prayer appears in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

#### Is there a particular structure to the Our Father?

After the initial address to the Father, the prayer itself is composed of seven petitions. There are three “thy-petitions” (thy name, thy kingdom, thy will) followed by four “us-petitions” (give us, forgive us, lead us not and deliver us). In order to better understand the Lord’s Prayer, it is important to briefly examine each petition.

#### “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he did not teach them to pray “My Father,” but rather “Our Father.” This reminds us that we are God’s sons and daughters together in Christ, not as isolated individuals. It is only as the body of Christ that we can pray to God as Father. When we call God “Father,” it is a reminder for us to live as children in relation with God. In teaching us to call God “Father,” Jesus also tells us that we have the privilege to call God by the same name he used in his intimate relationship with the Father.

#### “Hallowed be thy name...”

In the first petition, we are asking that God’s name would be “hallowed” or sanctified. Objectively speaking, God’s name is already holy, but the prayer is asking that God make his name holy to all people through his works and deeds. (See Ezekiel 36:22-27.)

#### “Thy kingdom come...”

The second petition has a twofold meaning. First, we are praying for the coming of the kingdom of God here and now in our everyday lives. At the same time, we are also praying for Christ’s glorious return at the end of time and the final coming of the reign of God.

#### “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...”

The third petition asks God that our will be conformed to his divine will. When Jesus was praying to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, he also used the words “thy will be done.” When we pray “thy will be done” we commit ourselves to following Jesus by taking up our cross.

#### “Give us this day, our daily bread...”

In the fourth petition, “give us” expresses our trust in our heavenly Father. “Our daily bread” refers to our earthly nourishment that is necessary to physically sustain us throughout the day and the Bread of Life (the Word of God and the Body of Christ) that spiritually nourishes us. As Catholics, we are privileged to receive the “Bread of Life” daily in the Mass.

#### “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us...”

In the fifth petition, we beg for God’s mercy for the times that we have fallen short of loving God and loving our neighbor. We acknowledge that the Father’s mercy and forgiveness are able to penetrate our hearts to the extent that we are able to forgive our enemies.

#### “Lead us not into temptation...”

Some people wonder why we would ask God not to lead us into temptation. The letter of St. James clearly says that God does not tempt us with evil (James 1:13). Therefore, in this petition, we are asking that God does not allow us to take the path that leads to sin. We are praying to avoid the near occasion of sin.

#### “But deliver us from evil...”

Closely tied to the previous prayer, in this final petition, we are asking God to protect us from evil. The Catechism teaches that the “evil” in this petition is not an abstract evil, but actually “refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God” (CCC, 2851). While we acknowledge the reality of the devil, we place our trust in Christ and his definitive victory over evil on the cross.

#### “Amen!”

After praying all of these petitions, we end by affirming our belief in all that we have prayed by saying “Amen!”

*Tim Hedrick is a second-year theologian studying for the Archdiocese of New Orleans at Notre Dame Seminary.*

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

January 10, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
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Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Sign of Peace

The priest prays that the peace of Christ will fill our hearts, our families, our Church, our communities, and our world. As a sign of peace, hope and love, we show our unity in Christ and our reconciliation with one another by extending to those around us a sign of peace. Although we only greet those around us, the rite is intended to extend our wish of peace to all peoples throughout the world.

### The Fraction of the Bread

The fraction or breaking of the bread is begun after the sign of peace and is carried out with proper reverence. In the Fraction Rite, the priest breaks the large consecrated bread. The gesture of breaking the bread done by Christ at the Last Supper, which in apostolic times gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name, signifies that the many faithful are made one body (1 Cor 10:17) by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life, which is Christ.

The priest breaks the Bread and puts a piece of the host into the chalice to signify the unity of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

January 17, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

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Prayer after Communion

### Lamb of God

Jesus is the lamb who sacrificed himself for us and saved us. In this invocation we pray for God's mercy and peace. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). The supplication Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) is usually sung and accompanies the fraction of the bread. The third time it concludes with the words "grant us peace."

### Invitation to the Eucharist

The priest invites the assembly to join in a preparation prayer to receive communion. We respond as did the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his son: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." The faithful are now ready and truly prepared to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

January 24, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Communion

Of all seven sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is the most central and important to Catholicism. Holy Communion is offered at every Mass, and in fact, the ritual of the Mass is largely taken up with preparing the hosts and wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ and the congregation to receive the Body of Christ. Transubstantiation is the act of changing the substances of bread and wine into the substances of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Holy Eucharist refers to Christ's body and blood present in the consecrated host on the altar, and Catholics believe that the consecrated bread and wine are actually the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ. For Catholics, the presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist isn't just symbolic, it's real.

When you receive Holy Communion, you're intimately united with Jesus Christ—he literally becomes part of you. Also, by taking Holy Communion, you express your union with all Catholics who believe the same doctrines, obey the same laws, and follow the same leaders. This sense of participation in a larger community is why Catholics (and Eastern Orthodox Christians) have a strict law that only people who are *in communion* with the Church can receive Holy Communion. In other words, only those who are united in the same beliefs are allowed to receive Holy Communion.

*The Catholic Sacrament of Holy Communion - Dummies website*

The belief of the relationship between the sacramental body of Christ and the mystical body is the key to understanding of the Eucharist. Here lies the heart of the mystery of this sacrament: **the *body* of Christ receives the *Body* of Christ to become more fully united as the *body* of Christ.**

Excerpts taken from How We Worship The Eucharist The Sacraments & The Hours by Rev. Lawrence E Mick

# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

January 24, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

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# THE MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

February 7, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes:

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### Sacred Silence

When the distribution of Communion is over, the priest and the assembly pray quietly for some time. This is the time of personal, quiet prayer and meditation on the sacred mystery which has been received. We are closely united with God at this time. This is the time to share your cares, concerns and prayers with God. You can ask God to strengthen you through the Eucharist and help you to be a better disciple in living the Gospel daily.

### Prayer after Communion

After the silence following Communion, the priest invites the assembly to pray, which closes the Communion Rite. This is the final prayer of the liturgy and is based on the theme of the liturgy, the saint of the day, or the appropriate liturgical season. The Prayer ends with one of the shorter conclusions:

- If the prayer is directed to the Father: "Through Christ our Lord"
- If it is directed to the Father, but the Son is mentioned at the end: "Who lives and reigns forever and ever"
- If it is directed to the Son: "Who live and reign forever and ever"
- The assembly makes the prayer their own by means of the acclamation "Amen".