

First Holy Communion Parish Preparation—April 2024



Mass is the term used to describe the celebration of the **Eucharist** where Jesus, who promised to be with us always (Matthew 28:20) is present on the altar. During the Mass, members of the community come forward to receive the body and blood of



Jesus, in the form of bread and wine. The action of coming forward and receiving the body and blood of Jesus is called **Holy Communion**. The Church calls the Eucharist the "source and summit" of the Christian life, which means that everything about our life is meant to revolve around Jesus Christ himself!

At each Mass, the priest, in the person of Jesus, takes the bread and wine and says, "This is my body"....."This is my blood" given up for you. "Do this in memory of me". Because God loved us so much, He sacrificed (gave up) His Son on the cross the day after he celebrated the Last Supper so we could be free from sin. At every Mass that sacrifice is ever present and real before our eyes. Jesus told his disciples, "I am the bread of life, come down from heaven." When we receive Holy Communion, we too receive Jesus, the bread of life who strengthens us as his disciples in the world today so we can tell others about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

WHAT HAPPENS AT MASS?

GATHERING

Every Sunday, the faith community gathers for Mass. Sunday is a day made holy by God. It is often called "the Lord's Day" because Sunday was the day Jesus rose from the dead. Sundays are a day of rest so we can keep this day holy by going to Mass.



Before we enter our seat to sit down, we genuflect on one knee to the tabernacle because we are in Jesus' presence and the tabernacle contains the precious body of Jesus. When we sit down, we do so quietly in God's presence or we pray to God knowing that He is with us.



ON ENTERING THE CHURCH



When we enter a church, the first thing we do is dip our hand into the holy water font at the door and bless ourselves: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This reminds us that the building we enter is a sacred, or holy building. It also reminds us of the day we first entered into the life of the Church at our Baptism.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Mass begins with the opening procession when the altar servers and the priest are welcomed by the congregation with a hymn of praise, often known as the Opening Hymn! The priest genuflects to the tabernacle and then kisses the altar. He goes to the Presider's Chair and then begins Mass with the sign of the cross.



The Sign of the Cross-We profess our faith in the Holy Trinity-the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Penitential Act-We then remember our sins and ask God for his forgiveness and mercy.

The Gloria-like the angels on the night Jesus was born, we too praise God in song singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to people of goodwill.

Collect (pronounced kahl-ect)

-We ask God to hear our prayers.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the Collect (Opening Prayer), everyone sits to listen to God's word in the scriptures.



First Reading-A reader reads from the Old Testament.

Psalm-We respond to God's word through song.

Second Reading-A reader reads God's word from the New Testament.

Gospel Acclamation- We sing "Alleluia!" to praise God for

His Good News.

Gospel-We listen to the words, actions and teaching of Jesus.

Homily-The priest or deacon explains what was just proclaimed during the Gospel reading so we can understand how Jesus wants us to live our lives today.

Profession of Faith-We proclaim what we believe in our faith through the Creed (either the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed).

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and Gifts-The gifts of wine and bread are brought to the Altar and taken by the priest. These gifts are the fruits of the land and our work. They also represent the blessing of God on our work.

Holy Holy Holy-also called the Sanctus, this is sung by everyone in the congregation.

Prayer Over the Offerings-The priest offers a prayer over the gifts asking God to accept our sacrifice.

Eucharistic Prayer- The priest then prays a prayer of thanksgiving to God, the Father.

Consecration-The highlight and centre of the entire celebration!

This is when the bread and wine are consecrated and are transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of Jesus. "This is my body", "This is my blood", Jesus said.



The Mystery of Faith-This is sung right after to the Consecration as a declaration of our faith and communion with Jesus.

Lord's Prayer-As Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God, Our Father, we too pray to our Father using the same words. We praise and bless God, we pray for the coming of His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, and then we pray for our daily needs, the forgiveness of our sins, and to be freed from all evil.

Sign of Peace-We offer one another Christ's peace by extending a handshake.

Lamb of God-We pray for forgiveness, mercy, and peace.

Communion-We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUDING RITES

Final Blessing-We receive God's blessing.

Dismissal-We leave in peace, glorifying God through our lives for the rest of the week! Don't forget to genuflect after leaving your pew!



LEARN HOW TO BLESS YOURSELF!



Join hands



In the name of the Father



and of the Son



and of the Holy



Spirit.



Amen.