



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

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.

Welcome

Guests are always welcome and are cordially invited and encouraged to join with the congregation in praying the prayers and singing the hymns.

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 Sacred Scriptures, assisting the Priest, taking up the offering and helping to distribute Holy Communion.

The Sunday Mass begins with the **Introductory Rites** which include the **Sign of the Cross**, the **Greeting**, the **Penitential Act**, the **Gloria** (Hymn of Praise), and the **Collect** (the Opening Prayer). The Mass continues with the **Liturgy of the Word** which includes four readings from Scripture, the **Homily** (an explanation and application of the readings to daily life), the **Creed** (the Profession of Faith) and the **Universal Prayer** (prayers asking for God's blessings).

The Priest then prepares the altar and gifts for the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** during which time 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.

While only Catholics in full communion with the Church may receive Holy Communion, we invite you to join us in praising and worshiping God in Word and in song.

The Mass ends with the **Concluding Rites** which include the **Blessing** and **Dismissal**.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

The Congregation sings an Entrance Hymn while the Crucifix and Book of the Gospels are carried in procession to the altar. The Mass begins with the **Sign of the Cross**, a **Greeting**, the **Penitential Act** (an expression of sorrow and repentance for sin), the **Gloria** (a song of praise to Almighty God) and the **Collect** (the Opening Prayer).

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

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

The Congregation then stands and recites a prayer known as the Creed (the **Profession of Faith**) and then offers prayers to God (the **Universal Prayer**) 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 community, etc. This concludes the first part of the Mass, referred to as 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 provide for other charitable works. These offerings, along with bread and wine, are brought forward for the **Preparation of the Gifts** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** begins.

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

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** in 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 God the Father," to which the congregation responds "Amen."

While our non-Catholic brothers and sisters are not able to join us in receiving Holy Communion, we do ask that all be united in prayer through a spiritual communion at this time.

The Congregation stands to pray the **Our Father** and then exchanges with each other a **Greeting of Peace** to prepare us to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. The Congregation often sings a hymn or antiphon together during Holy Communion as a sign of unity. The **Prayer after Communion** is then offered which concludes the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The Priest gives the **Final Blessing** and the **Dismissal**. The Congregation usually sings a Recessional Hymn and all go forth with the resolve to live fully by God's Word and to become more fully what they have received (the Body of Christ) until meeting again the following week.

Are there other names for the Mass?

The Mass is also referred to as the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Thanksgiving), the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or the Sacred Liturgy.

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

Because at the Last Supper, 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,' and likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood, which will be shed for you.'" NAB Luke 22:20)

Why do we call the priest "Father"?

We call him "Father" because he is our spiritual father and mentor in faith. Even though we use this honorary title, we acknowledge that no one is greater than God, our Heavenly Father.

Why are there statues in the church building?

There may be statues of Jesus, Mary, Joseph or other saints who have gone before us. We do not worship statues. They are simply visual 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 candles reminds us of the light that Christ brings into the world.

Is the Mass always the same?

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

The Mass

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or to locate a Catholic church
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The Mass



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