

Mass for the Commencement of the New Academic Year

**(Secondary School)
Autumn 2025**

(Mass texts, Scripture texts, sample Prayers of the Faithful)



PREPARATORY SUGGESTIONS

Celebrating Eucharist at the beginning of the new school year may be an opportunity to symbolically draw the school community together focusing on symbols/themes that reflect each year group as they embark on the new school year together.

Some ideas for different year groups could include...

First Year – New beginnings and friendships

Second Year – Cementing life in secondary school, securing their roots

Third Year – Securing friendships, settling down, first experience of state exams

Transition Year – a chance to participate in school life in a different way

Fifth Year – An introduction to senior cycle

Sixth Year – A time to reflect on life in secondary school, thoughts on the Leaving Cert

INTRODUCTION

Before Mass commences, a student may introduce symbols carried forward in procession by a representative from each year group.

PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, you are the way that leads to the Father, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, you are the truth that brings joy to the world, Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you are the life that renews the world. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Or

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,
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 brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God. **Amen**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, of new beginnings,
we know that this is a year full of promise and possibility.
Enfold us in your love and fill us with your truth.
May your presence with us guide us in our friendships and learning.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. **Amen**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Col. 3:12-17, 23,24

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians.
As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God. Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps. 100

(Please note: an alternative Psalm may be sung.)

Response: We are his people: the sheep of his flock

Cry out with joy to all the world, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing for joy. **R**

Know that he, the Lord, is God.
He made us, we belong to him,
We are his people, the sheep of his flock. **R**

Indeed, how good is the Lord,
Eternal his merciful love.
He is faithful from age to age. **R**

SECOND READING

Phil. 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians.

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Finally, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Fill your minds with everything that is true,
everything that is noble, everything that is pure.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Mt. 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Please add to these or amend them the need arises to link with the theme of the school's liturgy.

We pray that our school will always be a place of welcome, where all students, staff and parents feel valued and included. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

We pray for all students here present, that they will fulfil their potential and become a witness to the message of Jesus. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

We pray for all those who are sick. We also remember their family and friends and we ask God to give them strength and comfort at this time of need. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

We pray for our teachers and all the office staff, caretakers and cleaning staff in our school who work to ensure our school is a welcoming place for learning. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

We remember all those in our school community who have lost loved ones. We pray that the Lord will comfort them in their loss. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

We pray for all the members of the _____ Community, especially the Religious, carers and community workers who strive to make our Community a better one. Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, Graciously Hear Us

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

May the fire of the Spirit, O Lord,
sanctify the sacrificial gifts offered in your sight
just as it enkindled the hearts of the disciples of your Son,

who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

PREFACE

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For you bestow gifts suited to every season
and guide the governing of your Church in wonderful ways.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
you come unfailingly to her aid,
so that with a heart always subject to you
she may never fail to seek your help in time of trouble
nor cease to give you thanks in time of joy,
through Christ our Lord.
And so, in company with the choirs of angels,
we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR CHILDREN III

Yes, Lord, you are holy; you are kind to us and to all. For this we thank you.
We thank you above all for your Son, Jesus Christ.

You sent him into this world because people had turned away from you and no longer loved each other. He opened our eyes and our hearts to understand that we are brothers and sisters and that you are Father of us all.

He now brings us together to one table and asks us to do what he did.

Father, we ask you to bless ✠ these gifts of bread and wine and make them holy. Change them for us into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, your Son. On the night before he died for us, he had supper for the last time with his disciples. He took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, saying:

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT:
FOR THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.**

In the same way he took a cup of wine. He gave you thanks and handed the cup to his disciples, saying:

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT:
THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND
ETERNAL COVENANT WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND
FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.**

THEN HE SAID TO THEM: DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

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

God our Father, we remember with joy all that Jesus did to save us. In this holy sacrifice, which he gave as a gift to his Church, we remember his death and resurrection.

Father in heaven, accept us together with your beloved Son. He willingly died for us, but you raised him to life again. Jesus now lives with you in glory, but he is also here on earth, among us. One day he will come in glory and in his kingdom there will be no more suffering, no more tears, no more sadness.

Father in heaven, you have called us to receive the body and blood of Christ at this table and to be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Through this sacred meal give us strength to please you more and more.

Lord our God, remember Frances, our pope, Tom, our bishop, and all other bishops.

Help all who follow Jesus to work for peace and to bring happiness to others.

Bring us all at last together with Mary, the Mother of God, and all the saints, to live with you and to be one with Christ in heaven.

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

Amen!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord,

in this eucharist you give us food for our spirits
and blessings for our lives.

In everything we do this year
may we be mindful of the good you call us to do,
the school community of faith, hope and love, you call us to build,
and the studies by which we become more learned and wise,
for your greater glory.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION REFLECTION

A Friendship Blessing

May you be blessed with good friends.

May you learn to be a good friend to your self.

May you be able to journey to that place in your soul where there is great love,
warmth, feeling and forgiveness.

May this change you.

May it transfigure that which is negative, distant or cold in you.

May you be brought into, the real passion, kinship and
affinity of belonging.

May you treasure your friends.

May you be good to them and may you be there for them;
may they bring you all the blessings, challenges, truth and
light that you need for your journey.

May you never be isolated; but may you always be in the gentle nest of belonging with
your anam cara.

(John O' Donohue from "Anam Cara")

FINAL BLESSING

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

(Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.)

Priest: May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Amen

Priest: May his face shine on you, and be gracious to you.

Amen

Priest: May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace.

Amen

Priest: May almighty God bless you, the Father, ✠ Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen

The Mass is ended; go in peace glorifying the Lord by your lives.

Thanks be to God.