

Celebration of Mass

Mass

The common name for the Eucharistic liturgy of the Catholic Church. Also referred to as Eucharist, Celebration of the Liturgy, Eucharistic celebration, Sacrifice of the Mass or Lord's Supper.

Do not use: "Saying Mass" or "Performing Mass".

Instead use: "Celebrating mass", "Concelebrating Mass", "Celebrating the Liturgy", or "Celebrating the Eucharist"

Liturgy *(The public prayer of the Church)*

Entrance Procession - *(Priest, deacon, altar servers, lectors, enter the church or designated place for celebration of the liturgy.)*

Entrance Song/Music - *(The song/music which takes place during the entrance procession.)*

Veneration of the Altar - *(The revering of the altar with a kiss and the optional use of incense.)*

Greeting - *(The celebrant greets all pre-sent at the liturgy, expressing the presence of the Lord to the assembled community)*

We begin the Mass with the sign of the Cross - the oldest gesture of our faith - and a greeting. In this way we go back to the earliest traditions of the Eucharist. The sign of the cross, a traditional prelude to prayer, is a form of self-blessing with strong baptismal overtones.

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[All together make the sign of the cross.]

All: Amen.

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

The "altar" is by its very nature a table of sacrifice and at the same time a table of the paschal banquet. It is a symbol of Christ as well as of the whole Christian Community. The veneration of the altar at the beginning of the celebration is an act of greeting, which recalls that the common table is holy and sacred to the action of the assembly. It is the place from which prayer ascends like incense before God.

Penitential Rite – *(A general acknowledgment of sinfulness by the entire assembly, accompanied by requests for God's mercy and forgiveness.)*

Priest: Coming together as God's family, with confidence let us ask the Father's forgiveness, for he is full of gentleness and compassion.

All: I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord, our God.

Recalling our faults and sins, in preparation for the unity of the Eucharist, is an ancient tradition in the Church. We recall our common need for salvation and God's merciful compassion.

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

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).)*

All: Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give
you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

This joyful prayer - The Gloria - is really a song of praise, a "canticle". The Gloria -- is found in Christian prayer books as early as the year 380!! At first, it was sung only on special feasts, but later it was included in every Sunday celebration.

Opening Prayer – *(This prayer by the celebrant expresses the general theme of the celebration.)*

Priest. Let us pray.

[After a time of silent prayer, the Priest sings or says the Opening Prayer, which is different for each Mass. At the end, the people proclaim their consent.]

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word – *(That section of the celebration where readings from the Scriptures are proclaimed and reflected upon.)*

First Reading (Old Testament selection)

Lector. A reading from the Book (or Letter, or Acts) of...

[Different readings are prescribed for each day; after the lector ends, the people respond:]

Lector. The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

The presence of the Old Testament in the first reading manifests the Church's firm conviction that all Scripture is the Word of God. God is speaking to His chosen people in the words of love through the whole Liturgy of the Word. The reading prepares the table of God's Word for the faithful and open up the riches of the Bible for them.

The Responsorial Psalm is the Assembly's response to the reading, which has just been proclaimed. The Christian Community uses God's Word - taken from the Psalms of the Old Testament - as a response to God's Word, thereby making God's Word their own.

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; *the people join in the repeated response.*].

Second Reading (New Testament selection)

Lector. A reading from the Book (or Letter, or Acts) of...

[*Different readings are prescribed for each day; after the lector ends, the people respond:*]

Lector. The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

In the Second Reading, formerly termed the Epistle, the assembly encounters the early Church living its Christian faith. This witness of the apostolic community provides an example for all times, since Christians of every age are to recall the love of the Father made present in Christ, the good news of redemption and the duty of Christian love. All followers of Jesus are called to live decently and without blemish, to be tolerant of one another and to be steadfast in the faith.

Alleluia Acclamation or Gospel Acclamation – (*This acclamation of praise to God follows the second reading and prepares the assembly for the Gospel.*)

Choir or Cantor. Alleluia! **All repeat: Alleluia!**

Choir or Cantor. [verse] **All repeat: Alleluia!**
The "Alleluia" may be repeated two or more times.

The Gospel is very sacred, since these are the words and deeds of Christ, we surround it by many distinct acts of respect; one of these is that we stand for the Gospel Reading.

Whereas, any lector could proclaim the other readings, a special minister was appointed to read the Gospel. In the early Church it was the Deacon who was considered the special example of Christ as servant. Only in the absence of a Deacon does the Priest proclaim the Gospel.

The making of small signs of the Cross on the book, forehead, mouth and heart express readiness to open one's mind to the Word, to confess it with the mouth, and to safeguard it in the heart. We are now ready to listen to the Gospel.

Gospel:

Before the Gospel Proclamation:

Priest. The Lord be with you. **All: And also with you.**

Priest. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...
[*Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John*]

All: Glory to you, Lord!

After the Gospel Proclamation:

Priest. The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

The homily (sermon) 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.)

Nicene Creed

**All: We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the
only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary, and
became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.**

Amen.

And now, as we stand together to proclaim our faith through the Creed, we are responding "Yes" to the message of God's Word. The oldest faith statement in the Church is called the Apostle's Creed.

We bow at the words "BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT HE WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, AND BECAME MAN" because the Incarnation is the most sacred moment of all creation.

General Intercessions / Prayer of the Faithful

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.

Lector. ...let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer. [repeated after each petition]

Liturgy of the Eucharist – *(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 is distributed to the assembly.)*

The second major part of the Mass contains elements of two ancient traditions - the meal, or bread breaking, which Jesus left as His memorial; and the Hebrew tradition of sacrifice offered to God. These two elements weave together in the symbolic actions and prayers of the Eucharist.

Please note that up until now, all of the actions have taken place away from the altar (either at the Priest's chair or at the pulpit also known as the ambo). Everything will now center on the altar where the Eucharistic Sacrifice will take place. The altar is prepared; the gifts are "set apart" and presented as a sign of the community's desire to incorporate itself in the sacrifice of Christ.

You will recall that when Jesus was at Supper with His Disciples, He took bread, broke the bread and gave it to His Disciples saying, "Do this in memory of me." The Mass then, is the perpetuation of the Last Supper of Holy Thursday and the Sacrifice on the Cross, of Good Friday.

Blessed Sacrament - *The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, whether at the Mass or reserved in a special place in the Church.*

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

Incense - *Incense (material used to produce a fragrant odor when burned) is used as a symbol of the Church's offering; the rising smoke represents the prayers of the assembly rising to God.*

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.*

Presentation of the Gifts / Preparation of the Altar:

The priest (deacon) mixes a little water with the wine to symbolize the human and the divine natures of Christ joined in the Mystery of the Incarnation - God becoming human as the Priest continues.

Priest. Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

Priest. Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

Priest. Pray, my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

All: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all the Church.

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.*

[*The Priest sings or says this prayer, which is different for each Mass. At the end, the people respond.*]

All: Amen.

The priest washes his hands as a symbol of internal purification to prepare for the most sacred part of the Mass. In former days, it was quite often a real necessity for the Priest to wash his hands after receiving the gifts of the people - which may have included fresh fish and live chickens as well as bread and wine!

Eucharistic Prayer - *The prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. It is the center and high point of the celebration. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Church believes that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.*

Now we arrive at the most sacred part, the Eucharistic Prayer, "the center and high point to the entire celebration. It is essentially a statement of praise and thanksgiving for God's works of salvation, making present both the body and blood of the Lord and his great redeeming actions in our lives.

Recall that since the Apostles were Jews, they brought their familiar religious practices to Christianity. The Eucharistic Prayer is based on the Jewish Table Prayers.

The priest prays to God on our behalf, but as a reminder that we are all offering this prayer, we will enter into a dialogue three times. The first will take place at the beginning of the Preface.

Preface Dialogue - *The introductory dialogue between the celebrant and assembly in which all are invited to join in prayer and thanksgiving to God. The Holy, Holy, Holy The response of the community to the preface and a continuation of the general theme of praise and thanks. Also called the Sanctus.*

Preface Dialogue:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

All: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Sanctus:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Memorial Acclamation:

Priest: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

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.*

Doxology - *A final prayer of praise of God.- summarize the Eucharistic Prayer*

Priest: Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

Amen - *Also called the Great Amen. It is the acclamation by the people expressing their agreement with all that has been said and done in the Eucharistic prayer.*

All: Amen! [may be sung more than once]

COMMUNION RITE

Lord's Prayer - *("Our Father..." The prayer of petition for both daily food (which for Christians means also the Eucharistic bread) and the forgiveness of sins.*

Priest: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

**All: Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

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.*

The Sign of Peace has been part of the Mass as early as the fourth century. Peace - "SHALOM" - means all possible prosperity. We pray that each person will live in total and complete harmony with nature, self and God. In the sign of peace we make a spiritual pledge to be open to each other as Christ would, both in the celebration of the Liturgy and after it. Since the Risen Christ is the source of all peace, this gesture expresses faith that Christ is present in the Assembly because of reconciliation and wholeness.

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Priest: The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Deacon or Priest: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

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.*

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

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

Communion:

Priest: This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

A small portion of the large host is now placed into the chalice signifying the union of the Body and the Blood of Christ. Just as the double consecration, that is, OF the bread and OF the wine, represented the death of Christ, so it was deemed necessary to symbolize the reuniting of the Body and Blood of Christ before communion - a symbolic re-enactment of the Lord's resurrection.

All: Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

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.*

Priest: Let us pray.

[All pray in silence for a while, unless a period of silence has already been observed. Then the Priest sings or says the Prayer after Communion, which is different for each Mass. At the end, the people proclaim their consent.]

All: Amen.

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.*

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Dismissal:

Deacon or Priest. The Mass is ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

The Priest will now reverence the altar once again as he did when he began the Liturgy. It is similar to the ritual of love when we visit a friend or relative. The kiss of farewell at the end of the celebration mirrors the kiss whereby the altar is greeted at the beginning of Mass. Both are gestures venerating the table as the symbol of Christ.

A hymn is usually sung as the ministers leave the sanctuary. All those attending the Mass are expected to remain until the ministers have reached the rear of the Church, so that they can greet us as we leave.