

THE RICHES AND BLESSINGS OF
THE MASS

A Guide to Understand the Mass

Contents

THE MASS – IT'S BACKGROUND	p. 3
THE MASS – FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE	p. 5
THE MASS – FROM CHURCH HISTORY	p. 7
THE MASS – EUCHARISTIC MIRACLES	p. 8
THE MASS – PREPARATION FOR	p. 11
THE MASS – THE ORDER OF	p. 12
THE MASS – SOME TERMS EXPLAINED	p. 31
THE MASS – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	p. 31
HELPFUL READING	p. 32
HELPFUL WEBSITES	p. 33
BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES	p. 33

THE MASS IT'S BACKGROUND

The word “Mass” comes from the Latin word *missa*, meaning “the celebration of the Eucharist” (the Lord’s Supper).¹

The Mass is a marvelous heritage that Jesus left to His disciples on the night of the Last Supper when He said to them: “Do this in memory of Me.” His disciples were faithful to Him. From the first days after the Resurrection, they met every first day of the week and have continued to do so for more than two thousand years.

The Mass is so rich that it is limiting to use only one word to name it. Throughout history, it has been called the Lord’s Supper, Last Supper, Breaking of the Bread. Today we like to call it Eucharist. This word means *thanksgiving*.

At the Eucharist we celebrate Christ who becomes present in our midst.

The Mass includes many words and many rites. Each word, each rite is destined to open our spirit and our heart to the riches of a mystery that we will never fully discover.²

Because Jesus commanded his apostles to “Do this in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:24; Lk. 22:19), the Eucharist soon became the primary act of Christian worship in the primitive Church. This reenactment of the Lord’s Last Supper was accompanied by readings from the Old Testament, accounts of Jesus’ life and teaching, and prayers. Many early Christian

writings record these various readings and prayers. This “prayer service,” with the Eucharist as its center, came to be called “the Mass” by Catholics. Although the Mass has developed somewhat over the centuries, its parts are essentially the same as the worship services of the early Church.

Catholics understand participation in the Eucharist primarily as the ultimate sign of the unity that exists among Christians. Because the Eucharist or the Lord’s Supper makes present the central mystery of the Christian faith – the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus – Catholics consider it the highest form of Christian prayer. It is not just the prayer of the individual, nor of the priest who presides over it, but it is truly the prayer of the whole church, gathered to worship Jesus, our Savior and great high priest (Heb. 7:26-27; 8:1).³

The Second Vatican Council insisted that it is not enough for Catholics to participate in the liturgy in a merely external way: *In order that the sacred liturgy may produce its full effect, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their thoughts match their words, and they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain.* (2 Cor. 6:1)⁴

Where Catholics are participating in the liturgy of the Mass without true faith, without conversion, or without the proper attitude of heart, they first must be called to repentance, faith, and conversion so that they will be worshipping not only in body, but “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).⁵

THE MASS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

(The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist)

John 6:51-56 (Eucharist foreshown)

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven.

52 If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world.

53 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

54 Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.

55 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.

56 For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed.

57 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.

58 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

59 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever. (Douay-Rheims Version)⁶

Matthew 26:26-27 (Eucharist instituted)

26 And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is my body.

27 And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this.

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.

Mark 14:22-24 22 And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread; and blessing, broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye. This is my body.

23 And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it.

24 And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many.

Luke 22:19-20 19 And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me.

20 In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you.

Acts 2:42 **(The early Church devoted themselves to receiving the Eucharist)** 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (RSV)⁷

1 Corinthians 10:16, 21. **(The Eucharist is a participation in Christ's body and blood)** 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

1 Corinthians 11:23-32. **(The Eucharist must be received worthily)** 23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

THE MASS FROM CHURCH HISTORY

St. Ignatius (A.D. 110) "[heretics] abstain from Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ ..."⁸

St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 150) "... not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but ... as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer

set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the Flesh and Blood of that incarnated Jesus.”⁹

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (A.D. 195) “He [Jesus] has declared the cup, a part of his creation, to be His own Blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, He has established as His own Body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.”¹⁰

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 350) “He himself, therefore, having declared and said of the Bread, ‘This is My Body,’ who will dare any longer to doubt? And when He Himself has affirmed and said, ‘This is My Blood,’ who can ever hesitate and say it is not His Blood?”¹¹

St. Cyril (A.D. 350) “Do not, therefore, regard the bread and wine as simply that, for they are, according to the Master’s declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm.”¹²

THE MASS EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLE’S

Lanciano, Italy – In the 8th century, a priest after pronouncing the words of consecration had a strong temptation to doubt the Real presence of Jesus. Before the startled priest’s eyes, the Sacred Host visibly changed into a circle of Flesh. The consecrated wine was transformed into bright Blood, coagulating into five small clots, different in form and size.

Four authentications have been performed throughout the centuries, but the last verification, ordered by the Holy See in 1970, is the most scientifically complete. Microscopic studies document that:

- The Flesh is real human flesh and the Blood is real human blood.
- The Flesh is composed of cardiac muscular tissue, having no trace whatsoever of any materials or agents used for preservation of flesh.
- Both the Flesh and Blood belong to the same blood “type AB”.
- The proteins in the Blood are in the same proportions as those found in normal fresh blood.

This “on-going” miracle is visible even to this day, after more than 1200 years of existence. The Host-Flesh appears rose-colored when back lighted. The color of the five clots of coagulated blood is a brownish-red hue tending toward yellow. (Canon Domenico Coli had a Monstrance made and the precious Relics were placed into it on April 16, 1713).¹³

We believe that Jesus can heal and deliver through the Eucharist. I will tell you it is one thing to believe it and quite another to see it happen.

I was assigned a group of teenagers to help facilitate a conference weekend. I was surprised when I met my group consisting of gang members complete with tattoos. They were apathetic and rebellious during

the teachings and testimonies. Throughout the weekend they continued to be stubborn.

At the end of the day, we were asked to be silent and to kneel because a Priest was bringing the Blessed Sacrament into the room to bless the youth. Everyone knelt except my group who refused to kneel and remained standing in rebellion.

When the Blessed Sacrament entered the room I was amazed at what happened. Instantly they all fell to their knees and began to weep! The power of the Blessed Sacrament brought them to their knees and broke open their hearts. All the walls came down and they wept like babies! The pain locked within them came gushing forth. These teens had many challenges in their respective families and were trying to cope with difficult things: divorced parents, drugs, gangs, peer pressure, lust. They were carrying a lot of anger, even rage. Yet they were afraid.

In Jesus' Eucharistic Presence they experienced healing. Through the Blessed Sacrament they were delivered from many demonic influences that held them in bondage. Only an experience of God's love could heal them. I knelt in Eucharistic amazement, humbled and grateful. It was a scene I will never forget.

There is power before the Blessed Sacrament. Human defense mechanisms fall down. He sees us as we are and loves us despite of our resistance. The young people in my group experienced a conversion of heart. The power of Eucharistic love compelled them to a posture of repentance and the

Holy Spirit filled them with new life. Jesus' deliverance ministry, which is part of His healing ministry, continues in and through the infinite graces of the Blessed Sacrament. (Kathleen Beckman, July 8, 2010).¹⁴

THE MASS PREPARATION FOR

Koinonia is the Greek word first used to describe *Holy Communion*. *Koinonia* means *a family bond, a union*. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus Christ, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. In Christ we experience again our essential union shared with all who are members of His Body. Therefore, we need to prepare ourselves the best we can.

First of all, we need to examine our conscience and ask forgiveness for any ways we have turned from God or injured ourselves or others. If we have serious sin, we need to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We need to fast from food and drink (except water) for one hour before going to Holy Communion. We fast in this way to prepare ourselves physically to receive the Bread of Life.

Similarly, it is good to prepare ourselves spiritually to receive God's Word, which is spirit and life. A time-honored method of preparation is to read the Gospel and the Readings before Mass and take some time reflecting on them. What is the Lord saying to you, to His Body, and to all humanity, through the Readings of the day?

When you get to church, take time before Mass to be quiet and enter the presence of the Lord. Speak to Our Lord; tell Him you believe Him, hope in Him, and love Him. During Mass, sing the hymns, listen to the readings, and pray the prayers with all your heart. When you go up to Communion, tell Jesus, “I greatly desire to receive You, dear Jesus!”¹⁵

THE MASS THE ORDER OF¹⁶

Introductory Rites

Entrance Chant or song. Stand

(When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest and the faithful, standing, sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross, while the Priest, facing the people, says:)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. People: **Amen.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ Making the Sign of the Cross on ourselves at the beginning of the Mass reminds us that we our children of the True and Living Triune God and have been baptized in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Only those who have been baptized can fully participate in the Eucharist. Let us remember that Christ has given us the sign of the greatest love on the Cross).

Greeting

(The Priest greets the people, saying:) (Priest will choose A., B., or C.)

A. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

B. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ The phrase “And with your spirit” is derived from St. Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy, which concludes: “The Lord be with your spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). For St. Paul, the “spirit” was the spiritual part of man most influenced by the divine).

Penitential Act (Priest will choose A., B., or C.)

A. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sin, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(A brief pause for silence follows. Then all recite together the formula of general confession:)

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

(You strike your breast each time you say the word *fault*:)

Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you,

my brother and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

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

People: **Amen.**

B. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

People: **For we have sinned against you.**

Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

People: **And grant us you salvation.**

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

People: **Amen.**

C. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(A brief pause for silence follows.)

(The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, then says the following or other invocations with:)

Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy):

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

People: **Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.**

Priest: You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.
Or: Christ, eleison.

People: **Christ, have mercy.** Or: **Christe, eleison.**

Priest: You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

People: **Lord, have mercy.** Or: **Kyrie, eleison.**

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

People: **Amen.**

Kyrie (Greek for “Lord have mercy)

(These invocations follow, unless they have just occurred in a formula of the Penitential Act.)

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

(Commentary:¹⁷ The Penitential Act at the beginning of the Mass is not there to humiliate us but to help us. In the Gospels many individuals have called upon Jesus for His mercy and help. In Latin the word *pietas* is translated “tenderness,” “love,” “affection,” “forbearance,” “leniency.” It is the merciful tenderness of Christ that we call upon.)

Gloria

(When prescribed, this hymn is either sung or said:)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

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.

(Commentary:¹⁷ When Jesus was born, the angels sang: *Glory to God in the highest*. Inspired by these words, a fourth century author composed the *Gloria* that we say or sing during the Mass. This hymn gives glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit for what They are and for what They have done.)

Collect (The name now used only for short prayers before the Epistle in the Mass).

Priest: Let us pray.

(All pray in silence for a while. Then the Priest says the prayer. At the end the people acclaim:) **Amen.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ At the end of the prayers the priest says the Hebrew word *Amen*. The word “Amen” manifests our adherence to what has just been claimed. The word “Amen” manifest also our desire that the prayer we present to God be granted. That is why it is translated by “So be it.”)

Liturgy of the Word

(Commentary:¹⁷ The Eucharist is celebrated on two tables. The first one, from which the Word of God is proclaimed and the second one to which the bread and wine are brought, is the altar. Christ gives Himself first to the believers at the table of the Word. Then He gives Himself at the table of the bread and the wine. On these two tables, he becomes our spiritual food. We receive Him in both ways, but it is always Him we receive.

When someone speaks to us, basic courtesy requires listening to him. When God speaks to us during the Mass through biblical texts, we should lend an ear, and our heart toward the one who speaks to us).

First Reading of Scripture

sit

(To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:)
The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

(The psalmist or cantor sings or says the Psalm, with the people making the response.)

(Commentary:¹⁷ Why do we read or sing from the Old Testament? Simple answer: it is because these texts are

the “Word of God,” as well as those of the New Testament. According to the Second Vatican Council, “the New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament and the Old is unveiled in the New.” The texts of the Old Testament are, therefore, to be received with joy and veneration).

Second Reading of Scripture

(After this, there is to be a Second Reading, a reader reads it from the ambo, as above. “*Ambo*”, a word Greek in origin meaning a mountain or elevation (platform) in which the Scripture is read. To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:)

The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ When at the end of a biblical reading the lector says: “The Word of the Lord,” we answer: “Thanks be to God.” By saying these words we acknowledge the wisdom of God, of His words and His actions).

Gospel Acclamation

stand

(The Alleluia or another chant laid down by the rubrics follows, as the liturgical season requires. The word “*Alleluia*” means *Praise the Lord*. We stand during the sung *Alleluia* as a sign of tribute given to Christ who come again to speak to us through the words of the Gospel.)

Gospel Dialogue

(Deacon or Priest sings or says:)

The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

(Deacon or Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to N.)

People: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel Reading

(Commentary:¹⁷ When the priest or the deacon announces which Gospel will be proclaimed on a specific Sunday, he makes a Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the forehead, the mouth, and the chest. The faithful imitate him. By this triple gesture, they ask that their spirit, their lips and their heart be purified to welcome the Word. Furthermore they ask to understand well the Word they will hear (sign on the forehead), to keep it deep down in their being (sign of the heart) and to spread it around them (sign on the lips).

(The Deacon or the Priest, proclaims the Gospel. At the end of the Gospel he acclaims:)

The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ At the end of the Gospel, the priest or the deacon says: “The Gospel of the Lord.” We answer: “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” It is directed to the Lord Jesus. The Second Vatican Council states that Christ is present in His Word. It is He “Who still announces the Gospel.” So it is Him that we acclaim).

(Commentary:¹⁷ Why three readings? Before the Second Vatican Council, two readings were proclaimed during

the Mass on Sundays. Since this Council (which opened on October 11, 1962 and closed on December 3, 1965), three readings are proclaimed and they spread out over a three-year cycle. The purpose of this is to help people coming to Mass to know better the book, the Bible, a source of life and comfort that nobody will ever exhaust).

Homily (sermon)

sit

(Commentary:¹⁷ When the priest gives his homily he tries to show how the texts of the Bible proclaimed still refer to us today).

(Commentary:¹⁷ Let the message sent by God penetrate us. In the second century BC, Qoheleth wrote: “There is a time for everything. A time for keeping silence and a time to speak.” It is advisable during the Mass to keep a sacred silence after a reading or after the homily so that God’s Word may speak to us).

Profession of Faith

(Commentary:¹⁸ The most crucial and influential part of Sacred Tradition is the Creed. The word comes from the Latin *credo*, meaning “I believe.” The two most ancient and most important creeds are the *Apostles’ Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*. The *Nicene Creed* was the fruit of the Council of Nicea, which convened in A.D. 325 to condemn the heresy of Arianism and to affirm the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. The *Nicene Creed* reflects one’s loyalty and allegiance to the truths of the Catholic Church).

(At the end of the Homily, the Symbol or Profession of Faith or Creed, when prescribed, is either sung or said:)

I believe in one God, The Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.)

And by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with 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.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Especially during Lent and Easter Time, the baptismal Symbol, known as the Apostles' Creed, may be used.)

(Commentary:¹⁸ The Apostles' Creed is a Christian statement of belief attributed to the 12 apostles. The origin of this creed comes from the first century A.D.)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.)

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

(Commentary:¹⁷ After having heard the Word of God and affirmed it with the Creed, we respond again to this Word with prayer. Then follows the Universal Prayer, that is, the Prayer of the Faithful or Bidding Prayers. As a priestly people we unite with one another to pray for

today's needs in the Church and the world. We ask God to make himself known to the four corners of the earth.)

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts

(If no Offertory Chant –song- is sung, the Priest says aloud:)

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.

People: **Blessed be God for ever.**

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.

People: **Blessed be God for ever.**

Invitation to Prayer

Priest: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

(The people rise and reply:) stand

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 his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings stand

(The Priest says the Prayer. At the end the people acclaim:) **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

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

People: **It is right and just.**

Priest and People: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. 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.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ In the book of revelation it is written that four angels, with six wings each, stand before God and proclaim constantly: “Holy, Holy, Holy.” So we are invited to join our voice to that of the angels and to the voice of all the chosen ones who acclaim God. The Eucharistic Prayer unites heaven and earth to give thanks to God, the marvelous and almighty One.

“Hosanna” comes from the Hebrew and means: “Please, save us!” Originally it was a shout, a cry for help expressed to God. Later, it was used as an acclamation or praise addressed to God Who saves us.

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” We find this phrase in Psalm 118 that was written in expectation of the Savior.)

kneel

(After the consecration the Priest sings or says:
The mystery of faith.

(And the people acclaim A., B., or C.:)

A. We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

B. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

C. Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

(At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer the Priest sings or says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

(The Priest sings or says:)

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

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, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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

Sign of Peace

(The Priest says:)

Lord Jesus Christ who said to your Apostles; Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign forever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

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

People: **And with your spirit.**

Deacon or Priest: Let us offer each other the sign of peace. *Greet those close at hand with saying, "Peace be with you."*

Fraction of the Bread

(The following is sung or said:)

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.

(The invocation may be repeated if the fraction is prolonged. Only the final time, however, is **grant us peace** said.)

Invitation to Communion

kneel

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

(Commentary:¹⁷ The rite of the Elevation of the bread and wine after the consecration exists since the beginning of the 13th century. The rite was established to motivate those present to desire for a spiritual communion with Christ through His Body and Blood).

(Together with the people:)

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion

Priest: The Body of Christ.

The communicant replies: **Amen.**

(Commentary:¹⁷ Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote: “Under each species [of the bread and wine] the whole Christ is present.” So, by receiving the bread, the believer receives the whole Christ).

Catechism of the Catholic Church could not be more clear: “at the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the word of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ’s Body and Blood ... The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ ... (No. 1333).

This is the faith of the followers of Christ since the earliest days of the Christian community. In his First Letter to the Corinthians, which scholars date to about A.D. 54, St. Paul reminds his readers: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16).

Like all religious language, “Body and Blood of Christ” is an attempt to put into human words a mystery the human intellect can never fully grasp. It is important to understand that “body and blood” is a Semitic phrase that means “the whole person.” Catholicism insists that following the consecration, the whole person of Christ (Body and Blood, soul and divinity) is present in both bread and the wine. With this realization we find ourselves smack in the middle of an overwhelmingly profound mystery, an experience of transcendent holiness, a sacred event of awesome dimensions. When we receive Communion, we may be inclined to fall on our faces in wonder and worship. There is no room for a casual attitude toward the Eucharist. There is only room for gratitude, respect, worship, and thanksgiving. Earlier generations had a deep respect for the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, on the altars and in the tabernacles of their parish churches, a sense of gratitude and worship. The more we reflect on the mystery of the Resurrection and its intimate relationship with the Sacrament, the more likely we are to gain an appropriate spirit of awe and reverence.

The Second Vatican Council, in the mid-1960s, declared that Christ is present “not only” in the person of the priest who presides in Christ’s name, “but especially in the Eucharistic species,” that is, in the consecrated bread and wine. Christ is also present “in His word since it is He Himself Who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church.” Christ is present “when the Church prays and sings, for He has promised ‘where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them (Mt. 18:20).’” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 7.*)¹⁹

“Now you,” St. Paul says, “are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). Christ is present in the assembly or congregation when we gather for Mass. Indeed, it is because the risen Christ is present in our midst, in the community of faith, that He becomes really present in the Eucharist. At the same time, He becomes present in our midst, in a unique way, because He is present in the consecrated bread and wine.

This is why the Eucharist is not a spectator activity. Everyone participates in the ritual, the whole community celebrates; in a very real sense the entire congregation “says Mass.” The priest presides, to be sure, and only he has the authority and power to consecrate the bread and wine so they become the “whole person” of the risen Christ. But theologically the priest cannot celebrate the Eucharist apart from the community of faith where Christ is present. Even in the rare instance where a priest may say Mass with no one else present, he does so only through his spiritual union with the whole Church.

THE MASS SOME TERMS EXPLAINED¹⁷

Eucharist comes from the Greek and means thanksgiving.

When bells ring. Bells symbolize the voice of God who calls His own to come to meet Him. He does not close the door to any of His children.

Greet one another. To recognize the face of Christ in the persons we sit next to.

The chasuble. The preside at the Eucharist, the priest, wears a chasuble, an outer garment of purple, white, red or green. Each color represents a spiritual truth (a sign of victory, joy, light, growth in sanctity, the Passion of Christ, the blood of the martyrs, fire, love, etc.)

Kiss of the altar. The altar represents Christ. At the beginning of the Mass the priest venerates the altar by a kiss.

Sign of the Cross. The sign of the Cross reminds us of the only true and living God. We are His children, baptized in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

THE MASS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS²⁰

When Jesus said, “This is my body” and “this is my blood” at the Last Supper, was he speaking figuratively or literally. The symbolic or memorial view of the Eucharist is completely at odds with two

thousand years of historic Christianity. Doesn't it seem reasonable that if anyone would know what the Lord meant when He said "this is my body" and "this is my blood," the early Christians would have known? The fact is, the early Church was consistent and unanimous in its belief that Christ was truly present in the Lord's Communion.

I am offended by the Catholic Church's stance on communion. I am not allowed to receive communion at a Catholic service. At our church we allow anyone to approach the table of the Lord. Please read 1 Corinthians 11:26-32. If one is in the state of serious sin, he should not receive the Lord's body and blood. To knowingly do so would entail sacrilege. This prohibition extends to Catholics, not just non-Catholics.

Secondly, "Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself" points out the necessity for believing in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, to discern that this is really His body and blood, soul and divinity under the appearances of bread and wine. So it's clear that great care must be taken to avoid these dangers St. Paul warns against in this passage.

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