

## OUR EUCHARISTIC JOURNEY

Obeys to **The National Eucharistic Revival** which is a three-year initiative sponsored by the Bishops of the United States to inspire and prepare the People of God to be formed, healed, converted, united, and sent out to a hurting and hungry world through a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

For this reason, we concluded, during five consecutive weekends, "a Eucharistic Journey" focusing on each of the four principal parts of the Holy Mass: **The Entrance Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites.**

Here is the catechesis that we shared at the Sunday Masses with the hope and the intention that you read this at home, that you review it from time to time, and more importantly that you meditate on these teachings of the Church during this Lenten Season.

### First Part: Introductory Rites

The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Kyrie, the Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. - Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily."

**The Mass begins with the entrance chant/song.** The entrance procession is the church's way of remembering and celebrating that we are pilgrims on this earth, beginning with baptism and the baptismal font at the entrance of the church, to the altar partake of the heavenly banquet, the Eucharist. The body, the blood of Christ. The celebrant and other ministers enter in procession and reverence the altar with a bow and/or a kiss. The **altar** is a symbol of Christ at the heart of the assembly and so deserves this special reverence

All make the **Sign of the Cross** and the celebrant extends a **greeting** to the gathered people in words taken from Scripture.

**The Penitential Act follows the greeting.** At the very beginning of the Mass, the faithful recall their sins and place their trust in God's abiding mercy. The Penitential Act **includes the Kyrie Eleison**, a Greek phrase meaning, "**Lord, have mercy.**" This litany recalls God's merciful actions throughout history. On Sundays, especially in Easter Time, in place of the customary Penitential Act, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.

On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, the *Gloria in Excelsis* follows the Penitential Act. **The Gloria** begins by echoing the proclamation of the angels at the birth of Christ: "*Glory to God in the highest!*" In this ancient hymn, the gathered assembly joins the heavenly choirs in offering praise and adoration to the Father

and Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

The Introductory Rites conclude with an **Opening Prayer, The Collect.** The celebrant invites the gathered assembly to pray and, after a brief silence, proclaims the prayer of the day. The Collect gathers the prayers of all into one and disposes all to hear the Word of God in the context of the celebration.

### Second Part: The Liturgy of the Word.

The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of readings of Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. Here God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful.

The Liturgy of the Word includes: the First reading; the responsorial psalm; the second reading, when a second reading is proclaimed; the verse before the gospel, mostly known as the Alleluia; the Gospel; the Homily; the profession of faith, on Sundays and other solemnities; and the universal prayer or prayer of the faithful that concludes it.

The Church, gathered by the Holy Spirit for liturgical celebration, announces and proclaims the word of God. By Baptism and Confirmation, the Church has made all Christ's faithful into messengers of God's Word because of the grace of hearing they have received. They must therefore be the bearers of the same word in the Church and in the world, at least by the witness of their lives.

Every time we come to Mass we listen to the words of scripture, conscious that God's Word is a living word, speaking to us in our age as powerfully and as relevant as when it was written. In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church feeds the people of God from the table of his Word (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 51). The Scriptures are the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures, God speaks to us, leading us along the path to salvation and Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful.

**The First Reading** is most commonly taken from the Old Testament. During Easter Time, it is taken from the Acts of the Apostles which tells the story of the Church in its earliest days.

**The Responsorial Psalm**, which is sung between the first two readings helps us to meditate and internalize on the word of God we just listened to and prepares us for the readings that follow particularly to be better disposed to hear the proclamation of the Gospel.

**The Second Reading** is proclaimed on Sundays and other solemnities, and it is taken from the New Testament and particularly from the letters of saint Paul or the other letters or the book of revelation.

**The Acclamation before the Gospel.** After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the Alleluia or another

chant laid down by the rubrics is sung, as the liturgical time requires. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the gathering of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the gospel. Apart from Lent, that acclamation is "Alleluia," derived from a Hebrew phrase meaning "Praise the Lord!"

**The proclamation of the Gospel** is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. Because the Gospel tells of the life, ministry, and preaching of Christ, it receives several special signs of honor and reverence. The gospel is proclaimed from the Book of the Gospels which is carried in procession from the altar to the ambo. The gathered assembly stands to hear the Gospel and it is introduced by an acclamation of praise as mentioned in the previous paragraph. A deacon (or, if no deacon is present, a priest) reads the Gospel.

**The Homily** is part of the Liturgy and is highly recommended, for it is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life. After the Scripture readings, the celebrant preaches the homily focusing on the Scripture texts just proclaimed, or on some other texts from the liturgy of the day, drawing from them lessons that may help us to live better lives, more faithful to Christ's Call to grow in holiness. The homily takes into account both the mystery of being celebrated and the particular need of the listeners. We ought to listen attentively.

**The Creed.** The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the homily, and that they may also honor and confess the great mysteries of the faith. The creed is to be sung or said by the Priest together with the people on Sundays and Solemnities. It may also be said at particular celebrations of a more solemn character. Both can be said: either the Nicene, or Apostles' Creed. The Nicene Creed is a statement of faith dating from the fourth century, while the Apostles' Creed is the ancient baptismal creed of the Church in Rome. At Easter the baptismal promises are renewed, from a formula based on the Apostles' Creed, this takes the place of the Creed.

**The Universal Prayer** or Prayer of the Faithful, which concludes the Liturgy of the Word, is the people's response, in some sense, to the Word of God which they have received in faith; and exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. The series of intentions is usually to be

- a) For the needs of the Church;
- b) For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- c) For those burdened by any kind of difficulty; and
- d) For the local community.

Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion.

## Third Part: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. The term "Eucharist" originates from the Greek word *eucharistia*, meaning thanksgiving.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest, who represents Christ, the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself accomplished and entrusted to his disciples to do in memory of him. The Church has ordered every Eucharistic Celebration in its parts according to the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper. These parts include:

*The preparation of the gifts* that corresponds to taking the same elements that Jesus took in his hands: bread and wine with water. *The Eucharistic Prayer* corresponds to giving thanks and blessing the gifts of bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

*The Breaking of Bread and Communion* that correspond to "breaking and distributing" the consecrated gifts, just as Jesus broke and distributed them and that the apostles received from the hands of Christ himself.

**The preparation of the gifts** begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist. While the priest or deacon prepares the altar, representatives of the people bring the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The celebrant blesses and praises God for these gifts and places them on the altar, the place of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In addition to the bread and wine, the financial contribution of the parishioners is received for the support of the Church and the care of the poor. The Prayer over the Offerings concludes this preparation and prepares everyone for the Eucharistic Prayer.

**The Eucharistic Prayer:** It is the center and culmination of the entire celebration. In this prayer, the priest acts in the person of Christ as the head of his body, the Church. He collects not only the bread and wine but also our intentions and unites them to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, offering them to the Father. As the Eucharistic Prayer continues, we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice to make us a "holy people" and allow us to "enjoy together the eternal fullness of the glory of God.

*The Preface:* is the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer, in which the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, for all his works, for creation, redemption, and sanctification or some particular aspects, according to the variants of the day, the holyday or the liturgical time. This song of praise and thanksgiving is the most beautiful prayer that man can address to God. It begins with the dialogue between the priest and the people: "The Lord be with you" and ends with the singing of the "**Holy, Holy.**"

The Eucharistic prayer continues with the following parts: The epiclesis, Narration of the institution and consecration, anamnesis, Oblation, Intercessions and Doxology.

*Epiclesis:* is the invocation or call to the Holy Spirit to consecrate the bread and wine and become the body and blood of Christ,

and so that the immaculate victim that will be received in communion is for the salvation of those who receive; That is to say, at this moment Jesus is present by the power of the Holy Spirit to stay with us as food to give us his life.

The narrative of the institution and consecration in which the priest narrates what happened at the Last Supper and repeats the same words of Christ, carrying out the same sacrifice that Christ instituted at the Last Supper, giving his body and blood to the apostles in form of food and drink and gave the command. The consecration culminates with the adoration of Christ present on the altar. It is a proclamation of the mystery of our faith in which the people participate using one of the three options for the Great Acclamation.

The Anamnesis that follows is the reminder, or memorial, of the blessed passion, glorious resurrection, and ascension to heaven of our Lord, fulfilling the commission made to the Apostles on the night of the last supper.

The Oblation is the church's invitation for the faithful to offer themselves together with the Immaculate victim and also become a perfect offering to God in Christ.

The intercessions imply that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the entire heavenly and earthly Church and that the oblation is made for her and for all her living and deceased members.

In The Doxology, which concludes the Eucharistic prayer, and which expresses the glorification of God, the priest, raising the chalice with the paten, which contains the body and blood of Jesus, says: "Through Him, with Him and in Him..." And it is concluded and confirmed with our Amen, thus we join in the solemn praise of the Holy Trinity.

**The Communion Rite** follows the Eucharistic Prayer. Since the celebration of the Eucharist is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that in accordance with the Lord's command his Body and Blood should be received as spiritual food by those of the faithful who are properly disposed.

This is the sense of the fraction and the other preparatory rites by which the faithful are led more immediately to Communion. The Communion Rite includes: The Lord's Prayer, the Rite of Peace, the Fraction of the Bread, and Communion itself.

The rite begins with The Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught this prayer to his disciples when they asked how to pray. In the Lord's prayer a petition is made for daily bread, which for Christians means principally the Eucharistic Bread, and entreating also for purification from sin, so that what is holy may in truth be given to the holy. The Priest pronounces the invitation to the prayer, and all the faithful say the prayer with him; then the priest alone adds the embolism, which the people conclude by means of the doxology. The invitation, the Prayer itself, the embolism and the doxology are to be sung or said aloud.

The Rite of Peace follows by which the Church entreats peace

and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament. As for the actual sign of peace to be given, it is appropriate that each person, in a sober manner, offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest.

The Fraction of the Bread is begun after the sign of peace, carried out with proper reverence is reserved to the Priest and the Deacon. The Priest breaks the Eucharistic Bread, with the assistance, if the case requires, of the Deacon or a concelebrant. The gesture of breaking bread done by Christ at the Last Supper, which in apostolic times gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name, signifies that the many faithful are made of one body by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life, which is Christ.

The Priest breaks the Bread and puts a piece of the host into the chalice to signify the unity of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the work of salvation. The supplication, Lamb of God, is sung to accompany the fraction and for this reason can be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has been completed.

The Communion itself: To receive Holy Communion: The Priest prepares himself by a prayer, said quietly, so that he may fruitfully receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The faithful do the same praying in silence. The priest shows the faithful the Eucharistic Bread, holding it over the paten or over the chalice, and invites them to the banquet of Christ.

Before receiving Holy Communion, the celebrant and assembly make an act of humility as they acknowledge their unworthiness to receive so great a gift. The celebrant receives Holy Communion first and then the people come forward in procession.

The communitarian character of the procession to receive the Holy Communion is brought about by singing the communion hymn, which expresses the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices and shows gladness of heart. The singing is prolonged for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful.

The fact that the Communion Procession is a profoundly religious action tells us something about the way in which we should participate in this procession. We are the Body of Christ, moving forward to receive the Christ who makes us one with himself and with one another. Our procession should move with dignity; our bearing should be that of those who know they have been redeemed by Christ and are coming to receive their God!

Because sharing at the Eucharistic Table is a sign of unity in the Body of Christ, *only those in communion with the Catholic Church may receive Holy Communion*. Those who do not receive Holy Communion still participate in this rite by praying for unity with Christ and with each other.

Those who receive Holy Communion should be prepared to receive so great a gift. They should fast (except for medicines) for at least one hour before receiving the Eucharist and should

not be conscious of having committed serious sin. The faithful approach the Minister distributing the Holy Communion and, bowing with reverence, receive Holy Communion. People may receive the Body of Christ either on the tongue or in the hand.

If Communion is received in the hand, the hands should first be clean. If one is right-handed the left hand should rest upon the right. The host will then be laid in the palm of the left hand and then taken by the right hand to the mouth. If one is left-handed this is reversed. It is not appropriate to reach out with the fingers and take the host from the person distributing.

The priest or other minister offers the Eucharist to each person saying, "The Body of Christ." The person receiving responds by saying, "Amen," a Hebrew word meaning, "So be it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2856). The communicant should audibly respond, "Amen," indicating by that response his or her belief that this small wafer of bread, and the wine in the chalice are in reality the body and blood of Christ the Lord.

When one receives from the chalice, the same proclamation is made by the person distributing Communion and the Communicant again responds, "Amen." It should be noted that it is never permissible for a person to dip the host he or she has received into the chalice. If, for some reason, the communicant is not able or willing to drink from the cup then that person should receive only under the form of bread.

As the people receive Holy Communion, the communion chant or song is sung. The unity of voices echoes the unity the Eucharist brings. All may spend some time in silent prayer of thanksgiving as well.

Prayer after Communion: To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the whole Communion Rite, the Priest pronounces the Prayer after Communion in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated by asking that the benefits of the Eucharist will remain active in our daily lives. It expresses the Church's gratitude for the mysteries celebrated and received.

## **Fourth Part: The Concluding Rites**

In the Rites of Conclusion of the Holy Mass, the priest is still carrying out a priestly task, namely, of mediation between God and the faithful people. These are not optional rites for the priest here invokes on the people the divine blessing, while in the name of the people, he thanks God for the gifts already received by his kindness. Here also he acts "in persona Christi."

To the Concluding Rites belong the following: *brief announcements, The Priest's Greeting and Blessing, the Dismissal of the people, and the kissing of the altar by the Priest and the Deacon*, followed by a profound bow to the altar by the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers.

**Announcements**: During the Concluding Rites, *announcements* may be made (if necessary) after the Prayer after Communion. They are not only information of parish activities, needs and such,

but also the indication and celebration of the parish's rich life in Christ that comes from the Holy Eucharist. They also indicate that all parish efforts are directed to the encounter with God celebrated at Holy Mass.

In our parish, we take the opportunity after the announcements to invite a family to take the Chalice of Vocations home and pray on behalf of the parish for an increase in vocations to the priesthood.

The Prayers for after Mass (To St. Michael The Archangel, to St Joseph and to Our patron St. Isaac Jogues,) just like the Prayers before Mass (To the Blessed Mother, and to the Holy Spirit,) are not part of the Eucharistic liturgy. However, the congregation takes the opportunity of being gathered and strengthened by the communion just celebrated and received to ask for the intercession of the saints and the courage to go into the world as ambassadors of Christ.

**The Priest's Greeting and The Blessing**. The greeting of the Priest to the congregation is a preparation to the blessing that follows. Then, he blesses the people assembled. Sometimes, the blessing is very simple. On special days, the blessing may be more extensive. In every case, the blessing is always trinitarian: "May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." It is in the triune God and in the sign of the cross that we find our blessing.

**The Dismissal of the People**. After the blessing, the deacon dismisses the people. In fact, the dismissal gives the liturgy its name. The word "Mass" comes from the Latin word, "Missa." At one time, the people were dismissed with the words "Ite, missa est" (literally meaning "Go, she—meaning you, the Church—has been sent"). The word "Missa" is related to the word "missio," the root of the English word "mission."

The liturgy does not simply come to an end. Those assembled are sent forth to bring the fruits of the Eucharist to the world. This is the main purpose of the Eucharist, that strengthening us with the Word and the Sacrament, we are sent into the world to be Eucharistic People. Therefore, it is not proper to leave the Mass before the sending.

Although in the General Instructions for the Roman Missal, there is no closing hymn specified, we sing a sending song. This allows the congregation to end the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the celebration of unity and peace, as one body: The Body of Christ, united as one voice we rejoice to have been sent into the world as Eucharistic People.



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