



The Mass

Mass is the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, under the ceremonies given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper, when he transformed bread and wine into his Body and Blood. In general, the Mass can be divided into two: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Word is composed of Scripture readings, which are proclaimed and reflected upon. Usually, there are three readings: an Old Testament selection, a New Testament selection (from the Epistles), and the Gospel reading. After the readings, a priest or deacon delivers a homily, a reflection on the readings.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the section of the celebration when the gifts of bread and wine are prepared and the Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the celebrant, and the Blessed Sacrament (Eucharist, Communion) is distributed to the assembly.

Entrance Procession

Priests, deacon, altar servers, and lectors enter the church or designated place for celebration of the liturgy.

Entrance Hymn/Song or Gathering Hymn

The song or music performed during the entrance procession.

Veneration of the Altar

The altar is revered with a kiss and the optional use of incense.

Greeting

The celebrant greets all present at the liturgy, expressing the presence of the Lord to the assembled community.

Penitential Rite

A general acknowledgment of sinfulness by the entire assembly, accompanied by requests for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Gloria

Ancient hymn of praise in which the Church glorifies God. It is used on all Sundays (outside of Advent and Lent), and at solemn celebrations. The text originates from the Christmas narrative in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:14).

Opening Prayer

This prayer by the celebrant expresses the general theme of the celebration.

Liturgy of the Word

Responsorial Psalm

Between the first and second readings, a psalm is spoken or sung by the entire assembly. The response is repeated after each verse. If sung, a cantor or choir sings the verses of the psalm.

Alleluia Acclamation

This acclamation of praise to God follows the second reading and prepares the assembly for the Gospel.

Homily (Sermon)

The homily is a reflection by the celebrant or other minister on the Scripture readings and on the application of the texts in the daily lives of the assembled community.

Profession of Faith

The assembly together recalls and proclaims the fundamental teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. The Profession of Faith, also referred to as the Creed, is used on all Sundays and Holy Days.

General Intercessions

Prayer of intercession for all of humankind; for the Church, civil authorities, those with various needs, for all peoples, and for the salvation of the world. The celebrant invites all to pray, another minister proclaims the prayers of petition and the assembly responds by asking God to hear and to grant their requests.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

The time in the Mass when the bread and wine to be used in the celebration are brought to the celebrant, usually by representatives of the faithful.

Offertory Hymn/Song

Music used during the presentation of the gifts to the celebrant and as the altar is prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Washing of Hands

An expression of the desire for inward purification. The celebrant washes his hands in symbolic cleansing to prepare himself just as the gifts have been prepared as an offering to the Lord.

Prayer Over the Gifts

The prayer by the celebrant asking that the gifts to be offered be made holy and acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

Eucharistic Prayer

The prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. It is the centre and high point of the celebration. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Preface Dialogue

The introductory dialogue between the celebrant and assembly in which all are invited to join in prayer and thanksgiving to God called the Sanctus or Holy, Holy, Holy. The community responds to the preface and continues the general theme of praise and thanks.

Consecration

The prayer and blessing during which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Intercessions

A series of prayers for the Church, the world, the Pope, clergy and laity, and the dead.

Amen

Also called the Great Amen. It is the acclamation by the people expressing their agreement withal that has been said and one in the Eucharistic prayer.

The Lord's Prayer (Our Father)

The prayer of petition for our needs and for forgiveness of sins.

Doxology

The response of the people acclaiming the sovereignty of God.

Sign of Peace

Before sharing the Body of Christ the members of the assembly are invited to express their love and peace with one another.

Breaking of the Bread

The celebrant recreates gestures of Christ at the Last Supper when He broke the bread to give to His disciples. The action signifies that in communion the many are made one in the one Bread of Life which is Christ.

Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

An invocation during the breaking of the bread in which the assembly petitions God for mercy and peace.

Holy Communion

After saying a preparatory prayer, the celebrant (or other designated ministers) give communion (the consecrated bread and wine) to himself and the other ministers at the altar, and then communion is distributed to the congregation.

Communion Song

The music that is used as the consecrated bread and wine – the Body and Blood of Christ – is distributed to the faithful.

Prayer After Communion

The final prayer by the celebrant in which he petitions that the Sacrament be beneficial for all.

Concluding Rite

The brief rite which consists of the celebrant's greeting to all present, final blessing and dismissal; followed by a concluding song and concluding procession.