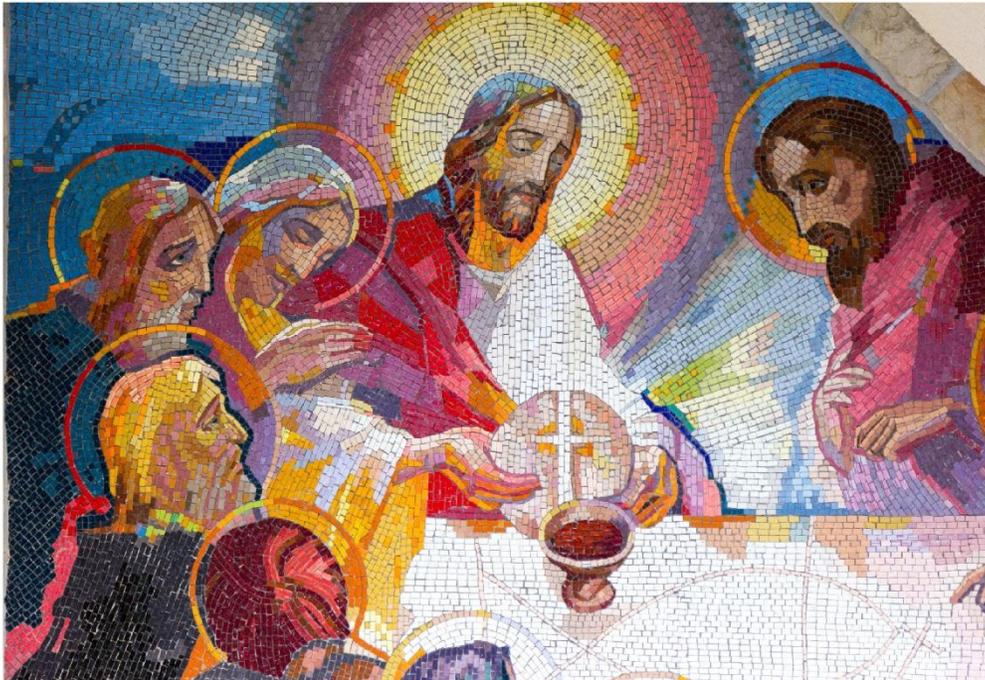


The Miracle of the Mass

Preparing our Hearts to Encounter Jesus Christ in the Eucharist



“Jesus has made Himself the Bread of Life to give us life. Night and day, He is there.

If you really want to grow in love, come back to the healing, sustaining, and transforming rays of Jesus, radiating from the Eucharist, come back to that Adoration.”

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Sunday is the day that God has reserved for us to rest and delight in Him. On that day, we visit Jesus by attending Mass. There, we get to know Him better and deepen our friendship with Him. Christ invites us to go with Him to his Father's house, the Church! There, Jesus descends from Heaven, enters our hearts and transforms them little by little with his love, until they become just like his own Sacred Heart! Let's get excited and prepare ourselves well for this great encounter!

Upon entering the Church, we make the sign of the cross, invoking the Holy Trinity to guide our thoughts, our words, our actions, and our hearts to God. Afterwards, our eyes look for the Tabernacle. If the red light is on, Jesus is there – present in the Eucharist! With a heart filled with love, kindness, and respect, we now genuflect, by touching our right knee to the floor before Him, our God and King.



Having entered our pew, we prepare ourselves for mass to begin. In these quiet moments before mass, take time to tell Jesus in your heart that you love Him and that you desire to have a deep friendship with Him.

The mass is divided in four parts: The Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. Each part of the mass has its own prayers and special meaning. Let us explore those now!

I. INTRODUCTORY RITE



1.1 Greeting

The mass starts when the priest enters the church and kisses the altar, where Jesus will soon be offered. Along with the priest, we make the sign of the cross. The priest then greets the faithful and prays for the grace and love of God to be with us.

1.2 Entrance Antiphon

A line from the Sacred Scriptures is now read that reminds us how much God loves us and prepares us to begin the mass and meet Jesus!

1.3 Penitential Rite

We recognize before God that sometimes we sin and offend Jesus and our neighbor. This is the time to ask for pardon from God and others. We must learn each day from Jesus' example as He carried his cross to Calvary. Each time He fell, He got back up! So too, must we rise from each fall persevering in our efforts every day to give Jesus our best. As we strike our chest three times, we recall the pain that our souls feel for having sinned against God.

It is also the time to forgive others as generously as God has forgiven us! We are called to be merciful as Jesus was at the cross, when He forgave us all, including those who crucified Him.

1.4 Kyrie Eleison

Being the sinners that we are, we pray to Jesus to have mercy on us, trusting that his infinite mercy will fill our hearts with his love. "For the one to whom much is forgiven, loves more."

1.5 Glory to God

This is a great hymn sung in worship to the Holy Trinity for all his goodness and might. In this moment, we praise God and adore Him. It was the angels who first sang this hymn of Glory to the baby Jesus at Bethlehem. Now it is our turn to sing this hymn of Glory, along with all the angels and saints in heaven, to Jesus who is really present in this holy mass!



1.6 Opening Prayer

Now together with the priest we gather our intentions for the mass and offer them with Jesus up to his heavenly Father.

II. LITURGY OF THE WORD

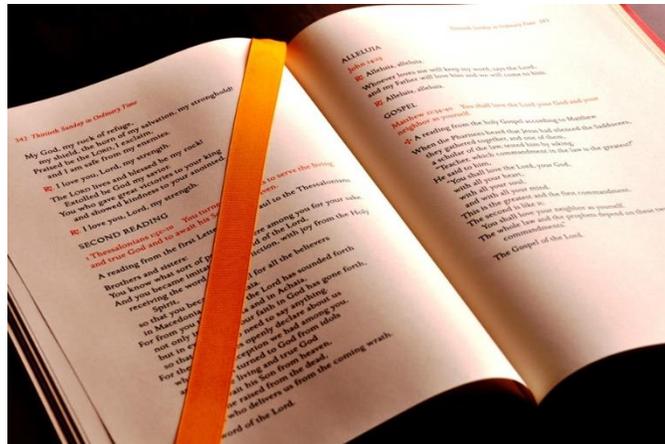
During the Liturgy of the Word, we listen to the readings to get to know Jesus' heart better, as well as his love message to the world, the straightest way to Heaven! This way, our soul is nurtured and grows in appreciation and love to Jesus. The more we know Him, the closer our loving hearts will be to God!

2.1 First Reading

The First Reading usually comes from the Old Testament, the History of Salvation before Christ was born. It is the faith journey of the chosen people led by the prophets, who inspired by the Holy Spirit, helped them prepare their hearts for the arrival of the Savior. It announces that God, since the beginning of time, loves us dearly, and his deep desire to share with us an eternity of love in heaven.

2.2 Responsorial Psalm

The Psalms are poems and chants that express the feelings of souls inspired by God's revelation of Himself in the Old Testament. With psalms we worship God, recognize how good He is, tell Him that we trust Him, and thank Him for taking care of us and guiding us. Let's learn the response to the Psalm and keep praying it along the day to glorify God!



2.3 Second Reading

The second reading is read on Sundays and important festivities of the Church. It comes from the New Testament, after Jesus had resurrected and ascended to Heaven. It is usually part of the letters from the Apostles to the first Christian communities, written to share his teachings and to deepen and solidify their faith in Jesus!

2.4 Gospel Acclamation

Before the priest reads the life of Jesus, we all say: "Alleluia, Alleluia" rejoicing that we will hear God's word! During Lent, we all say: "Honor and glory to You Oh Lord" instead. Afterwards, a short phrase is read which summarizes how much God loves us and how much we admire Him. At the end we repeat the "Alleluia, Alleluia" or the "Honor and Glory to You Oh Lord".

2.5 Gospel

When the priest reads the Gospel, we stand up as a sign of respect and do the complete sign of the cross: on our forehead, so God helps us understand his word; on our mouth, so He helps us transmit his love message through our words; and on our heart, so it resembles more and more his Sacred Heart.



We are called to be very attentive, this is one of the most important parts of the mass, because we will listen to the words and life of Jesus told by four of his friends, the Evangelists. Their names are St. Mark, St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John.

The evangelists share with us the love message that Jesus brought, to form our hearts and lead our lives to an eternity of God's love in Heaven! When finished reading, the priest, as a sign of deep respect, kisses the Gospel before closing it. It is the word of the Lord, the most loving words ever written or ever to be written!

2.6 Homily

The Homily or Sermon is when the priest preaches to us to help us understand the scriptures. By getting to know Jesus through them, we can follow his testimony, grow spiritually, and take God's message to our everyday living, thus persevering in God's way!

2.7 Profession of Faith

The creed is the longest prayer of the mass. It is a summary of all the main truths that we believe as Catholics! In this moment, we reflect upon every phrase we pray.

We stand on our feet and we affirm what we believe of God, that He created everything and is almighty, that his son, Jesus Christ, was born of Virgin Mary, died, and resurrected to save us. We also say that we believe in the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, that we belong to. We recognize that our faith comes from the apostles and that in Rome we have the Pope, as representant of Jesus on earth who guides our church. We affirm that we believe in baptism and eternal life in God's love. Such a powerful prayer!

2.8 Prayer of the Faithful

It is when we all together pray to God for the Church, for the sick, for the poor, for loving families, for vocations, for all that we need to go to Heaven, and for all those who suffer. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew, 18,20)

If there's a special intention we have, this is the time to share it with Jesus, we will all as a community of faith, pray to God for it. We do that by responding after every intention: “Lord, hear our prayer”.

After finishing this prayer, the alms collection follows. We offer to God, the Church, and the poor, part of the fruit of our work, as a precious gift to Jesus who lives in every person. It is an opportunity to be generous and share our blessings with those in need, remembering always that “God is never out done in generosity!”



III. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Liturgy of the Eucharist leads us to the moment in which the loving sacrifice of Jesus, God's beloved son, will be offered on the altar, the miracle of bread becoming Jesus Christ!

3.1 Presentation of the Gifts

The priest prepares and elevates the gifts to offer to God in the altar, the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Jesus.



We offer in this moment to Jesus all our joy, our worries, our work, our effort, ourselves. We could pray by saying to Jesus: "I love you and I offer to You all my life, and all who I am". That way, God receives everything we offer to Him, and blesses it.

The priest in that moment asks God to receive with tenderness everything we offer to Him. We respond: "Blessed be God forever."

After the Offertory, the priest washes his hands asking God for forgiveness for his sins, so his soul is ready to receive Jesus in his precious heart.



3.2 Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic prayer is offered by the priest before the Consecration, to prepare our hearts for the most important moment of the mass! Here, we recognize that it is right and necessary to always thank God, it is a special moment where we put everything in God's hands. We finish this Eucharistic Prayer by praising Him that He is Holy, Holy, Holy (for the Holy Trinity).

When the priest imposes his hands over the offerings, praying to the Holy Spirit to descend upon

them, we kneel in an adoration attitude, to await the most transcendental and beautiful part of the Mass, the Consecration, the moment in which the bread and wine turn wholly into the Body and Blood of Christ.

3.3 Consecration

When we are kneeling, we pay special attention because the moment in which Jesus will descend is approaching. The priest shares what happened in the Last Supper, and representing Jesus, he reads the words that Christ acclaimed at that time. The bell rings as a celebration of this joyful moment of salvation. It is a sublime act in which the priest elevates the bread so it transubstantiates into the Holy Eucharist, the body of Christ, and the chalice, into the blood of Christ. The bread and wine are no longer bread and wine! A miracle has taken place! They are Jesus' true body, blood, soul and divinity!



Jesus descends to offer Himself as sacrifice on the altar for our love and salvation. We can imagine that we are standing close to Him, at the feet of the cross, accompanying Him and consoling Him. We can share from heart to heart how much we love Jesus, pray so He increases our faith, and allows us to serve Him always.

3.4 Eucharistic Prayer

Now with Christ present on the altar, the priest prays for the Church, for the Pope, for the priests and bishops, for all of us, and for the people that are in Heaven. We pray too for our family or friends that have passed away.

The priest keeps on asking for the intercession before God of Virgin Mary and the Saints, so one day we all reunite in Heaven. The Community of Saints is present at this point, when we all adore God in Heaven and Earth. We finish giving glory to God, for Christ, with Him, and in Him, united to the Holy Spirit!

3.5 Communion Rite

The beautiful moment to receive Jesus physically in our hearts is closer. For this transcendental moment, we prepare praying with Jesus present in the altar, the perfect prayer that He taught us: **the Our Father**. We pray to our Heavenly Father adoring Him, asking for his help and guidance in our mission, and praying that He frees us from evil, and helps us not to fall into temptation.



3.6 Sign of Peace

God wants us to be in peace with Him and with the others before receiving Him. For that, before receiving Communion, we shake our hands with each other as a sign of peace, for Jesus rejoices when we love one another, when we are content with who has offended us, and are at peace in our hearts. The peace be with you always!



3.7 Breaking of the Bread

The priest shows Jesus in the Eucharist, and reminds us that we are very fortunate to be able to receive Him. At this moment, we look at the Eucharist, and listen to what the priest says... in front of us is Jesus, the lamb of God, who forgives us, loves us, and saves us.

God knows us, and loves us so much that even if He knows we are not perfect, He wants to come to our hearts. We accept that we are not worthy to receive Him, but we tell Him to only say the word so our heart is healed. It is a moment of faith, to believe that Jesus upon visiting our hearts can transform them little by little into the hearts of the saints that God calls us to be!

After this moment in which we remember that it is Jesus who is truly the Eucharist, the priest receives Holy Communion and prepares to give Communion to the faithful. Our God and our King who is almighty and eternal becomes the Holy Host to dwell in our hearts and transform them forever!

3.8 Communion Antiphon

This short phrase is a message to reflect upon, while walking towards the altar to receive Christ in our heart. As we walk, all our attitude shows deep appreciation, love, and respect for what will happen: we are walking towards Jesus, who invited us and is looking forward to entering our hearts and transform them with his blessings and love!



3.9 Communion

It is the most precious moment of the mass filled with loving expectation, we truly receive Jesus in our hearts! A blessing beyond words! When Jesus dwells in us, let's talk to Him heart to heart, listen to Him, and thank Him. Pray to Him to help us grow in love, to desire to be good, and for our hearts to be only his. Dearest Jesus be the center of our lives!

After receiving communion, it's Jesus and us in our hearts, an indescribable spiritual treasure! Let's share with Jesus our feelings, needs, and worries; let's pray for his loving guidance, care, and protection every day! Let's share with Him our plans, our greatest fears, our most wonderful joys! Let's ask Him what his plans are for us, how can we help to build his loving kingdom! It is then, when Jesus becomes our best friend, when a profound spiritual relationship with our God and Savior grows!



IV. CONCLUDING RITE

4.1 Final Blessing

At the end of mass, we receive with much respect and a deep gratitude, the blessing of God that the priest gives us. We do the sign of the cross and go in peace to worship God and serve others. What an amazing way to share the joy of receiving Jesus in our hearts, to love others like He loves us!

We wait until the priest exits the Church while singing and worshipping God, thanking Him for all the blessings received, and asking Our Lady to accompany us and guide us always! Finally, we genuflect before Our God and King, and take Him in our hearts to help us be the saints He calls us to be!



Mass every Sunday is about getting to know Jesus better, letting his heart rejoice in our love and worship, and deepening our friendship with Him. What a gift each mass to be able to receive Jesus truly into our hearts in Communion and allowing Him to transform them into his Sacred Heart! There is nothing greater we can do on earth to prepare ourselves for heaven than attend mass! Let us go to mass as often as possible and bring others to come to know and share this great gift with us!

