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## **Are there other names for the Mass?**

The Mass is also called The celebration of the Eucharist (Thanksgiving), the Breaking of the Bread, Holy Mass or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

## **Why do we break the bread, drink from the cup and share Holy Communion?**

Because Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me." ("Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which will be given up for you; do this in memory of me.'" NAB Luke 22:19)

## **Why do we call the priest "Father"?**

We call him "Father" because he is our spiritual father or mentor in faith. We acknowledge that no one is greater than God, our Almighty Father.

## **Why are there statues in the church building?**

There may be statues of Jesus, Mary, Joseph or holy men and women who have gone before us. We do not worship or idolize statues. They are simply reminders—much like you would display a photograph of your spouse or children as a reminder when they are not physically present.

**Why do we light candles?** The lighting of the candles reminds us of the light that Christ brings into the world.

## **Is the Mass always the same?**

The readings from Holy Scripture and some prayers change each week but the structure of the Mass remains the same.

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### **The Mass**

Prepared by the Liturgical Commission  
of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau  
and approved for distribution by the  
Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.  
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau  
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This brochure may be reprinted for use  
by the parishes and missions of the  
Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau.

For more information about the Mass  
or to locate a Catholic church  
in your area of Southern Missouri,  
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# **The Mass**



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*The Roman  
Catholic Diocese  
of Springfield-  
Cape Girardeau  
in Southern  
Missouri*



## *The Mass is the greatest prayer of the Catholic Church and much loved by all Catholics.*

**GUESTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AND ARE CORDIALLY INVITED AND ENCOURAGED TO JOIN WITH THE CONGREGATION IN RECITING THE PRAYERS AND SINGING THE HYMNS.**

**IT** is both the duty and the privilege of Catholics to come together at Sunday Mass all over the world, as one body, the Church, to worship and praise God. Sharing our faith with others is a great joy. The priest presides at Mass and all participate by singing and praying. Others take additional roles of providing music, reading the Holy Scripture, assisting the priest, taking up the offering and helping to distribute Holy Communion.

In brief, the Mass begins with **The Introductory Rites** which include the Greeting, Penitential Rite, Glory to God and Opening Prayer. The Mass continues with **The Liturgy of the Word** which includes four readings from Scripture, an explanation and application of the readings to daily life (The Homily), a profession of faith (the Creed) and prayers asking for God's blessings.

The priest then prepares the altar for **The Liturgy of the Eucharist** during which the bread and the wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord, Jesus Christ and offered to the Father. Following the "Our Father," the congregation shares in Holy Communion.

The Mass finishes with **The Closing Rites** which include the blessing and dismissal. While only Catholics in full communion with the Church may share in Holy Communion, we invite you to join in praising God in word and song.

### **Introductory Rites**

**THE** Congregation sings a Gathering Hymn while the cross or crucifix and book of Holy Gospels are carried in procession to the altar. The Mass begins with **The Sign of the Cross, A Greeting**, an expression of sorrow and repentance for sin (**The Penitential Rite**), a song of praise to Almighty God (**The Glory to God**) and **The Opening Prayer**.

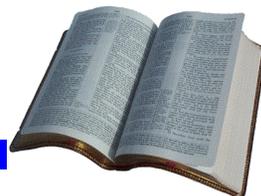
### **The Liturgy of the Word**

**THE** Congregation is seated to listen to readings from the Bible. **The First Reading** is normally from a book of the Old Testament followed by a **Psalm** which is usually sung (but may be recited). **The Second Reading** is from the New Testament. The Congregation then stands for the reading from one of the four Gospels and is seated after **The Gospel** while the priest explains the readings and shows how God's Word may be applied to one's daily life (**The Homily**).

**THE** Congregation stands and recites a prayer known as the Creed (**The Profession of Faith**) and then prays to God (**The General Intercessions**) for a variety of needs: the Church throughout the world, for cities and nations and their leaders, for people who are faced with any kind of difficulty and for the people of this particular church congregation, etc. This concludes the first part of the Mass, **The Liturgy of the Word**.

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

**THE** Congregation is seated while the priest and altar servers prepare the altar during which time ushers collect offerings to support the Church, assist the poor and other good works. These offerings, along with bread and wine are brought forward for **The Preparation of the Gifts** and **The Liturgy of the Eucharist** begins. After the recitation of an ancient prayer



addressed to God (The Preface) the Congregation sings "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord..." and then kneels for The Eucharistic Prayer and The Consecration during which the priest asks God the Father to send the power of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church believes that the Lord Jesus actually becomes present under the form of bread and wine, not just in a symbolic way, but in a real way, although the appearance of bread and wine remains. The redemptive self-offering of Jesus on the cross is made present and offered "through, with and in Him the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit to the Father" to which the congregation responds "Amen."

**PERSONS WHO CANNOT KNEEL FOR ANY REASON MAY SIT WHILE THE CONGREGATION KNEELS.**

We regret that we cannot ask our non-Catholic brothers and sisters to join in Holy Communion, but we do ask that all be united in prayer (a spiritual communion) at this sacred time.

The Congregation stands to recite **The Our Father**, gives each other **A Greeting of Peace** and prepares to receive in **Holy Communion** the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Congregation often sings a hymn or antiphon together during Holy Communion as a sign of unity. **A Closing Prayer** is said following Holy Communion and **The Liturgy of the Eucharist** is complete.

### **The Closing Rites**

**THE** priest gives **The Final Blessing** and **The Dismissal**. The Congregation sings **A Closing Hymn** and all leave with the resolve to live fully by God's word and to become more fully what they received (The Body of Christ) until meeting again the following week.