

**APOSTLES OF THE REAL PRESENCE**  
**Devoted to Restoring the Faith and Understanding in the Real Presence of**  
**Jesus Christ in the Eucharist**

**MEANING OF VARIOUS PARTS OF THE MASS**

The Mass is comprised of two major and distinct, though related parts, namely Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist. One centers around the Bible, and other, around the bread and wine. However, both form one single act of worship. They are not independent of each other. What is proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Christ is present in both parts; first in His word, then in His Eucharistic action.

Christ said that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that issues from the mouth of God. This word is our food before the Eucharistic bread: we receive Christ in the Sacred readings before receiving Him in Holy Communion.

**Introductory Rites.**

Before we start the Liturgy of the Word, the Mass also involves some Introductory Rites. The major introductory rites can be summarized as following:

**The Entrance Song and Greeting**

When the congregation has finished singing the entrance hymn or song, the priest makes the sign of the Cross and greets the Faithful. **He makes the sign of the Cross!** This clearly signifies that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The sign of the Cross, the means used to bring about degrading death, became the instrument which helped to bring about glorious eternal life. The cross, used to crucify the worst of criminals, became the sign which gave Christians the courage to gladly give up their lives for their Lord and Savior. Through the Cross, despair turned into hope! Satan knew the power of the Cross. He shouted to Jesus: "*Get down from the cross!*"

The sign of the Cross represents the Holy Trinity. The priest makes the sign of the Cross, saying "*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*". As He did at the Sacrifice of the Cross, now at the Sacrifice of the Mass Our Lord Jesus is offering Himself through His priest to the Father.

The sign of the Cross represents our Baptism, which initiates us into the family of God, the Holy Trinity. It is a reminder that we were not only washed by the Blood of the Lamb, we were baptized into His Family by His death. When our Lord died for us, we were "washed in His Blood, Baptized into His death and given life in Him." The sign of the Cross is the oldest gesture of our Faith.

As the celebrant greets the people: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,*" our response is: "*And also with you.*" With these words, we, the Body of Christ, unite ourselves with one another, we the Faithful and our priest, one in our professed belief in Jesus Christ.

**The Penitential Rite**

At this point in the Mass, the priest invites us to examine our consciences and to express sorrow for our sins. The sinner remains dead in sin unless God, through His infinite goodness and mercy, restores him to life in Him. The one offering, the Sacrifice should be holy; therefore, as we are in communion with the priest as he offers the Sacrifice, we are asking the Lord to cleanse us of our sins that we might be worthy to offer this Sacrifice in company with the celebrant. We ask our Lord at this time to pardon us of any sin, we may have unintentionally forgotten to confess, praying that our soul be spotlessly clean as we welcome our Lord in His Eucharist - His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity to be one with us.

**The Kyrie and Opening Prayer**



(The Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Church alone, insofar as only those who believe may share in it. Thus, the Church alone in her living members is united to Christ in His Eucharistic sacrifice. On the other hand, however, the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the whole human race, insofar as Christ died for all and wants all to be saved and to receive the graces of His death and resurrection. Hence, as we offer ourselves in the Eucharistic sacrifice, let us pray for our loved ones and all people, that all may lead lives of obedience to the heavenly Father's will.)

After the gifts have been prepared the priest says: "Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father." But our response, "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 Church," cannot be meaningful unless we have really offered ourselves. And the Lord Himself gives us the condition for the acceptance of our gifts: "If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering" (Mt. 5:23-24).

### Eucharistic Prayer

"The Eucharistic prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification, is the center and high point of the entire celebration. In an introductory dialogue the priest invites the people to lift their hearts to God in prayer and thanks; he unites them with Himself in the prayer he addresses in their name to the Father through Jesus Christ. The meaning of the prayer is that the whole congregation joins Christ in acknowledging the works of God and in offering the sacrifice".

After our acclamation of the mystery of faith -"Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again," - we offer to the Father "this life-giving bread, this saving cup... this holy and living sacrifice." In union with Christ and through Him, we offer ourselves to the Father, so that we could become more perfectly united with Him and with each other and that, eventually, God may be all in all. Then we pray for the Church and its members, living and deceased. The Eucharistic prayer concludes with the doxology, to which the *people respond with a solemn. Amen.*

### Consecration

The Eucharistic Prayer is centered in the consecration, transubstantiation, changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Let us look into some of its deeper meaning.

With the consecration, Christ is sacramentally present upon our altars with His infinite merits, with His dispositions of love and obedience with which He died, so that we may join our dispositions to His, to form the offering of the whole Christ, the Mystical Christ, the whole Church, as Christ offers Himself with His Church. Thus, as we join ourselves with Him we have a most powerful means of working out our salvation and of asking help for ourselves and for that of the whole world.

The essence of Christianity is to live out the paschal mystery of Christ in our lives; that is, as Christ died, resurrected and ascended into glory, so that we, too, would offer ourselves to God, die to sin and self, resurrect to a new life and, eventually, to live in eternal glory with Him.

Since Christ takes unto Himself all our personal offerings, everything about us becomes transformed: our work becomes his work; our crosses, His crosses; our suffering, His suffering; our joys, His joys; our pardons, His pardons; our prayer, His prayer; our love, His love; our life, His life. Our whole life can acquire a divine value, because he takes our offering and makes it his own; our life and actions become the life and actions of Christ.

Furthermore, our whole life and its activities can acquire a redemptive value. Everything we do, no matter how insignificant, when offered to the Father in union with Christ, helps towards our redemption. In other words, we become "more and more redeemed" - depending upon how much and what we have offered of ourselves - "passing over" more and more from the "old self to the new," from the natural to the supernatural, from self to God.

### Holy Communion

"Since the Eucharistic celebration is the paschal meal, in accord with His command, the body and blood of the Lord should be received as spiritual food by the faithful who are properly disposed". Since receiving Holy Communion is a sharing in the sacrifice and is its highest form of participation, we should not lightly refrain from receiving Holy Communion.

We have offered a gift of ourselves to the heavenly Father; in Holy Communion God gives us a gift of Himself through Jesus Christ. We have offered his sacrifice for our salvation; in Holy Communion we share in that sacrifice. We have offered our love and obedience to the Father; in Holy Communion we receive Christ in order to help us to persevere in carrying out our self-offering. In the Mass the Church offers and is being offered; in Holy Communion a greater union with Christ and with all the members of his Body is effected.

"In this union with Christ we are not alone, for Communion is not merely the union of the individual soul and Christ; it unites Christ to all the members of the Mystical Body and in an extended way through prayer to all humanity".

Concluding Rite (The Mass is ended - go in peace!)

It does not end when we are dismissed by a priest, it must continue in our daily life. We have offered ourselves to God and we now must live out that offering. After having received the Lord's blessing, and even more so after having received Him in Holy Communion, Christ comes to us, into our life and world, to help us live out our offering and to help bring Him to the world and the world to Him.

Christ tells us "Go! live the Mass! live out the offering of yourself!" We have offered Him our eyes, therefore we must be careful at what we look, for our eyes are consecrated to God. We have offered Him our ears, tongue, legs, arms, our whole body, therefore we must be careful how we use them, for they belong to God. We have offered Him our soul with its faculties, therefore we must orient our soul towards the Lord. We have surrendered ourselves to the will of God, therefore we must learn how to accept life with all its demands, hardships, and joys, for the glory of God. Our whole life must be so lived and every action must be so performed that we can offer them to God.

Indeed, the Mass makes a difference in our life because it becomes a life in union with Christ! Indeed, it makes a difference because "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me!" (Rev. Maynard Kolodziej, "Understanding the Mass", Catholic Book Publishing Co., NJ, 1998)

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