

## Overview of the Mass

Before we begin our journey, it will be helpful to have a brief overview of the itinerary we will follow, which is an outline of the Mass itself: the *Introductory Rites*, the *Liturgy of the Word*, the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*, and the *Concluding Rites*.

The two principal parts of the Mass are the *Liturgy of the Word* and the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*. These two form one unified act of worship. We are first nourished at the table of God's word through the readings from Scripture, and then at the table of Our Lord's Body, which we receive in holy communion.

These two central parts of the Mass are flanked by two smaller parts: the Introductory Rites and the Concluding Rites. The *Introductory Rites* open the celebration of the Mass and prepare the faithful for their sacred encounter with God in his Word and in the Eucharist. After communion, the *Concluding Rites* formally close the celebration and send the people forth to do good works and take Christ into the world.

The chart below lays out these four main sections of the Mass, which serve as an umbrella for the smaller, individual parts of the liturgy. Keeping this "big picture" of the Mass in mind will be helpful as we embark on our journey.

