

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Renewal

St. Laurence Catholic Church
February 9, 2019

A Walk Through the Mass



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Introduction

- Think of the Mass a ritualized dinner party: we gather, sit and talk, move to the table to share a meal – a very special meal, say goodbye and depart
- The Mass is the most intimate expression of *communal* unity in which Catholics can *participate* – it is not theater or entertainment. Would you ever have a dinner party for just yourself?
- When you enter the church, what are the first things you notice? Cross, tabernacle, altar, ambo, presider's chair, pews – all are symbolic of Jesus' presence at Mass

I. Gathering Rites: bring us together as one

- **Greeters** and hospitality as we enter Church
- **Holy water** – sign of cross reminds us of our baptism
- **Genuflection** – medieval custom to bend the knee before the king as a sign of reverence
- Entrance **procession** is reminder we are a pilgrim Church on a journey to our real home

I. Gathering Rites: bring us together as one

- Priest and deacon will reverence the altar with a kiss
- Posture – stand when Mass begins; standing is normal posture at Mass – we are attentive and ready to go when standing
- Begin “In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” from Mt 28:19 – the Great Commission
- “The Lord be with you” from Ruth 2:4 – an ancient greeting similar to “good day”
- “And with your Spirit” response from St. Paul in Gal 6:18, Phil 4:23

I. Gathering Rites: bring us together as one

- **Penitential rite** – “Lord have mercy ...” or “Confiteor = “I confess ...”; reminds us of our weakness and the need for salvation; we approach the table of God with humility
- **Gloria** – “Glory to God in the highest ...” Lk 2:14 and Lk 19:38
- Opening Prayer: the **Collect** – priest asks us to join our minds in prayer and then “collects” our intentions into one prayer to which we respond “Amen” = “So be it” => “I stake my life on it”
- We sit for the initial readings from the Bible

II. Liturgy of the Word: we listen to stories about God's people

- On most Sundays, 2 readings from Old Testament (second is usually from book of Psalms) and one from New Testament (Letters of St. Paul or St. Peter or Acts of the Apostles)
- After readings, we respond "Thanks be to God" from 1 Cor 15:57, Rom 6:17, et al
- We stand for the **Gospel** because it is the Word of God, Jesus Himself speaking to us
- We sing "Alleluia" from Hebrew Hallelujah which is short for "Praise Yahweh" found in many Psalms

II. Liturgy of the Word: we listen to stories about God's people

- Procession of the Book of the Gospel to the ambo indicates something special
- “Glory to you O Lord” (see Psalm 115) – make sign of cross on forehead, lips and heart – may your Word be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart
- At end of Gospel, we respond “Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ” to show our faith in the presence of Jesus in His Word

II. Liturgy of the Word: we listen to stories about God's people

- We sit for the **homily**, a sermon or talk to break open or unpack the Word of God and to show how it can be applied in our lives today; Living Word; Jesus took time to explain his teachings to His disciples
- We stand and recite the **Creed**: from credo = I believe; summary of our core beliefs; Nicene Creed typically recited at Mass is from 4th century Church councils; sometimes recite Apostles' Creed which is even older
- **Universal Prayer** or **Prayer of the Faithful**: intentions for the world and the Church to help it become more Christ-like as we just heard in the readings

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist: we share a meal at the table of our Lord

- We set the table, say grace, and share the food and drink
- Preparation of the Gifts – setting the table
- Early Church brought bread and wine to be offered for the meal to be shared with the poor
- We do the same today and offer monetary gifts for the poor and the support of the local church community
- Priest blesses offerings on altar, washes his hands and offers the gifts to God in prayer; we respond “May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hand ...” as we too are offering these gifts and ourselves to God as part of the sacrifice

Outline of Eucharistic Prayer

- The most solemn part of the Mass in which the mystery of **transubstantiation** takes place – simple bread and wine become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ – a cornerstone of our faith
- Words may change but structure of the prayer remains the same:
 - 1) We recall salvation history: God's desire to save all humanity
 - 2) In particular, we recall, Jesus Christ, the central event in salvation history and the memorial he left us on the night before he died. We recall his passion, death and resurrection.
 - 3) After gratefully calling to mind all the wonderful saving acts God has done for us in the past, we petition God to continue those deeds of Jesus in the present: We pray that we may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

Eucharistic Prayer

- **Invitation** – dialogue between the priest and the people who are standing “The Lord be with you”, “Lift up your hearts”, “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God”; Greek word for thanksgiving is Eucharist which is what we are celebrating
- **Preface** – prayer to bring us into the presence of God; we respond “Holy, holy, holy ...” from Rev 4:8 and Mt 21:9 (Hosanna in the highest from Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem)
- **Consecration** – we kneel in reverence as priest prays for the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord; recalls Last Supper; we proclaim the mystery of our faith: “When we eat this bread ...”
- **Prayer for unity and intercessions**
- **Elevation** of consecrated species: “Through Him with Him and in Him ...”; we respond with the Great Amen = I believe

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist: we share a meal at the table of our Lord

- **Communion Rite** – we stand; Our Father (Mt 6:9-15, Lk 11:2-4); sign of peace (Mt 5:24 – first reconcile with your brother) sign of our union/communion; priest shows us the Body of Christ and invites us to partake: “Behold the Lamb of God ...” Jn 1:29 “Lord I am not worthy ...” Mt 8:8 words of a Roman centurion
- **Procession** to the altar – **as one Body of Christ** we move from the pew to the foot of the sanctuary, the place where heaven meets earth to receive “The Body of Christ”; “Amen”; this is the most profound sign of our communion with one another; return to our pew and thank God for the gift of this sacrament and for the sacrifice associated with it; ultimately we thank God for our salvation: His offer of eternal life in Him; “ Behold what you are, become what you receive”; we join in song of thanksgiving

IV. Commissioning

- The meal is finished; we prepare to return to our normal world: announcements
- **Blessing** – Jesus blessed the Apostles before His Ascension - Lk 24:51
- **Dismissal** – “Go!” *Ite missa est*; Mt 28:19; bring Jesus into the world; we are living tabernacles so should live the Mass in our daily activities