



**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2023**



A CALL TO COME AND SEE THE LORD

On Epiphany Sunday we celebrate the story of three wise men, who, following a star, left the comfort of their homes and came together to follow this invitation from God to a humble stable in the town of Bethlehem. Inside, their eyes beheld a newborn child laying in a manger, a feeding trough, as though he were food for animals. And yet these foreign men from far away knelt in worship, for with eyes of faith they saw that this child was the King of kings.

These three men would be the first to approach the Lord and worship him in this way, bringing Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but would not be the last. We continue this tradition every time we gather at Holy Mass. When we kneel during our Mass, we look up and see what appears to be food: bread and wine. And yet with our eyes of faith, we know that this is no bread at all, but is the body of Christ, and that the wine is His most precious blood. We see Jesus Christ in his body, blood, soul, and divinity as He sits enthroned on the Altar, and we bring Him the gifts of our time and attention, the things He desires from us most of all.



God calls us, just as He called those wise men, to come and see our Savior in person. He invites us to encounter him in his house, gathering us together as a family, as brothers and sisters, to be with one another and with God at his table.

JESUS IS WITH US AT THE MASS

Most of us are familiar with Jesus' promise to us that He is always with us wherever two or three are gathered in his name. This is truer at Mass than at any other gathering or worship space. He is present there with us on multiple levels. He is present in our communion with each other, mystically pouring out himself through our common prayer. He is present in the priest, who acts in the person of Christ as he offers the body and blood of our blessed Lord on the altar to His Heavenly Father. He is present in the word proclaimed from the scriptures by the lectors and by the deacon and priest, for He is the Word made flesh and is present whenever that Word is proclaimed. But above all else, He is most profoundly present in the Eucharist itself. Inside every host and every drop within the chalice is His body, blood, soul, and divinity. This is not a symbol or a metaphor, but his actual physical self. Yes, it looks like bread and tastes like it but with our faith, we know that this is his body and blood. Within that body and blood, Jesus is alive and present. It is Jesus that we see on the altar, that we receive on our hands and on our tongue, and that we consume into our very bodies so that we can take Jesus with us as we depart from the walls of the church and go forth into the world. God is in no way distant from us when we gather to worship at Mass, rather He is there with us and is so close to us that He allows us to take him into our very selves so that we can be one with him.



JESUS: PRIEST, PROPHET, KING.

When the three wise men came before the Lord, they offered to him gold, frankincense and myrrh. These small and seemingly strange gifts hold a great symbol of what we know through faith of Jesus Christ. The three wise men knew that they were encountering a king, but also a priest and a prophet. Indeed Jesus is all of these things, and when we come to Mass we encounter Jesus as all three.

JESUS THE PRIEST

In the Old Testament, the Lord established a priesthood which would offer the sacrifices of animals to God on behalf of the Jewish people. In our New Testament, we now have a great high priest: Jesus Christ, who offers up himself on the cross as a sacrifice so powerful that no other sacrifice needs to be offered. In the Mass, we have Christ continuing to offer that same sacrifice through the mystical realities of our liturgy. At Mass, it is as if we have been transported backwards in time to both Good Friday and Easter Sunday, to the moment of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord. For Good Friday our sacrifice was offered, and on Easter Sunday that same sacrifice, Jesus Christ, was raised up. Within our parish priest who celebrates the Mass, Christ is at work changing our liturgy from a simple reenactment to a powerful reliving of that Great Event. It is Christ who offers up the Eucharist, his body and blood, to God our father.

JESUS THE PROPHET

In the gospels, Jesus calls himself the way the truth and the life. His teachings are the fullness of truth and provide us not only with the way that we can live out a most fulfilling Christian life but also the way to come to know God personally and perfectly. At every Mass, we proclaim the word of God. as the word made flesh, it is Jesus himself who speaks to us through the word. Not only is this true of the gospel, but all of the readings. For all of scripture is inspired by God, and Jesus is God. Jesus speaks to us as a church and as individuals through scripture.

JESUS THE KING

On the day of his crucifixion, Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns and mounted upon the throne that is the cross. As we celebrate the Mass, and recall those events, we exchange these painful things for glorious symbols of our Lord's kingship. Sometimes we ask, why do we use a golden chalice when Jesus surely used a cup of wood or clay at the Last Supper? The answer is that we are not simply reenacting the Last Supper. We are giving our Lord a splendid and worthy throne. We enthrone the presence of Jesus Christ on the altar, arrayed in gold because that is the way that we should treat our triumphant king. Even as the Lord appears to us in so humble a form as bread and wine, we give to him a worthy reception. We bow before our mighty king made known to us in bread and wine.





TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
INTRODUCTORY RITES:
“OUR ENTRANCE INTO MASS, OUR ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN”
SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2023



GATHERING TOGETHER

Before we even begin the Mass, worship takes place from the moment we choose to come to Mass. We prepare ourselves by setting aside the business of our life and instead focus on God and the marvelous event about to take place. We dress in our Sunday best, just as the priest vests for Mass, and enter the Church in a spirit of prayer as we prepare ourselves to meet the Lord in His word and body. Just as the priest prepares for Mass, we prepare our hearts as well. For we are all part of the same celebration.



PROCESSION

At the beginning of Sunday Mass, before the priest begins the celebration, he makes a symbolic journey from the entrance of the church to the sanctuary, then kisses the Altar. This action is a sign of the priest’s unity with us, who have traveled from home and entered the church from outside, a journey each of us makes. The priest does not enter into the church or the sanctuary alone, but is accompanied by those who assist him in his celebration of the Mass as the Mass is not a private affair. These ministers enter the church led by an image of Christ crucified, signifying how Christ leads His pilgrim people from the world into heaven, which is signified by the Altar.

As the priest processes through the church to the Altar, he walks past people in the pews, signifying that even as the priest is set apart for certain sacred functions, he too is part of the people of God. He is one of us, coming from among our own ranks before stepping up to the Altar as the Celebrant of the Mass. The priest kisses the Altar as he arrives, signifying not only reverence for this sacred table, but also how the words uttered by his lips are words of worship and praise.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

The Mass, like all prayers, begins with the Sign of the Cross. In this, we recall how Jesus used the cross as the tool of our salvation. As we sign ourselves, the priest says the words, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” When we invoke the Holy Trinity during the sign of the cross, we recall our baptism, in which the same words were said by the priest as he poured water over our heads, cleansing us from Original Sin and making us members of the family of God.

These words are rightly used to begin our sacred liturgy because of the power of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Since ancient times in royal courts, whenever important business was conducted or some proclamation read, the president of the assembly would say, “In the name of the King!” In the same way, we invoke the name of our God in His Divine Persons as a symbol of recognition that our worship is focused on Him and we are gathered in His name, for His sake.

WORDS OF GREETING

We all know the exchange, “The Lord be with you,” with the people responding, “and with your spirit.” We say this several times throughout the Mass. Even from the first greeting, whether it be these exact words or other forms of greeting, they are not merely poetic words of welcome. These words are a spiritual exchange, not between priest and people, but between Christ and His Church. From the moment the priest enters the church, his words and actions are not his own. The priest takes on the role of Christ in the assembly, acting as the Head of the Church while we are the body. This is why the people respond, “and with your spirit,” rather than, “and also

with you.” In mentioning the spirit, we acknowledge the dynamic that the priest is both his own person and the *in persona Christi*, the person of Christ within the priest as he celebrates the Mass. This idea of Christ being active in our liturgy through the priest is a repeated key point that we return to throughout the Mass.



PENITENTIAL ACT

Immediately after the priest and people exchange the sacred greeting, they turn together to the Lord in repentance. This is usually done by everyone while praying together the Confiteor (“I confess to Almighty God...”) and invoking the Kyrie (“Lord, have mercy”). There is an option, often used during the Easter season, to have the priest sprinkle holy water over the people in remembrance of our baptism and the cleansing power of God’s forgiveness.

In all of this, we are acknowledging our sins and our need for God’s mercy. This part of the Mass is a summary of the pursuit of our earthly life: coming to God like the prodigal son and receiving His mercy and love. Just as Christ tells us to make peace with our brother before entering the temple, we make peace with God. We should clarify that serious sins require the Sacrament of Confession for forgiveness, but small (venial) sins can be forgiven by these penitential acts, which we pray at every Mass. In the Old Testament, priests would ritually purify themselves before offering the Old Covenant sacrifices. In the New Covenant, it is right that we spiritually purify ourselves through prayer before offering our own sacrifice of praise.

THE GLORIA

Once we have received God’s mercy, we immediately respond with that ancient hymn of praise, the Gloria. This hymn, sung on most Sundays and other Solemnities (High Feasts), comes to us from the nativity of our Lord, when angels appeared to shepherds singing the glory of God. They sang to announce that Christ had come. In this same way, we sing the Gloria to recognize that Christ is present with us at Mass, through our gathering together, through the priest, through the Word, and most of all, through the Eucharist. We proclaim with great joy the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, made present again and again at the Mass.

It is worth clarifying that we do not always sing this hymn. We do not sing the Gloria during Advent and Lent because during those seasons there is a greater focus on penance and mercy. By contrast, Easter, Christmas, and other Sundays are most appropriate occasions to praise God for His glory. It is appropriate that the Gloria take place directly after the Penitential Acts, acting as a joyous response to the forgiveness from God that we have just received.

THE COLLECT: THE OPENING PRAYER

After the Gloria (or the Penitential Acts, if there is no Gloria), the priest invites the entire community to pray as one by the call, “Let Us Pray.” This call, used since the earliest days of the Church, calls the community to enter into the mysteries about to happen. The priest extends his hands outward, a sign that he is speaking to God on behalf of all of us, and he prays the Collect, the opening prayer that is proper to this day. He alone says the words, but we are called to bind our thoughts to those words and to be united in this prayer, our hearts being gathered (or *collected*, one might say) into the arms of the priest as he brings them to God.



The Collect gives us a kind of theme of this particular Mass, like a first look at the readings of this Mass, or the particular reason for this Mass. The Collect acts as the main point of the beginning phase of the Mass. The parts before this prayer were inviting us into the Mass. The Collect then brings us into the heavenly sanctuary where we offer ourselves, our presence, and our intentions to God. Entering into this liturgy, God invites us to listen to Him in the Liturgy of the Word.



**TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
LITURGY OF THE WORD: GOD SPEAKING TO US
SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023**



CHRIST PRESENT IN HIS WORD



At the beginning of Mass on Sunday, as the priest processes in, someone, either a Deacon or a lector, is carrying in a large book. This book, often bound in red leather or even in silver and gold is the book of the gospels. We carry this book in, and place it prominently in the center of the altar, drawing our eyes towards it as the focal point during the first half of the Mass. This first half is called the Liturgy of the Word, and it centers around the contents within that book.

We should ask ourselves: why do we treat a book with such reverence? Why is this book placed on the altar and made the center of attention of our worship? The answer is that within that book are the words of Jesus Christ.

In the beginning of the gospel of John, the apostle begins by telling us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” God’s presence is there in the words of scripture. This is made all the more real when later on in that first chapter of John’s gospel, he tells us that that Word, “was made flesh,” referring to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh. And so, our faith tells us that Jesus Christ is present to us in the proclaiming of scripture, and most especially the four gospels, which are the recorded words of Jesus Christ himself: his teachings, his parables, his miracles, and ultimately the historical events of his life, passion, death, and resurrection. We enshrine the Gospels because within those words are Jesus Christ.

But it is not only the gospels in which God’s word is made known to us. Yes, the gospels have pride of place because they are the words of God spoken by the very mouth of God, Jesus Christ. However, all of scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, are inspired by the Holy Spirit. There is no word in all of scripture that is not from God himself. When the Church compiled the Bible over 1700 years ago, it did so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that the whole world had the same inspired word of God to help shape their lives. These words of holy scripture are what we proclaim at Mass. Jesus Christ speaks to us at every Mass through His Word.

A GIFT OFFERED AND RECEIVED

It is no accident that even as God speaks to us through his Word, it is through the voices of people that his Word is proclaimed. Like many other gifts, God first gives us something, and then we use what He gave us to make something for Him in return. Even the bread we offer at Mass first came from grain that God gave us. So too God gives us His word in scripture, but he desires to hear us proclaim it aloud. Those who read the word of God are in a sense making an offering of their own voice to God, while those listening are offering up their hearing to God. In this sense, both proclaiming the Word of God and listening to it are themselves acts of worship.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

HOW READINGS ARE CHOSEN

Unlike other venues, the readings used for Mass are not chosen at random. In fact, as a general rule, they are not chosen by any one person, but rather are chosen for the whole Church. By this, we mean that the readings you hear each Sunday are being read in the church in the next town, the next state, and even Catholic churches on the other side of the world.

The word “Catholic,” comes from the Greek word meaning, “universal,” and one of our greatest expressions of that universal aspect of our Church is how no matter where you go, the liturgy will still be the same. Whether here in Hawaii, Washington DC, London, Rome, or even Antarctica, the prayers, the structure, and even the readings will be the same. The only difference would be the language that they use. Our readings, and indeed all the prayers at Mass, are chosen for the entire Church, and follow a perfect and inspired formula.

THE FIRST READING

The first reading is taken either from the Old Testament or, during the Easter Season, the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament. The first reading lays the foundation for the whole Liturgy of the Word, often connecting to the Gospel to be proclaimed at that Mass by means of foreshadowing either the event of that day’s Gospel or the message behind it. It is often either the telling of a historical event or a prophecy.

THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Taken from the book of Psalms, this acts as a kind of praise in which the people take part. It is a reading from scripture, but it is also a dialogue between psalmist and congregation which focuses on praising God. The psalms would have been something Jesus and the Apostles prayed, and so taking part in the response, either sung or recited, connects us to them and to 2000 years of worshippers praising God in the same way.



THE SECOND READING

Sometimes called the Epistle, the second reading is taken from one of the letters the New Testament written by the Apostles. This reading, addressed by the Apostles, often St. Paul, speaks to us as it did the early Church to whom those letters were first addressed. Our reading from them relates to the fact that the early Church and our Catholic Church today are the same Church, and that the message of these letters is as relevant to us today as it was to those early Christians.

THE GOSPEL

Once we have announced the Gospel with the Alleluia, the deacon, or in his absence, the priest, proclaims the Gospel, the very words and actions of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ. We revere the Gospel so much that we stand during its proclamation, like a soldier at attention in the presence of their Commander-in-Chief. As these are the very words of God spoken by His own lips, we bring all our focus to these words, for they are the peak and height of the Liturgy of the Word. It is the climax of our proclamation.



THE HOMILY

If the Gospel is the peak of the Liturgy of the Word, then the homily is the descending from the mountain. The homily is the priest taking the established word of God and expressing to us how it continues to speak to us today, even with the cultural differences and lifetimes of history that have taken place.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Creed, which the lay faithful recite with the priest, is our symbolic response to having heard the Word of God. In response to the teaching of God found in scripture, we acclaim: “I believe!”

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER OR PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The Word of God always focusses us on our mission, and so we conclude the Liturgy of the Word by offering prayers and petitions for the Church, the world, and all the needs of our community.



**TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST, PART A
SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2023**



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, which comprises the second half of the Mass, is considered the deepest and most profound worship that we, the human race, can offer to God. Many people believe it is simply a re-telling of the Last Supper, but it is actually far more than that. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is indeed a reliving of that night at the Last Supper, but it also relives the fullness of Christ's passion, His crucifixion and death, and even His resurrection. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, especially the Eucharistic Prayer, we partake in that one sacrifice of Jesus offering himself on the Cross and rising again.



When we celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we are not simply remembering some events that took place 2000 years ago and showing them on some kind of stage. Rather, as we participate in the Liturgy, the reality of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection are made present to us in the Eucharist. It is almost like being transported back into the Hill of Calvary, witnessing the crucifixion and resurrection before our very eyes, although hidden from our mortal view under signs. Nonetheless, with eyes of faith, we behold Christ crucified and Christ risen when our eyes are drawn to the Holy Eucharist held out to us by the priest. This is why the Mass is both the most solemn and the most joyful event of our day, our week, and of our whole life. Every time we come to the Liturgy of the Eucharist; the entire event of Christ's redemptive sacrifice is made present to us.

THE EUCHARIST'S ORIGINS AT THE LAST SUPPER

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is made up of four parts, each part corresponding to an action that Christ did at the Last Supper. These four actions we recall in the words of the Eucharist Prayer: Christ took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. We know that these four parts matter because our Lord repeated the same action again on Easter Sunday when he appeared to two of his disciples and ate with them at Emmaus. These four actions form the backbone of how Christ instituted the Mass that is now celebrated throughout the world.

TOOK: THE OFFERTORY

In the Old Testament, when a person wished to offer a sacrifice to God in the temple, he would be responsible for bringing the sacrifice, such as a lamb, to the priest at the Altar. The priest would then take the lamb and offer it as a sacrifice on the person's behalf. In our New Testament tradition, we continue this practice at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist during what is called the Offertory, or Preparation of the Gifts. The altar is set, and the people bring forth the gifts to be offered. This includes the bread and the wine that will be used for our 'sacrifice,' as well as the offerings of the people, in the form of the collection.

There is great significance to the church taking up the collection at this time. First, it is to unite our own material offerings to that of the bread and wine offered for the Eucharist. The people bring them up together to show how just as the bread and wine are brought up to be used by God for our benefit (made into the Eucharist so that we eat of it and have our souls nourished) so too our money is used by the Church to benefit the world by building up the kingdom of God. It is also significant because the money brought up comes from our own pocket. We have willingly let go of that money and handed it over to God as a sign that we are not attached to that money. We empty our hands of that money so that we can then fill our hands with the Bread of Life. To coin a phrase, we give our 'bread,' and we receive the True Bread, the bread that is the body of Christ.

BLESSED: THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the central point of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Mass as a whole. It is the moment of the consecration when bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the actions of the priest. It is the moment when God comes down from heaven into our churches and chapels, enthroned within the chalice and upon the Altar. During the Eucharistic Prayer, we kneel if we can further this reality of our faith. Christ becomes truly present -- body, blood, soul, and divinity -- through this sacred prayer of the Church.

It begins with a preface which speaks about the mysteries of that celebration of the Mass, but then takes its true form when we, united with the angels and saints in heaven, acclaim, "Holy, holy, holy." From there, this beautiful prayer forms a perfect prayer of praise which requires its own in-depth analysis, which will be the subject of next week's insert. Suffice it to say that this prayer reaches its apex as the priest utters the words of consecration, changing the bread to flesh and the wine to blood. The prayer contains many types of prayers, finally concluding with us all singing the Great Amen.



BROKE: THE FRACTURING RITE

The Fracturing Rite surrounds the breaking of the bread so that we might partake of it. It begins with the Our Father or Lord's Prayer, a prayer which was taught to us by Christ Himself. It is an ancient tradition within the Mass that this prayer be what follows the Eucharistic Prayer. We recite it together in one voice, as we are one body, the mystical body of Christ, celebrating the presence of His physical body which is on the Altar. This idea of our oneness in Christ continues with the prayers for peace and unity which follow, as well as the Sign of Peace, a liturgical action which symbolizes our unity and that there is no division among us. The Sign of Peace is not meant to be an excuse to socialize or engage in conversation, but is meant to be a sacred action, sharing the peace of Christ with one another, while still maintaining our focus on the worship we are participating in.

After the sign of peace has been exchanged, the choir recites the Lamb of God, drawing our focus back to the altar. It is at this moment, while the Lamb of God is acclaimed three times, that the priest breaks the Eucharist apart. This is the 'fracturing,' and is a sign that the body of Christ was slain for our salvation as well as a sign of Christ being the food for many, not simply the priest. As the priest does this, we rightly acclaim, "Have mercy on us," and, "Grant us peace."



GAVE: THE COMMUNION RITE

The Eucharist is not a sacrifice to be performed and then discarded. Like the lamb of the Passover meal, we eat of the sacrifice. The priest partakes first, then shares the Eucharist with us, first those assisting him in giving communion, and then he and his assistant ministers hand on to us that great gift of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Each small host and every drop in the chalice is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ Himself. It may look like bread and wine, and even taste as they do, but in faith, we believe that they are not bits of bread and drops of wine, but the real, actual, physical Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As such, when we approach for communion, and the minister presents us with the Body of Christ, we respond, "Amen," for indeed, we truly believe.

Even as we receive communion, it is most appropriate that we take time after receiving this most precious gift to give thanks for what we have received. Indeed, even if we receive it often, it is a powerful gift which should never be taken for granted. Thus, the Communion Rite does not end the Mass. We do not leave the church once we have received the Eucharist. Instead, we are called to return to our seats and spend some time in silent prayer to reflect on the great gift of Christ's very flesh and blood that we have received. This period of reflection is followed by the Prayer after Communion, bringing the Communion Rite to a close.



TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST, PART B: THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023



THE HIGH POINT OF THE MASS

The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed by the priest in the name of the entire sacred assembly, it is this prayer that transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer is most commonly known as the means of the changing of bread and wine into body and blood, but there is much more to it than that. We should be mindful that the word “Eucharist” comes from the Greek word for “thanksgiving,” and the Eucharistic prayer, indeed the Mass as a whole, can be called a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father. The Eucharistic Prayer includes almost every kind of prayer we can give.

In the current use of our Mass, called the Roman Rite, there are ten approved Eucharistic Prayers that a priest may use. Some are used frequently on Sundays and weekdays, while some are used more sparingly because they are for special needs or occasions. Some are longer than others and some have their various prayers in different orders. Regardless, even if these each have different wordings, they all have the same key elements that make up the different prayers within the Eucharistic Prayer. By knowing these different elements and being able to recognize them when we hear the priest pray them, we are able to have a deeper and fuller participation in this most holy prayer. The elements are:

DIALOGUE OF PRIEST AND PEOPLE

This serves as the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer. The priest calls the people to be attentive to the divine prayer and to participate in it in heart and voice. Worship is a task of the mind, heart, soul, and body, and so the priest invites the people to this sacred moment. The dialogue is always the same:

“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.”

Notice how the priest does not say his usual, “Let us pray,” but rather, “Let us give thanks...” The priest is inviting us to participate in the thanksgiving that is the Eucharist.

PREFACE

After the Dialogue, the priest turns his focus to God the Father and addresses Him directly. The Preface usually begins with, “It is truly right and just,” showing a continuation of what the people have just said, showing us how the priest’s prayer is tied to our prayer. The preface can differ in its wording and is often related to the unique celebration of that day, but it is always a prayer of thanksgiving which recalls the deeds of God the Father through Jesus Christ. The preface ends with our response, in which we acclaim, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

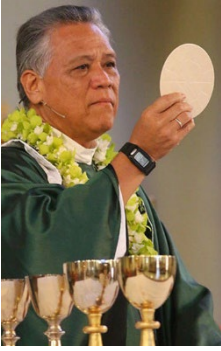
PRAYER OF PRAISE TO THE FATHER (ANAMNESIS – “NOT FORGETTING”)

An ancient form of prayer found time and time again in scripture, the Prayer of Praise, or *Anamnesis*, is when the priest mentions God’s greatness and the wonders He has done. It seems strange to spend time telling God how great He is; however, this form of prayer has been done by Moses, King David, and even Jesus Himself. It is thus in keeping with our greater tradition to join our prayer of praise to these.

THE CALLING DOWN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (EPICLESIS)

It is not the priest who transforms the bread and wine into body and blood of Christ; only God can do that. The act of consecrating the gifts requires the Holy Spirit’s direct involvement. The priest performs the *Epiclesis* by extending his hands over the gifts with his palms down above them as he asks God the Father to send down the Holy Spirit that those gifts become the Body and Blood of Christ. It makes the gifts holy and acceptable so that they become worthy to be the Eucharist.





WORDS OF INSTITUTION (CONSECRATION)

These are the words by which the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ himself. It is at time within the prayer in which the priest recalls and relives the last supper. During this, the priest repeats the words first uttered by Christ: “This is my body,” and, “This is the chalice of my blood.” When the priest says these words, it is no longer the priest who is speaking, but Christ speaking through the priest. As Christ is the fullness of Truth, what He says is always true, and thus when He says that the bread is His body, it thus becomes so. Our Lord then does the same to the wine, transforming it into His blood. This concludes with, “Do this in memory of me.”

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION (MYSTERY OF FAITH)

The consecration is followed by the priest proclaiming, “The Mystery of Faith,” a reference to the consecration he has just facilitated. The people respond by professing their faith in the new covenant, the consecration, and thus the Real Presence.

REMEMBERING THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION AS WELL AS HIS ASCENSION

This part of the Eucharistic Prayer is when the priest mentions how we are called to remember Christ’s passion and crucifixion, as well as His resurrection from the dead, His glorious ascension into heaven, and His future return to us in glory.

OFFERING OF THE BODY AND BLOOD

Before the consecration, we offered up bread and wine, made from human hands, to the Father as a gift. Now, those have been replaced with the Body and Blood of Christ, which are of far greater value in terms of sacrifice. Thus, the priest offers the Body and Blood of Christ to God the Father as the true acceptable sacrifice in atonement for our sins. The sacrifice on the cross, made present to us in the Eucharist, is the sacrifice that erases our sins and makes us worthy of God’s grace. We participate in this offering. Both priest and people offer up the sacrifice of Jesus as the price for our salvation.

EPICLESIS OVER THE PEOPLE

Similar but distinct from the *epiclesis* of the bread and wine, the priest asks God to remember and consecrate the people who are gathered at this Mass. We should remember that the priest acts as something of a mediator, and thus is the one who asks God to bless all the people of God gathered within the church for Mass. The Eucharist consecrates us as members of the Body of Christ.

INTERCESSIONS

Much like the Prayers of the Faithful, the Eucharistic Prayers include petitions of behalf of the Pope, the Bishop, the whole Church, and the dead.

DOXOLOGY (RIGHT PRAISE)

Always the same, the doxology is the final prayer of the priest which summarizes the Trinity and how each plays a role in the Mass: “Through him and with him and in him (Jesus), O God almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever.”

GREAT AMEN

This is our response to the Doxology, which is often sung, and meant to relate how we acclaim, affirm, and believe in the sacrifice that has just been offered through the Eucharistic Prayer. The Great Amen concludes the Eucharistic Prayer.





**TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
POST COMMUNION AND CONCLUDING RITES
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2023**



CONCLUDING THE MASS AND THE CALL TO MISSION

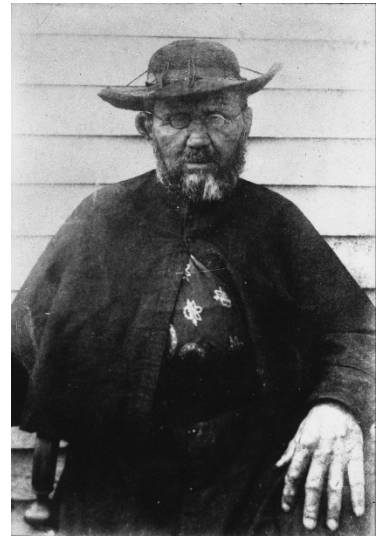
There is an ancient saying in the Church: “May God, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion.” This wonderful saying, based on St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, and which has been said as a blessing or salutation in the Church since at least the fifth century, finds a powerful meaning within the context of our liturgy. The liturgy is a work of God, so to speak, but it is indeed the work of the people, which is where the word *Liturgy* comes from. This good work of God’s and of our own must be brought to completion.

The Holy Mass does not end the moment we receive communion. Yes, receiving communion is the most intimate moment of the Mass for us individually, but that does not mean that what comes after is unimportant. There is a purpose to continue our prayer after we have received communion, and thus we do not leave right after we receive our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist. Instead, we return to our places within the church while communion continues to be distributed, and then once the Eucharist is taken to the tabernacle, we sit and allow ourselves some time for quiet reflection. We dwell on the gift of the Eucharist and remind ourselves of the reality of what, or rather *who* we have just received. Jesus, at this moment, dwells in us, not only spiritually, but physically.

This presence of Jesus within us, however, is not meant to be kept hidden away inside us. We are called to take Jesus with us out into the world! That is the center of what we might call our mission as Catholics. This emphasis on ‘mission’ is what the concluding rites of the Mass are all about.

So, what are we meant to understand about this mission of ours? Well, when we were baptized, several things happened to us. We were cleansed of Original Sin, we were reborn in the Holy Spirit, we became priests, prophets, and kings in the New Covenant, and we were made sons and daughters of God. As children of God, we are called to be members of His family, the Catholic Church. As members of the Church, we are meant to live out our lives as faithful Christians every day. This is not always easy, especially in our modern age, but God helps us through giving us spiritual graces, especially through our participation at the Mass.

We come to Mass to worship God, yes, but while we are offering Him our gift of worship, He is giving us gifts of His own. When we participate in the liturgy and receive communion reverently and worthily, God gives grace and strength to live out our Christian lives even when it becomes difficult. When we struggle to pray, God gives us the strength and desire to pray. When we struggle to do good works, God gives us the drive to do them. When we struggle with sin, God guides us to righteousness. When we feel discouraged, God gives us hope. When we feel anxious, God gives us peace. When we feel alone, God reveals Himself to us. All these things are gifts from God, and God pours forth these gifts to us as we encounter Him, especially in the Mass. What this means for us is that as we go to Mass, God is strengthening us spiritually, helping us live lives of faith in a complex world. Our mission is to stay true to the Gospel no matter what life throws our way. This is where our focus falls during the closing rites of the Mass.



CONCLUDING RITES

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

After communion, we are called to reflect on the reality of the Eucharist that we have received. This we do as individuals quietly right after receiving communion, but we also do so as a single community. Our quiet prayer is ended with the priest calling us together with the words, “Let us pray.” This parallels the Opening Prayer back at the beginning of Mass. Like that prayer, this prayer is unique to the day or week. This prayer is often related to the Opening Prayer in its wording, but also includes the themes of receiving strength and blessing from the Eucharist that we have received. This is not simply yet another reminder of how special it is for us to receive communion, it also tells us how receiving the Eucharist has done something to us, namely nourished our souls and given us strength. Like a good breakfast before a long day at work, the Eucharist is our spiritual nourishment for the work we are called to do after we go forth from the church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After the closing prayer, it is permissible to have some brief announcements. This can seem like a break from the spiritual activities of the liturgy, but it is tied to our worship. These announcements are meant to be concerned with upcoming parish activities, all of which are great opportunities to practice our faith beyond our Sunday worship, something we are all called to do. Make no mistake. We are all called to live out our Christian lives every day, not just on Sunday. Our parishes are places where we can foster our Christian living, and they should never be without activities, whether adoration, praise and worship, service projects, or social engagements. Mass is the most important time for us, but it is not the only time we are called to worship God or be with our brothers and sisters in the faith.

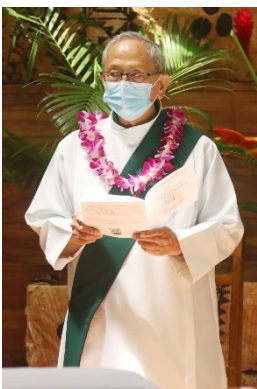
FINAL BLESSING

We end the Mass as we began it: with the Sign of the Cross. What is different here is that it also takes the form of the priest blessing us. Blessings from a priest or a deacon are a powerful gesture, always connected with a duty or purpose. For example, the priest blesses the deacon before he proclaims the Gospel, the bread and wine is blessed before it becomes the body and blood of Christ. Water is blessed before it is used for baptisms, chalices are blessed before they are set aside for liturgy, and even food can be blessed before it is eaten. When we are blessed at the close of Mass, it is our mission in mind. The Mass concludes with the final blessing, but the mission continues.



DISMISSAL (SENDING FORTH)

The final words of the Mass, whether said by the priest or deacon, give us our commission. There are a few different options they use, but the message is always the same: The Mass is ended, go forth and proclaim the Gospel by your life. Indeed, with this, our liturgy is fully concluded, but our mission to go forth and live out the Gospel continues.



The last action of the liturgy is for the priest and his assistant ministers to lead us out of the church and into the world. This shows us what we are now called to do. Armed with the word of God on our lips and the Body of Christ inside us, we take what we have received out into the world. Our liturgy has ended, yes, but our mission, our worship, and our Christian lives continue. We go forth as carriers of Christ, taking Him and His message to the world. By our lives, we show the world the joy of following Christ in His Church. This is our mission. We live out our lives in accordance with the scriptures so that we proclaim the Gospel through our actions each day. The Mass has taught us, healed us, uplifted us, and fed us. Now we go forth to bring the Church to the world and the world to our Church.



TEACHING MASS - BULLETIN INSERT
THE MASS: FULL, CONSCIOUS, AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2023



Over the past several weeks, these bulletins have focused on breaking down the different parts of the Mass and diving deep into the details. It is important for us to know the Mass along with its elements and its symbols so that we can understand and participate in the Mass in a deeper way. We are called to not simply spectate the Mass, but to take part in the worship in our mind, body, soul, and spirit.

With this in mind, our last bulletin will review the different parts of the Mass covered in previous sections and will focus on what we are called to do in order to participate in the Mass in a full, conscious, and active way,

This presence of Jesus within us, however, is not meant to be kept hidden away inside us. We are called to take Jesus with us out into the world! That is the center of what we might call our mission as Catholics.

PREPARING FOR MASS

Before we arrived at the Mass, our worship had already begun. We should enter a spirit of prayer before we even enter the church or even leave our homes. We should prepare ourselves by dressing our bodies in clothes fitting for worship, preparing our mind by meditating on the upcoming event of the Mass, our souls by prayer, and our hearts by recognizing God's love for us and responding with our love for Him. Coming to Mass is not a simple empty tradition or obligation. It is a deep expression of our relationship with God. Our Lord calls us to enter His house and be with Him. We come together as one Catholic family to be with God in the Eucharist.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Our Mass begins, rightly so, with the Sign of the Cross, which we make together as a sign of our unity of faith, our common baptism, and the means of our redemption. After we make the sign of the cross, the priest offers us words of greeting and blessing, which we return. This way, we know that even if we perform different tasks, in the liturgy, we are united in a single act of worship as a single body of believers.

Entering into our prayer, we then turn to God with a contrite heart and ask for mercy and forgiveness. We call to mind our sins during these first minutes of the Mass, recognizing that we are yet sinners in need of the help of God and prayers from all the saints. This prayer does not replace the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but it does offer absolution for small, venial sins.

After acknowledging our sins and receiving God's mercy, our hearts turn to God in joy as we sing the Gloria, an ancient song of praise which tells of God's glory, power, mercy, and His closeness to us. The Gloria is not sung at every Mass but is reserved for Sunday Masses as well as feasts throughout the year. After the Gloria, the priest exclaims, "Let us pray," prays silently with us, and prays aloud the prayer of the day. We unite ourselves to this same prayer so that, while it is spoken aloud by only one, it is prayed by all.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Our prayer continues through our proclaiming the Word of God. As Jesus is the Word made flesh, He is truly present in the word of God whenever it is read. As such, we sit to listen attentively to the readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the New Testament letters, and then finally the Gospel. The Gospel reading carries extra significance because not only is it the word of God, but it contains the words of Jesus spoken through His own mouth and his mighty works. Thus, while we sit for the other readings, we stand for the Gospel out of reverence for the words of Jesus.

After the Gospel is read, the priest or deacon will preach what is called a homily, which is a teaching specifically tied to our faith, drawing from the readings we have proclaimed. We are called to take these lessons to heart. As Catholics, we are called to live out our faith and pass it on to those we encounter in life. In order to

prepare ourselves for this great mission, we must come to know our great faith through the teachings of the Church, receiving them through the preaching of the clergy. This should not be the only way that we come to understand our faith, as there are many resources beyond a weekly homily from a priest or deacon, but that does not make it any less important. Indeed, receiving the teaching of the Church and listening attentively to the readings and homily are still an act of worship.

After the homily, and almost as a response to it, we stand and together recite the Creed, the summary of the teachings of the Church articulated in this way since the fourth century. All Catholics believe every word of the Creed, and it is important to know it, for it is what we believe. Having been taught the faith, we now profess it as one body of faith. United in our faith, we follow the creed by bringing the petitions of our community to God. We announce them and exclaim in one voice, “Lord, hear our prayer,” after each petition. These petitions close the Liturgy of the Word.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith. It is both the greatest gift we receive and the greatest thing we can offer to God. This is because the Eucharist is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, even if it has the appearance of bread and wine. Since Jesus is God and God alone is perfect, it is the perfect offering and a perfect gift. Because of this, it is right for us to see the Liturgy of the Eucharist as true worship of the God who is not far away and distant from us, but present with us in every place where Mass is offered.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, bread and wine are brought to the altar where they are transformed into the Body of Christ through the Eucharistic Prayer. During this prayer, we worship and adore the Lord as He comes down to us from heaven. It is here that the church is no longer simply a house of prayer, but a heavenly dwelling. God is with us here, not only in spirit, but physically as well. As members of the faithful, we are called to enter the deepest sense of worship, recognizing Christ in the Eucharist and responding with reverence, respect, and a prolific sense of awe. This is God who is before us! He is right there, held up by the priest for all of us to see!

Our God present with us, we pray aloud in one voice the Our Father, the prayer Christ Himself taught us, and exchange a sign of peace; a peace which comes from God and is for us to share with our brothers and sisters. In the sharing of peace, we are actively participating in the sign of our communion with one another, and rightly, because communion is the next part of the rite.

The first to take communion is the priest, but before he does so, he first breaks it as a sign that Christ’s body is to be shared with all the faithful, just as the sign of peace. After the priest takes communion for himself, he then gives communion, first to the deacon, and then all the faithful who are rightly disposed. It is right that we receive communion, as it is a gift from God. This gift of communion is the very body and blood of Christ, a true reality, hidden beneath bread and wine.

For us, we come forward to receive communion with a prayerful heart, dwelling on who it is that we are about to receive. We reverence our Lord with a bow as the priest or minister presents us with the Eucharist, and as he or she proclaims, “The body of Christ,” we respond, “Amen,” for indeed we truly believe.

CONCLUDING RITES

Communion does not end the Mass. Before we leave, we are given our mission to love and serve the Lord in the world. We are disciples of Christ, called to fill the world with His presence, taking Him with us from the church and into the world. We bear Christ in spirit and in our bodies, carrying Him with us into our daily lives. With the final blessing and the call to go forth, we depart from the church building, but we who are the Church carry Christ with us wherever we go.