

ORDER OF MASS

The Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites "ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily." (#46)*

They "have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation." (#46)*

The Entrance Procession

- The order of the procession is as follows: cross bearer, servers, reader or lector, deacon, and the priest-presider. This mimics a royal roman procession.
- As they arrive at the sanctuary, those not carrying the cross or Book of Gospels make a profound bow toward the altar. The altar/table is a symbol of Christ as the head or center of the faithful, because he is the sacrifice for sin and the meal that nourishes us. The deacon and priest kiss the altar as a sign of reverence to Jesus.
- The procession is accompanied by a hymn or chant which is meant to foster unity in the congregation and direct our attitudes and thoughts toward the prayerful celebration of that day's Eucharist.
- The entrance procession symbolizes the gathering of the Body of Christ, the Church, in the presence of our triune God in prayer.

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

- We make the sign of the cross identifies us: we gather in the name of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) as a baptized people (in the name of...) redeemed by the cross of Christ.
- By the greeting, the priest-presider draws the congregation's attention to the presence of the Lord in our midst, and our response, "and also with you" acknowledges that presence.
- The priest-presider may then briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.

Act of Penitence

- Recalling our baptism and having gathered in the Lord's presence, we immediately recognize and acknowledge our sinfulness. We have not lived

fully and faithfully the life of Christ. So by an act of penitence we call to mind our sins and recommit ourselves to live in Christ.

- There are ten different formulas that can be used here. In one way or another, the petition Kyrie eleison (Greek for "Lord, have mercy") is used. This is really the only prayer we can ever say when we recognize our sin and unworthiness before God.
- During Lent and at other appropriate times, the act of penitence and Kyrie are sung and the attitude of repentance enhanced by kneeling during it.
- On some Sundays, especially during the Easter season, the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the act of penitence. This rite emphasizes the cleansing waters of baptism and recommits us to live our baptismal promises.

The Gloria

- The Gloria, or "Glory to God," is a very ancient hymn of praise introduced into the liturgy in the 6th century. Originally only a bishop intoned the Gloria.
- The first lines of which echo the song of the angels who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. It is a series of acclamations, naming God with wonder and awe.
- Ordinarily, the Gloria is sung by all either in unison or alternately with choir/cantor and congregation.
- The Gloria is omitted during the season of Advent so that we may sing the song of the angels with renewed joy at Christmas. It is also omitted during the season of Lent because there is no room for such exuberant joy when we are reckoning with our sin.

The Collect

- The priest-presider then invites the congregation to pray. A brief moment of silence allows a prayerfulness to settle over the community as we continue to remember the presence of the Lord and to join our individual prayers with the prayer of all.
- The Collect (Opening Prayer) is prayed aloud by the presider. It gathers or collects together all the prayers we come with in the spirit of the Eucharistic celebration that has now begun.
- The people's response, "Amen" makes the prayer their own.
- The Collect changes each week for the particular Sunday or special occasion.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal

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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 own word, proclaims the Gospel." (#29)*

"For in the readings, as explained by the homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God's word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world." (#55)*

We fast for at least one hour before Mass so that we bodily experience the hunger we have for God's Word and Sacrament.

The Lectionary

The lectionary is the collection of readings used for daily and Sunday Masses and for Masses on special occasions.

Sunday Mass	Three Year Cycle Matthew - Year A, Mark - Year B, Luke - Year C, John - every year during Lent and Easter
Daily Mass	Two Year Cycle

Each Church Year begins on the first Sunday of Advent.

The first two readings and the Psalm are chosen in light of the Gospel.

The First Reading and the Psalm foreshadow the life of Jesus and the Second is a discussion of the life of Christ lived out in the early Christian community.

The Lectionary uses the New American Bible translation.

First Reading

Taken from the Hebrew Scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Kings, Wisdom, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others) or from the Acts of the Apostles (Easter Season). The lector ends by saying "The Word of the Lord" and the assembly responds "Thanks be to God." We often say those words too habitually.

Responsorial Psalm

Taken from the body of 150 Hebrew songs of blessing, cursing, ballads and lamentations. They would have been sung in Jewish worship services at the time of Jesus. They were/are a communal way of expressing emotions.

Second Reading

Taken from the letters (epistles) of early Christian writers such as Paul, John Peter and unknown authors. Most of the letters were written before the Gospels.

Gospel Acclamation

We stand and sing for joy in thanksgiving for the Word of God given to us.

Gospel Reading

Jesus the Christ continues to reveal himself to us in the stories and teachings of the gospel narratives. We stand in joyful attention to hear his words, as the eager crowds of his own time did.

Having heard the Word so central to our faith, our acclamation is more elaborate: "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." The priest or deacon kisses the Book of Gospels as a sign of reverence and affection for Jesus.

Homily

An extension of the Scripture readings as it applies to the current experience of Christians. We again are silent for a moment to let the words of the gospel sink in. Two things the homilist must take into consideration - God's saving work (the paschal mystery) and the needs of the community. (#41)

The Profession of Faith

We respond to God's Word for us by recommitting ourselves to living God's Word by renewing our Profession of Faith (or Creed). As a family of faith we reaffirm the tenets of our faith. We stand together as a sign that we stand together in the faith. We bow at the words, "by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

The Prayers of the Faithful

Having heard with hope the saving promise of God through the readings, we pray for the salvation of all. This Prayer of the Faithful intercedes in one way or another for the needs of the Church, for public authorities and the salvation of the world, for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, for the local

community, and for those who have died. We pray so that we are reminded to respond to the needs of others.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal

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The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts

Basic elements of bread and wine are and brought forward with the offering of the community as a symbol of our lives being brought to the altar. They represent not just basic food and drink; but more they represent our whole lives. All that our lives are about - our work, our struggles, our hopes, our joys, our hungers, our satisfactions - are symbolized in these gifts. We are united in our offering, just as many grains make one loaf and many grapes make one cup. The donations of money and gifts for the poor also symbolize the gift of our lives to God. These gifts are given in response to the Word of God to support the mission of Christ through the parish community. A Prayer over the Offerings is then prayed as a way to express our intention and hopes for these gifts.

Offertory Prayer

This was one of the most radical of reforms in the Mass of Paul VI is the use of the words and gestures of an ancient Jewish blessing (berakah) over the gifts.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam Borei peri ha-gafen.

Blessed are you Lord, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Jesus may have followed a Passover format (i.e. celebrating the Exodus) for the Last Supper but the fact is for religious Jews, all significant meals were ritualized.

The Jewish blessing celebrates the promise of the Kingdom of God whereas Christians use the same blessing to celebrate the fulfillment of the promise. The priest symbolically washes his hands as a sign of purification. This ritual originated when the offertory included farm products and the priest needed to wash his hands.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is addressed to God the Father who sends the Holy Spirit to consecrate the offerings through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that our gifts of bread and wine (our lives) become the Body and Blood of Christ. This is a prayer of sacrifice and thanksgiving. Thankfulness is given to God for the whole work of salvation and the Holy Spirit is called to make our offerings holy as they become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The priest invites the congregation to lift up their hearts to the Lord as "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." The entire congregation, with one voice (literally - the voice of the priest), joins itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in offering the sacrifice.

We stand for *The Preface* which is a highly variable, changing with the particular day, feast, occasion or liturgical season. It states our motives for praising and glorifying God and leads to *The Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy). After the Sanctus we kneel for the main body of the Eucharistic Prayer.

There are ten (10) Eucharistic Prayers currently approved for use in the dioceses of the United States: Eucharistic Prayer I or The Roman Canon (4th Century), Eucharistic Prayer II (3rd Century), Eucharistic Prayer III (20th Century composition based on the Roman Canon), Eucharistic Prayer IV (4th Century), two Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation (used in Lent and other appropriate occasions), three Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, and a Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions (also used for appropriate occasions).

The *Epiclesis* is when we ask God to send the Holy Spirit on our gifts of bread and wine (let your Spirit come upon these gifts...). Later there is a second epiclesis for the Church, and all the living and dead. We end the Prayer with a *Doxology* which praises all three persons in the Blessed Trinity.

The centerpiece of this prayerful remembrance is the *Institution Narrative*. We remember how "on the night he was betrayed," Jesus took the bread and cup and said "This is my Body, this is my Blood." This is followed by the *Memorial Acclamation* which speaks of the paschal mystery (death & resurrection of Jesus). There are *Intercessions* in the Eucharistic Prayer as well (for the pope, bishop, deceased, etc...). Through them we pray in communion with those in heaven for the needs of the living and the dead. *The Great Amen*, sung by the congregation, gives consent to all that has been voiced by the priest.

The Altar

The Eucharist is both a sacrifice and a meal. We are united with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as we offer our lives in sacrifice (symbolized by the bread and wine). Like the disciples attending the Last Super, the Eucharist is also a meal at which we receive spiritual nourishment. Altars that are large slabs of stone emphasize the sacrificial aspect of Eucharist. Altars that look

like tables emphasize the meal aspect. The altar at St. Paul incorporates both aspects.

Gestures

The ritual of the Eucharistic Prayer is a series of gestures married in a logical coherence. For example the priest extends his arms in a gesture of collecting the prayers of the community and lifting them to God. Unlike a staged performance, the words and actions are not a reenactment of the past. The words and gestures bring about the change from bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus.

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The Communion & Closing Rites

The Lord's Prayer

In The Lord's Prayer we continue our praise of God ("hallowed be Thy name") and make two petitions. We ask for "daily bread," an early description of the Eucharistic food, that we might be nourished in spirit. We ask for forgiveness of our trespasses, so that what is holy may be given to people who are holy.

The Rite of Peace

In the sign of peace we ask for peace and unity for the Church and for the whole human family. And we demonstrate our own commitment to be instruments of peace, unity and mutual love through our sharing a greeting of peace with those immediately around us. This act anticipates the unity and reconciliation that are ours in our communion with Christ.

The Fraction Rite with the Lamb of God

The Fraction, or the breaking of bread, is a simple but powerful action. The one loaf is broken into many pieces just as Christ was broken and his blood poured out for the many. We, though many, become one with Christ by our sharing this one bread and one cup in the same way the apostles received them from Christ's own hands. Having all hosts come from one bread and everyone drinking from one cup is an ideal but not practical in a large congregation.

During this action of breaking bread we sing the litany "Lamb of God," humbly expressing our awe and unworthiness for so great a gift as Christ, the Lamb who was slain for our sake. Lambs were sacrificial animals. Through this prayer we recognize that Jesus is the one sacrifice for all time eliminating the need for animal sacrifices.

Taking a small piece of a host the priest drops it in the Precious Blood while saying: *"May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it."* The action signifies that Jesus is one body and blood even though they are separated in various vessels.

Communion Procession

In the Communion Rite of Mass, we fulfill the command of the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper: *"Take and eat, take and drink."* We are fed by "the bread of life and the cup of eternal blessing." This simple meal is the gift of Christ's very self: *"This is my Body, which is given up for you, the cup of my Blood, shed for you and for all."*

Our procession to the Eucharistic table is accompanied by our singing, another way of uniting ourselves with our brothers and sisters in Christ. For such a gift as we are receiving in this Act of Communion, how can we keep from singing our praise and gratitude?

The General Instruction invites us to bow our heads before receiving the sacrament as an act of reverence. Genuflecting in the communion line or kneeling for communion is not proper because it becomes a private act of worship and breaks communion. Each communicant decides for him/herself whether to receive the consecrated host in the hand or on the tongue.

Prayer After Communion

When the Act of Communion is over, we pray silently for a moment or two, then stand and collect our prayers together in The Prayer after Communion. This is a petition whereby we ask that the grace we have received through participation in the Eucharist bear fruit in our daily lives and leads us to everlasting life.

The Final Blessing

The final blessing is a seal upon the graces received in the celebration of the Eucharist. Then we are then ready to take what we have received in this celebration of Mass out into our daily lives and the world in which we live. The blessing reminds us that we are on a mission to build up the kingdom of God. We need to be sent out to the world with the blessing of the Church.

The Dismissal

This is a charge to go and serve the world in whatever capacity (vocation) God has called us.

Sundry Items

Reverence and Fellowship
Holy Water Fonts

Bells
Cultic Action and Social Action