

101 QUESTIONS

About The
Catholic Mass



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Thy Kingdom Come is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization that was created to enlighten society on certain truths of the Catholic Faith. We utilize all forms of media to communicate these teaching's including video, audio, music, and the Internet.

The mission of Thy Kingdom Come is to promote a renewal of love for the Catholic Church by deepening the commitment and understanding of the people of God. With this renewed commitment, we aim to open and strengthen society's participation in the Christian life, and establish a sense of hope in the future of the Catholic Church.

Thy Kingdom Come is in complete communion with the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Our goal is always to walk in step with the Church.

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Foreword

We live in a world that receives its information in short, bite-sized packets. The 30 second news clip, the sound bite, the message spelled out on a billboard that flashes by at 70 miles per hour. We receive the latest ideas and just as quickly discard them. How out of place we find ourselves, then, when we encounter rituals that are designed to be perceived not over the course of seconds, but over the course of a lifetime; gradually revealing their treasures as the ceremonies themselves soak into the marrow of our bones, into the fabric of our being, becoming not simply another message, but a part of who we are. The celebration of the Catholic mass gives us an opportunity to worship God and offer our lives to Him, and it gives us opportunities to receive His grace that have no parallels. While the nature of the ritual brings us closer to God through the repetition of familiar forms, the ability of those ceremonies to strengthen us is increased as we begin to learn more about them. By studying the meaning and the history of each part of the mass, we are better able to experience it in its full richness and depth. Therefore, a work such as this can have great value in enriching our participation in the mass.

As Catholics, we know that the sacraments have power even when we are not attentive to them, but their ability to bring us closer to God only increases with our devotion and faith. I hope that this little work may be just such a stimulus to deepen our appreciation for the mass in each of its elements, so that, each day or each Sunday, as we encounter the sacred mysteries of the liturgy, they may draw us deeper into the reality of Christ. There, far away from any news flashes that will be old news tomorrow, the true good news of Jesus Christ continues to unfold its multi-layered beauty. Ever ancient, ever new, the mass can bring us to encounter something whose timeless value gives the color of irrelevance to so many of the preoccupations that envelop our lives. Yes, the mass takes time: time to study, and time to live, but it is time well spent, as it will soon blend with the timeless fabric of eternity.

Fr. Theodore Book

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Introduction

This booklet is for those who are interested in learning more about the Catholic Mass. It is included as part of a series from Thy Kingdom Come, Inc. called *The Catholic Mass... Revealed!*, which also includes a video DVD with commentary on the Mass, a music CD soundtrack, and a book. This question and answer booklet is intended as a resource for those who watch the DVD or who may be participating in a program to learn more about the Mass.

The Catholic Mass is the most sacred act of worship a person can participate in upon earth. It is our principal source of grace to live our Catholic lives. At the Last Supper, Jesus Christ sat down with His chosen apostles for what He knew would be their last meal before his Resurrection. At that supper, Jesus did something new, something never done before, and yet something that will continue until the end of time.

May your journey of faith take you into the Heart of Christ at the center of the Mass, where you will find Him in the Word and the Eucharist. May this booklet assist you to understand the mystery of the Mass and open you to the fullness of grace that the Lord has in store for you, with the Mass as the center of your life.

In Christ,

Thy Kingdom Come, Inc.

GATHERING



1) What makes a Catholic church building so special and unique?

Every Catholic church is God's house, His home on earth, and God's Son Jesus Christ lives there in the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is the center of our lives and the heart of our life in Christ. It is "*the sum and summary of our faith*" (CCC 1327). Like a friend, you can go and visit Him at church anytime. He really wants to see us and gladly welcomes us when we come to church. Jesus ministers the Sacraments He instituted 2000 years ago through the priest at every Catholic church.

2) Do all Catholic churches look the same?

People build Catholic churches. There are many different styles and types of churches as there are many different types of people and all sorts of cultures. Some churches are old, some are new, some are large like basilicas and cathedrals, and some are small like chapels. Even though they look different, most Catholic churches have the same important things within them.

3) What do all the Catholic churches have?

All Catholic churches contain the Tabernacle where the Eucharist is kept. They all have an altar and an ambo/lectern and all have a sacred place consecrated to God for the people to worship.

4) What is the greatest act of the Church?

The greatest act of the Church is the liturgy. The Liturgy is made up of the Mass, the Sacraments, and the Divine Office. The Mass (from *missa*, which means oblation, initiation, assembly, and dismissal) and the Eucharist (which means "*thanksgiving*") are at the heart and center of the liturgy. The Holy Eucharist is the font of life that cleanses and nourishes us with God's grace to live, not for ourselves but for God, in a communion of love with God and our neighbor.

5) Who can benefit from attending and participating in the Mass?

Anyone who attends Mass with theological faith and personal devotion can benefit from the Mass. Theological faith is the grace to believe in God and in all that He has revealed. God gives this grace to those who ask Him for it. The Holy Eucharist is a mystery of faith. This means that we could not come to know about It in truth except through God's Revelation; and, although with faith we can come to know many truths about the Eucharist, It cannot be fully understood by us.

6) Why are faith, grace, and participation so important in Mass?

The Church calls for the faithful to have "*full, conscious, and active participation*" in the Mass. Only those whom believe with faith the truths of the Mass can benefit most full from the grace and fruits of the Mass.

7) Where does the Mass come from?

Jesus Christ, Who is the God-Man, revealed the Mass at the Last Supper, before He died on the Cross, to redeem the world from sin and death. He instituted the Mass and the Eucharist to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross – to be continued throughout the ages until the end of time, as He said, *“Do this in remembrance of Me.”*

8) Has the Mass always been the same?

The major parts of the Mass have existed from the beginning, while the Church’s authority occasionally, as the Spirit guides, makes revisions to some of the prayers and minor parts of the Mass. The Mass is the center of the Church and the Christian life and the greatest part of God’s Revelation in Jesus Christ. Jesus teaches about the Mass and the Eucharist in chapter six of John’s Gospel, in the Last Supper Gospel accounts, and in Paul’s first Letter to the Corinthians (11:17-34). From the beginning, the Church has always celebrated the Mass and believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Book of Acts speaks of the early Church dedicating itself to *“the breaking of Bread”* (Acts 2:42), which is historically synonymous with the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

9) Why don’t all the Christian denominations celebrate Mass?

The divinely revealed truths of the Mass and the Eucharist have remained unchanged throughout human history, whether all have believed in them or not. From the beginning, all Christians celebrated in common the Mass and believed in the Eucharist, that is until Martin Luther, who had been a Catholic priest for fifteen years, broke with the Catholic Church on October 31, 1517. By the year 1600, there were over two hundred Protestant interpretations of Christ’s words, *“This is My Body... This is My Blood.”* Even until today, Protestant Christians no longer believe in the Real Presence of Christ, although some believe in some form of presence in communion, nor celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass with the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation.

10) Do we hope that all Christians will be united in the one Mass again?

Yes, we pray for the restoration of the unity of all Christians in the Holy Eucharist, and for all humanity to believe in the Holy Mass. Unity is only possible through the Holy Eucharist. Yes, the Eucharist, called the Sacrament of Unity, is the most important means of hope for the restoration of all Christian unity, to reunite all Christians with the Church of Rome. It is important to note that we welcome our fellow Christians (as well as non-Christians) to the celebration of the Mass, but because Catholics believe the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, those not in full communion with the Catholic Church are ordinarily not admitted to receive Holy Communion.

11) How should I approach the Mass?

As faithful Catholics, our devotion to the Mass is based on faith, and we practice devotion with our will, which is guided by our mind as it grasps the truth of the Mass. As we grasp the truth of the Mass and cooperate with God’s grace to believe these truths with our mind and choose to be reverent with our will, then we can please God by our active participation in the Mass with faith and devotion. Any error we might have concerning the truth of the Mass will lessen our ability to receive its supernatural fruits. This is why it is so important to learn about the Mass.

12) So, is it important to learn about the Mass with faith?

Yes, our trust in God's Word and in His Church must be so strong that we are ready to believe whatever He has revealed with theological faith, even when our senses do not perceive the truth. With humble respect and firm adherence, we should approach the Mass realizing that human reason alone will not suffice to understand - faith is needed. The miracle of the Eucharist is not perceived by our senses, but by theological faith that relies upon the Church's divine authority. As believers, we have a duty to penetrate more deeply the truths of the Mass and the Eucharist, so by knowing God's truths more we may love Him more.

13) Is the Mass a Sacrament?

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is at the center of the Mass. In the Mass, Christ emanates, communicates, and radiates supernatural grace. This happens objectively in every Mass – for the whole world including all the persons in the world and all the souls in Purgatory. For those who are present and participating at Mass, the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Mass bestows upon them grace in accordance with their proper disposition and active participation.

14) Is it true that the more I participate in Mass, the more grace I will receive for myself and for others?

Yes, the more we participate in Mass with faith and devotion, the more grace we receive. Every Mass is a source of countless graces that are so needed today. For this reason, daily Mass is strongly encouraged. St. Leonard said that, except for daily Mass on the thousands of altars around the world, the human race would long ago have been destroyed because of its sins. This can be said even more so in our day, with its crisis of faith and escalation of sin. A Mass well participated in can change the world and greatly help other persons and the souls in Purgatory.

15) Why do we have to go to Mass on Sundays (and Holy Days of Obligation)?

Sunday is a holyday because Jesus made it holy by His resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday, the Holy Spirit made it holy by descending from Heaven on the apostolic Church on Pentecost Sunday. From the beginning of the Church, Sunday has been designated "*The Lord's Day*" (Rev. 1:10). By her authority, the Church has made every Sunday a day of obligation; and she has designated a few other days of the year, which are of special liturgical importance, as Holy Days of Obligation. Attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a grave obligation unless there is a serious reason for being unable to attend (which does not include vacation - when a Catholic church is accessible).

GATHERING



1

Preparing for Mass

16) What is the purpose of the small water bowls at the entrance of the church?

The holy water fonts are present so that we may bless ourselves as we enter into Christ's presence. Each time we do this, we are renewing our baptismal commitment with water and the invocation of the Trinity, and it serves to forgive venial sins and focuses our mind on our purpose in being in church. By doing so, we implore God's grace and protection as well.

17) What are the various ways that Christ is present in the Church?

Christ is present in the Mass and in the Church in several ways. Jesus is present in the Church when she prays, whenever we perform works of mercy, on our pilgrimage through life on earth on our way to Heaven, when the Gospel is preached, when the Church's teaching authority governs her members with the authority that comes from Christ Himself, and in the administration of the Sacraments. He is especially present in the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus promises: *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matt. 18:20).

18) Is Jesus present in the Mass in a special way?

Yes, Jesus is particularly present in Sacrifice of the Mass. In all these ways, Christ confers His grace, but the Eucharist is the summit of Christ's Presence. In the Sacraments, Christ confers grace. In the Eucharist, Christ is present with His power giving grace *and* He is also present in His very Self in what is called the Real Presence. The Eucharist is Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Son of God Who became the Son of Mary. The substance of the bread and the wine change into the actual body and blood of Jesus – this doctrine is called *"transubstantiation"* and is one of the major ways in which Catholic doctrine differs from all other churches except the Orthodox.

Introductory Rites

19) What is unique about the typical seats in a Catholic church?

Most Catholic churches have pews, long benches where the people sit together during Mass, or chairs. Everyone faces the sanctuary, which contains the main altar and the ambo/pulpit, where the priest presides. The pews usually have a kneeler, a soft padded fold-down bench used for kneeling during prayer and various parts of the Mass.

20) Why do we stand, sit, and kneel at Mass?

We engage in different forms of posture at Mass to correspond with the various parts of the Mass. For example, we sit during the readings and homily because they are instructional, but stand during the proclamation of the Gospel since it is about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We also stand during the prayer parts, whether the ones said by the priest alone or by the congregation as a group. We kneel in adoration during the consecration when the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ and before and after receiving Christ in Holy Communion.

21) Why do churches have statues and stained-glass windows depicting Jesus, Mary, and the Saints?

Catholics understand and accept the reality of the entire Communion of Saints. The Communion of Saints is made up of three groups in the one Family of God: the Church on earth, the souls in Purgatory, and the Saints in Heaven. Catholics do not adore any one except God and Him alone as the Trinity. But, Catholics understand that God has united the faithful and the Saints in a family of love that is not divided by the reality of death. Saints are our friends and we can honor them with mosaics, paintings, icons, statues, and stained-glass windows to remind us of their holy lives and of their presence among us, praying for us, and of our friendship with them. As photographs remind us of our family and friends, so too do the statues and images of Saints. In venerating holy images, we are venerating the person whom the image represents.

22) What is the significance of the various things seen in the sanctuary?

Candles are present to give light, symbolize the rising of our prayers to God as the smoke rises and to remind us that Jesus is our Light and we are called to be His light to others. Candles are a sign of reverence and festiveness. The flowers show us the beauty of God's creation, the representation of the liturgical season or feast, and our appreciation to God for His goodness. The credence table near the altar is present for the cruets that hold the water and wine, the basin and finger bowl, and the other items needed during the consecration. The Crucifix reminds us that every Mass is a representation of Christ's Sacrifice. The Sanctuary Lamp when lit reminds us that Jesus is present in the Tabernacle.

23) Is the presence of the Tabernacle important; and if so, where is it usually located and how do we acknowledge its presence?

Yes, the Tabernacle is of greatest importance because it is the *"house"* of the Eucharist Who is Christ. The Tabernacle must be present either in the sanctuary of the church, or in an attached chapel (usually in the raised area directly behind the altar or to one side of the altar). The Tabernacle is located in a place that is *"truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer."* Because Christ is truly present in the Tabernacle, it is customary to genuflect in reverence toward the Tabernacle in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament when entering and leaving the church or chapel, and to direct our prayers toward Christ in the Tabernacle in general.

24) What is the significance of the colored candles and wreath present around Christmas time?

During Advent, the 4-week season to prepare for Christmas, some churches place special candles around an Advent wreath. Each week another candle is lit. Three candles are purple to denote the solemn preparation period before Jesus' Birth. On the third Sunday of Advent, the pink candle is lit. This day is for rejoicing that the Birth of Jesus is near. The white candle in the middle is lit on Christmas Day, when the Light of the World is born. The Christmas season also frequently includes a Nativity scene, with poinsettias and Christmas trees to decorate the altar area.

25) What is the purpose of the 14 pictures or images along the sidewalls of the church?

These are the Stations of the Cross where people can stop to pray along the way of Jesus' Passion and Death, meditating on the various stages that are recounted in the gospels. The Stations are prayed especially during Lent.

26) What special things are included in the liturgy during Holy Week and Easter? The period of Holy Week and the Triduum of Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday is a very special time. The liturgy of the Mass has special place for blessed palm branches that resemble the scene of the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Cross that resembles the Crucifixion of Christ, Lilies that resemble the trumpets to announce the Resurrection, and perhaps a statue or depiction of the risen Lord or empty tomb. When present, these added symbols assist the faithful during Mass to reflect upon the central mystery of our Faith – the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ.

27) What is the purpose of the pool or large bowl of water located inside churches?

This pool or large bowl is called the Baptismal Font or Pool. It is used for Baptisms and is present at other times to remind us of our Baptism in Christ and of our baptismal vows and new life in Christ.

28) What is the significance of the large candle that sits near the Baptismal Font?

The paschal candle – blessed once a year during Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday, remains lit in sanctuary throughout Easter season. During the rest of the year, it is kept near the Baptismal Font and then is lit during Baptisms. It symbolizes the risen Jesus, and reminds us that He is our Light. A small baptismal candle is lit from the paschal candle during Baptisms and given to the one being baptized.

29) What is the purpose of the oil in jars seen in churches and often found in a cabinet on the wall?

Holy oils are used in the celebration of the Sacraments. They are used during Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick. People are anointed with these holy oils. There are three kinds of oils: Oil of Catechumens, Oil of the Sick and Holy Chrism. In some churches the holy oils are kept in an ambry, a chest or cabinet usually located on a wall.

30) What is the importance of the priest at Mass?

The Mass and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist depends in a special way on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which is of the ordained deacon, priest, and bishop. For a Mass to be celebrated, a priest or bishop is needed, since only they can consecrate the elements of bread and wine. Deacons and other ministers have important roles as well, though their presence is not necessary for the celebration of the Mass. The priest is the principal minister at Mass. The Eucharistic Prayer is the high point of the entire Mass and the most important role of the priest at Mass is to say these prayers of consecration.

31) What are the special clothes a priest wears?

At Mass, the celebrant wears liturgical vestments. His vestments include a Chasuble, which is an outer garment worn at Mass. He also wears a Stole, which is a long and thin liturgical vestment worn around the neck. These garments are colored to match the liturgical color of the season or feast of the Church. The altar cloth often matches the liturgical color of the priest's vestments. The colors are usually as follows: Green in Ordinary time, white for Easter/Christmas seasons, purple for Lent and Advent, and red for Pentecost, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and on the feast of the Apostles and martyrs.

32) Where does the priest and servers get ready for Mass?

The Priest (and deacon) gets dressed and ready for Mass in a room called the Sacristy. This room contains all the garments for the priest to wear and the other supplies for the altar servers and the Mass. There is also a special sink in the sacristy, called the sacrarium, which leads not to a drain but directly to the earth. The water from washed Mass linens (purificators) and purified Mass vessels is poured down the sacrarium drain after each Mass.

33) How do I know if a Bishop is present at Mass? What does a Bishop have that makes him unique?

A bishop is a priest ordained to shepherd a diocese of priests and lay faithful. He usually comes to parish churches to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation once a year. He may come to say Mass occasionally at other times as well. He has an Episcopal ring on his hand, which the faithful may kiss out of respect and to receive a blessing, a mitre (large folding cap) and a shepherd's crosier (long staff). When a Bishop is present at Mass, he is usually the main celebrant.

34) What is the purpose and role of the deacon at Mass?

Deacons are ordained men who may be single or married who serve the priest in ministry. They are often present at Masses in parishes. They assist the priest in specific service during the Mass, which may include leading various prayers, proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the homily, leading the general intercessions, and assisting during the consecration and distribution of Holy Communion.

35) Do lay people have special roles in the Mass as well?

Yes, laypersons assist in the Mass in a special way in various roles. The primary way that laypeople assist in Mass is as members of the congregation, joining their prayers to those of the priest. Laypersons may serve as lectors or readers who read the Scriptures other than the Gospel (first and second readings) and the general intercessions; as cantors who sing or chant the responsorial psalm which occurs between the first and second readings; as commentators who serve to introduce or explain the readings; as acolytes to serve at the altar and assist the priest or deacon and to assist in distributing Communion; as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who assist the priests in distributing the Eucharist; and as altar servers who serve the priest at Mass.

Entrance

36) How does Mass begin?

The entrance procession begins as the congregation has gathered and soon after the entrance song is begun (or antiphon is said). The procession includes the cross bearer (led by the thurifer if there is one), the candle bearers, book bearer carrying the Book of the Gospels who is either the lector or the deacon, and finally comes the celebrant. All in the procession genuflect to the Tabernacle and/or bow to the altar and proceed into the sanctuary. The Book of the Gospels is venerated and placed on the altar. The priest (and deacon) kiss the altar, and when incense is used, the altar and cross are incensed.

37) What happens when the priest reaches the sanctuary?

The priest leads the others to the altar where he kisses it as a sign of respect for Christ and then stands at the celebrant's chair.

38) Why is music such an important part of Mass?

Many churches have organs with pipes. Many Masses, especially on Sundays, have choirs – groups of people who lead the singing. It is important, like all celebrations for the celebration of the Mass to have music. The congregation sings as another way of praying to God.

St. Augustine said: *“Singing is praying twice.”* This is a wonderful way to give thanks and praise to God. Many churches have music books in the pews and a sign with numbers near the choir to tell you the song numbers. Sometimes several instruments are used including piano, guitars, flute, violin, and drums. The music matches the solemn nature of the Mass and the liturgical seasons and feasts.

39) Do I have to pray out loud at Mass?

It is very important to pray out loud as an expression of your heart-felt participation in the Mass. We pray out loud to remain focused on the Mass, so that our mind, heart, and body (with lips praying and responding out loud) are all united in integral participation. Catholics understand that the Mass is a communal gathering of worship and not just some individuals praying in the same place. The Mystical Body of Christ is the one family of the faithful gathered together in Christ. With this thinking, it is important to pray out loud as a family, all participating together in unison in our worship during Mass. We are the united congregation of the Body of Christ in the service of prayer and the sacrifice of love in the Mass.

Greeting

40) What is the greeting?

The celebrant begins Mass with the sign of the cross, saying: *“In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”* As he does so, all present bless themselves with the sign of the cross. He then gives a ritual greeting to all gathered, and the congregation responds.

GATHERING



2

Penitential Rite

41) Why does Mass begin with a prayer of repentance for sin?

We gather as the holy people of God. So, we begin by acknowledging our sinfulness and asking God's forgiveness so that nothing will keep us from union with Him. With proper participation, Mass forgives our venial sins; but we must still participate in the Sacrament of Penance to receive absolution for forgiveness of mortal sins.

Kyrie Eleison

42) Why is it so important to call on God's mercy?

The *Kyrie Eleison* ("Lord, have mercy") is sung or recited by all to praise the Lord and call on His mercy. Mercy is one of God's greatest attributes. We ask the Lord for mercy because we acknowledge that He is the Lord of forgiveness and wants to forgive our sins – we need only approach Him, saying we are sorry.

43) So, if I am in the state of mortal sin, I may not go to Mass?

No, you should still come to Mass, and you are still obliged to come on Sundays, but you may not receive the Eucharist until after going to confession.

44) What languages are found in the Mass?

Since the renewal of the Church's liturgy at Vatican II (1960s), the Mass of the Roman (Latin) Rite is most often prayed in the language of the local people, called the vernacular language. In the United States, this is in English, while it is German in Germany and Italian in Italy. In some places, the whole Mass is prayed in Latin, as was the custom before Vatican II since the time of the Church Fathers, when Latin was, in fact, the vernacular language. The Latin Mass may be celebrated in the older form of the traditional *Tridentine* Mass (from the Council of Trent) or in the renewed typical edition of the *Novus Ordo* (from the time of Vatican II and Paul VI) form of the Mass. And one prayer of the Mass is often prayed in Greek, which was a common language used in the time of Christ. This is the *Kyrie Eleison*, or "Lord have mercy" prayer. The Eastern Churches, which are under the Pope and include the Antiochian, Byzantine, and Alexandrian Rites, typically use their own languages and prayers, even when celebrating Mass in western countries like the United States.

GATHERING



3

Gloria

45) Is it important to praise God in the Mass, and if so, when does this occur?

Yes. The whole Mass is a continuous praise of God. But there is also a special hymn of praise called the Gloria (*“Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth”*). This is an ancient hymn of the Church, in which the congregation praises the Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Gloria is said or sung on Sundays and other solemn feasts outside of Advent and Lent.

GATHERING



4

Opening Prayer

46) How do the introductory rites come to a conclusion?

The introductory rites come to a conclusion with the opening prayer or collect. The people pray with the priest in God’s presence as he leads them in the opening prayer after a moment of silence. The opening prayer expresses the theme of the Mass while calling on God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the people give their assent by the acclamation, saying, *“Amen.”*

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



47) What is the Liturgy of the Word?

The Liturgy of the Word is the first main part of the Mass in which readings from Scripture are read and proclaimed. The readings include biblical readings, the responsorial psalm, and the Gospel. Afterwards, the homily, profession of faith, and general intercessions or prayer of the faithful complete this part of the Mass. In the readings, explained by the homily, God is speaking to His people, opening us to His wisdom, love, and redemption, and nourishing us with His Word.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



1

Biblical Readings, Responsorial Psalm, & Gospel

48) What biblical readings are said at Mass?

Sunday Mass includes two readings (the first excerpted from the Old Testament, except during Easter, and the second usually from a New Testament book or letter) and the Gospel, while daily Mass usually has one reading and the Gospel. A responsorial psalm is said or sung in between the readings. All these readings show the continuity of the work of salvation from the Old Testament through the writings of the apostles, highlighted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The responsorial psalm, with its chanting and singing of the psalms, dates back to the Jewish liturgy before the time of Christ.

49) Who reads the readings at Mass?

The layperson who reads the Bible readings organized in the Lectionary is called the reader or instituted lector. The readings are read from the pulpit, which may also be called an ambo. The ordained minister, the bishop, priest, or deacon, proclaims the Gospel from the ambo. God Himself speaks to us through the Bible readings.

50) How do I know when we are approaching the Gospel?

Before the Gospel, the *Alleluia* is sung, except during Lent when it is replaced by another acclamation. The congregation stands for the *Alleluia* and Gospel in respect of the Lord's Gospel as the central inspired Revelation of our Faith.

51) What are the main books used at Mass?

The book placed on the altar as Mass begins is the Book of the Gospels and it is used for the proclamation of the Gospel. The Book at the ambo is the Lectionary and is used for the readings. They are used for the first part of the Mass – the Liturgy of the Word. The other book used at Mass is the Sacramentary. This book is used by the priest for the Mass prayers and blessings and during the consecration at the altar. These books are the two parts of the Roman Missal.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



2

Homily

52) What is a homily?

A homily is a sermon preached after the readings and the Gospel. God Himself speaks to us through the Word. The homily interprets and relates the Bible passages and applies them to present Christian living. The homily gives the faithful present a better understanding and commentary on the proclaimed Word.

53) When is there a homily and who is permitted to give it?

A homily is given in the middle of the Mass after the Gospel. It must be given during Masses on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and is strongly recommended on weekdays, especially in Advent and Lent. Only a bishop, priest, or deacon may preach the homily.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



3

Profession of Faith

54) What is the Profession of Faith?

At Mass after the Homily, the faithful stand and recite the Profession of Faith, which is the Nicene Creed. By it, the faithful profess their faith in God and give assent to His Word. The Creed is a summary of the central dogmas of our Faith and is the heart of what we believe and profess. The Creed comes from the Latin word, *Credo*, which means, “*I believe.*” So, it should not just be recited but prayed from the heart.. We profess the Creed aloud and together because our Faith and Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. We profess what we together believe and we affirm our adherence to all the truths of our Faith.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



4

Prayer of the Faithful

55) What is the Prayer of the Faithful?

In the Prayer of the Faithful, the assembly stands to pray, in a common priesthood shared by all the baptized, for the concerns of the Church and the salvation of the whole world. Intercessory prayer is a very powerful and beneficial way to intercede for all humanity. As we lift up to God those in need, including ourselves, He hears and responds for the good of those for whom we pray. He is our Heavenly Father Who takes care of His children. Jesus says: “*Ask and you shall receive,*” and “*Where two or more are gathered in My Name and in prayer, I am there with you.*” Together, as the local Church, we gather in prayer united with the universal Church in Christ. We pray for the needs of the Church, the world, civil authorities, those in need, and the local community, including those who are sick and have recently passed away, and for the salvation of the world.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



56) What is the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the second and the most significant part of the Mass. Christ Himself instituted it at the Last Supper so He could be continuously present in His Church until the end of time. The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes the preparation of gifts, where the bread and wine with water are brought to the altar; the Eucharistic prayer giving thanks to God for the whole work of salvation and the consecration whereby the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ; and the breaking of the one bread in preparation for the faithful receiving the Lord's Body and Blood, just as the apostles received It at the Last Supper from Jesus' own Hands.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



1

Preparation of Gifts

57) What is brought up to the priest after the Homily?

A few laypersons, often a family, represent the entire congregation in bringing up the gifts at Mass. The gifts include the cruets of wine and water, the cup of the communion breads, called the ciborium, and the money collected by the congregation as a tithe offering to God and for the church's needs and ministries. These items are placed on or near the altar. Donations can also be placed in the poor boxes at the church's entrance.

58) What are the two cloth pieces placed on the altar for?

The altar servers prepare the altar by placing the corporal and purificator on the altar. The corporal is a square piece of linen used as an undercover for the sacred vessels used in the consecration so as to collect any particles or drops of the consecrated Host or wine that may fall onto the altar. The purificator is used to dry the sacred vessels at the end of Communion when they are purified. These cloth pieces are washed in a special way in the sacarium due to their use as sacred clothes with the Eucharistic species.

59) What else is placed on the altar for the consecration?

The chalice, which will hold the wine and water for consecration, is usually placed on the altar as well, along with the paten holding the main Host to be consecrated. The Sacramentary or missal is also placed on the altar so the priest can pray the prayers of the Mass. Once the gifts are brought up and accepted by the priest, he gives them to the altar servers to bring to the altar. Sometimes the deacon and priest will use incense to incense the gifts and altar, and then the deacon or other minister will incense the priest and people.

Prayer Over the Offerings

60) What special prayers does the priest pray over the elements on the altar? Do we join him?

The priest prays over the elements to be used during the consecration. He prepares the chalice with wine mixed with a little water. This symbolizes both the union of the divine and human in Jesus, and also the union of our lives and sacrifices with the sacrifice of Jesus. Twice the congregation responds: *“Blessed be God forever.”* The priest then washes his hands as an expression of his desire to be spiritually cleansed and made worthy to consecrate the Mass. Then the people pray: *“May the Lord accept the sacrifice...”*

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



2

Eucharistic Prayer

61) How is the Mass, and specifically the Consecration, related to the Death of Jesus on the Cross?

The Mass is a remarkable re-presentation of Christ’s Sacrifice of the Cross at Calvary. Christ is really present offering Himself in the person of the priest during the Consecration, no less truly than He offered Himself at the Last Supper and on Calvary for our salvation two thousand years ago. Jesus now communicates those graces to us and to the whole human race through the Mass.

62) Does Christ die over again at every Mass?

Christ died once and for all for our sins and His death merited all the graces that our sinful world needs to be redeemed. The Mass is not a new claim of another crucifixion of Christ, but the miracle of making His Crucifixion present on the altar and the communicating of the graces of the Cross to us within the Mass itself.

63) What is Jesus doing that is so special in the Mass?

Jesus is offering Himself, and us with Him, to the Heavenly Father in every Mass, and through Communion gives us the grace to be able to live as His disciples.

64) Why must a validly ordained priest (or bishop) celebrate the Consecration during the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass?

On the night of the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, He also instituted the Sacrament of the priesthood, called Holy Orders. He made it clear He wanted them to henceforth make present the same Sacrifice He had given at the Last Supper and on Calvary. Priests have received their power from Jesus through an unbroken chain of apostolic succession from the Apostles through the bishops down history to today. By the words of Consecration prayed by a validly ordained priest (or bishop), the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Without the priest, there would be no Sacrifice of the Mass. The power of consecration by an ordained priest brings the living Christ objectively to the altar.

65) What happens to the bread and wine on the altar as the priest prays over them during the Consecration?

Through the priest's words of consecration, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ – called transubstantiation. They still look the same. But the whole substance of the bread becomes the Substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus and the whole substance of the wine changes into the Substance of His Body and Blood. Jesus is present really, truly, and substantially, in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity! This is a great mystery that we cannot fully understand except by theological faith. St. Theodore of Mopsueta reminds us, *"The Lord did not say: 'This is a symbol of my Body, and this is a symbol of my Blood' but: 'This is my Body and my Blood'... for by the prayer of thanksgiving and the words spoken over them, they have been changed into Flesh and Blood."*

66) Why does the priest raise the Host and Chalice after the Consecration?

The Host and chalice are raised to the people for the purpose of adoration. The faithful may make an act of adoration by saying silently, *"My Lord and my God"* at this moment. The Host and chalice are usually held aloft for a few seconds so that people have time to make an act of adoration. This is a very important moment in the Mass, when Christ is now truly present in the Eucharist on the altar. Our prayers are powerful during this moment as well. Sometimes, bells are rung to indicate the moment of the elevation.

67) What is the memorial acclamation?

Immediately after the Consecration, the memorial acclamation or *"mystery of faith"* is recited, which may be one of four prayers, such as: *"Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again"* to proclaim our belief in the miracle that has just occurred on the altar.

68) How does the Eucharistic Prayer end?

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the Great *Amen* after the final doxology. This is one of the key moments of the lay participation in the Eucharistic Prayer. *"Amen"* means *"I believe"* – our profession of believe in all that has occurred.

69) Can we see and taste the changes of the bread and wine when they become the Body and Blood of Christ?

No. St. Thomas Aquinas explained that everything is made up of “*substance*” and “*accident*.” Substance is the core of the item, what makes it be that particular thing and nothing else. Accidents are the qualities of a particular thing. So, for example, the substance of a stone is the essence that makes this particular object a stone as distinct from being a piece of wood. It is often intangible. An accident, on the other hand, is a tangible quality that can vary. This particular stone looks blue and feels cold. “*Blue*” and “*cold*” are accidents.

At the Consecration, the substance of the bread and wine changes to be the Body and Blood of Jesus. The accidents of the bread and wine remain the same. In other words, it still looks like bread, it tastes like bread, it feels like bread, but it isn’t bread any longer.

70) What do I need to help me believe what I cannot see or fully understand about the Mass?

Faith is the answer. “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1). Theological faith is a gift from God. “*without faith it is impossible to please [God]*” (Hebrews 11:6).

71) What is the role of the lay faithful during the Consecration?

The lay faithful are called to unite themselves with Jesus as a joint offering to the Heavenly Father.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



3

Lord’s Prayer

72) When we say the Our Father, why do Catholics say it in two separated parts at Mass?

Jesus gave the *Our Father* Prayer to us. It is based on the two versions in the Gospels of Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Matthew’s version is most commonly used.

The Lord’s Prayer is sometimes concluded with the doxology [*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.*] The doxology is not found in the original texts of the Bible. It is first found in the *Didache* (circa 70 A.D.), which is The Teaching of the Apostles. Catholics do not end the *Our Father* with the doxology, but separate it in the Mass, recognizing that the two prayers are distinct. Protestants and Eastern Christians often attach the doxology to the *Our Father*. The Lord’s Prayer is “*truly the summary of the whole gospel.*”

73) What kind of posture is proper during the *Our Father*?

Some local communities and individuals have the informal practice of holding hands during the Our Father, or of people extending their hands in imitation of the gesture prescribed for the priest during the prayer. The gesture proper to the faithful during the prayer is called the "*orans*," that is, the hands joined together in the traditional posture of prayer or with arms extended toward God.

Sign of Peace

74) What is the *sign of peace* and how should we share it?

The exchange of a sign of peace is a demonstration of your desire to be reconciled with your neighbor, whoever they are, before going to the altar to receive the Lord in Communion. It should be extended only to those closest to you and in a sober manner. A simple handshake is most common, although, sometimes, family members will exchange a kiss on the cheek. Sts. Peter and Paul speak about the holy kiss as a sign of reverence in the Bible (Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Thess. 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14). At this point in the mass, each of the faithful turns to his neighbor, saying: "*Peace be with you,*" with the response, "*And also with you.*" At times, the priest may omit individual exchanges of peace.

75) I heard that the Church added the sign of peace and made other minor changes to the Mass after Vatican II. Can the Mass be changed?

Christ Himself instituted the Mass and the Eucharist. The Mass is only valid if a validly ordained priest celebrates it with valid matter, bread and wine, and valid form, the proper words of the Prayer of Consecration. Beyond this, the Mass may be revised according to the charism of the infallible authority of the Magisterium in the areas of various customs, prayers, and matters of smaller traditions within the Mass. The Mass has been recently revised around the instructions of Vatican II, and afterwards up to our time, in various small matters. In some ways, the Church is always in reform in her practices and customs; but this does not mean any of her truths and doctrines ever change. The Holy Spirit guides the Church in major and minor matters for the good of the faithful, and thus, obedience to the Church's guidance is called for from the faithful. While being obedient, the faithful may also continue to desire further revision and renewal as well.

Breaking of Bread – Lamb of God

76) Who is the Lamb of God?

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*). St. John the Baptist spoke to his followers when Jesus approached him at the Jordan, saying: "*Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.*" Jesus is the Lamb of the New Covenant. Drawing from the symbol of the lamb sacrificed in the Passover of Israel from Egypt, Jesus is the new Lamb. We pray to Jesus, the Lamb of God, for His mercy and peace, just before receiving Him in Communion.

77) Why does the priest break the Host on the altar after the Lamb of God Prayer?

Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with four great Eucharistic actions: He took, blessed, broke, and distributed the Bread (Matthew 27:45). The *breaking of the Bread* signifies that in communion we who are many are made one body in “*the Bread of Life*,” Who is Christ (see John 6:48, 1 Corinthians 10:17). The Mass is the Sacred Meal where we share table fellowship with Christ in His Family of love and unity. After the breaking of the Bread, the priest commingles a small part of the Host into the chalice to signify that Christ’s Body and Blood are reunited in His glorious Resurrection, in Heaven, and in the Eucharist.

78) How do the faithful make final preparations before receiving the Eucharist?

The faithful echo with ardent faith the words of the Centurion to Christ: “*Lord, I am not worthy... only say the Word and [my soul will] be healed.*”

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



4

Holy Communion

79) Who may receive Holy Communion?

The persons who may receive Holy Communion are those who are baptized and in full communion with the Catholic Church, who have received their First Holy Communion and are in the state of grace. They must not have eaten for at least an hour before receiving Holy Communion (including chewing gum, coffee, tea, soda, and candy; but not including medicine and water). It has become customary in some places for those not receiving Communion to come forward while crossing their arms as they approach the minister of Communion, so as to receive a blessing instead of the Eucharist. If a person is conscious of having committed a mortal sin, he must (in most cases) go to Confession before receiving Communion.

80) How often may I receive the Eucharist?

Currently, the Church teaches that I must attend and participate in Mass once a week on Sundays (or the Saturday vigil) and on other Holy Days of Obligation. I should receive the Eucharist when in the state of grace and having proper disposition each time I am at Mass, but I must at least receive the Eucharist once a year. It is highly recommended to attend Mass and to receive the Eucharist daily. I may receive the Eucharist twice in one day when the second time is at a full Mass that I attend and participate in.

81) Are there any other times I may receive the Eucharist besides at Mass?

Yes, you may receive the Eucharist during the week at a Communion Service in the place of a Mass or when a minister brings the Eucharist to you when you are sick or in the hospital.

82) What if I am not able to make it to Sunday Mass for a serious reason, or if it is not convenient during the week?

The Church teaches that when we are not able to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we may instead receive the Lord in a spiritual communion, which with proper disposition can be as effective in grace as receiving the Sacramental Eucharist Himself. We may receive spiritual communions as often as we would like, and may do so through a prayer asking for the Lord's special presence in a "*spiritual communion*."

83) What is the benefit of receiving Holy Communion?

Those who receive Holy Communion receive Jesus Christ glorified, fully in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, which is referred to as the "*total Christ*." This is the greatest source of grace, and thus increases the life of God within us. They receive Him and enter into deep communion with Him Who is really and sacramentally within them. The Eucharist helps them to love others with the love of God. It cleanses them from venial sin and strengthens them against sin and temptation. It fosters their service to Christ and His Church, and the needs of others. Jesus promised that he who eats His Flesh and drinks His Blood shall have eternal life and be raised on the last day (see John 6:54).

84) Is the Eucharist a preparation for Heaven?

Yes, it is a preparation and a foretaste of Heaven. Those who receive the Eucharist receive the assurance of eternal life, as the Church calls Holy Communion "*the medicine of immortality*." Through worthy reception of Holy Communion, we receive the grace we need to reach Heaven, of which the Mass is already a foretaste. We also receive the promise that our bodies will be resurrected on the last day. St. Pius X said: "*Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to Heaven... The surest, easiest, shortest way is the Eucharist*." In the Eucharist, Jesus enters into our soul and brings heavenly delights to us.

85) Are heavenly persons present at Mass?

As was mentioned in #18, Jesus is present in the Mass in various and special ways. The Three Persons of God – the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit – are present and active in bestowing grace as we address them in the prayers of the Mass. There are also other heavenly persons present at Mass – those of the Communion of Saints and the Angels. The Blessed Virgin Mary is present interceding for the Church, and countless thousands of Angels praising God, together with your Guardian Angel who is interceding for you. At every Mass, the church is also filled with many Saints of Heaven, both known and unknown, who come to glorify God with the Church on earth.

86) How should I approach the Eucharist to receive Communion?

It is important to approach the Lord in Communion with reverence, hands folded in prayer when coming and going from receiving Communion. We should be speaking to Him with love and thankfulness, being conscious of Him while receiving Him. We should avoid distractions, which would take our minds away from the solemnity and awesomeness of what we're doing.

87) Do I make any sign of reverence as I receive the Lord?

Yes. St. Augustine discusses how we should conduct ourselves, saying: *“It was in His flesh that Christ walked among us and it is His flesh that He has given us to eat for our salvation. No one, however, eats of this flesh without having first adored it... and not only do we not sin in thus adoring it, but we would sin if we did not do so.”* The Church asks us to make some external sign of adoration before receiving Christ in the Eucharist, and in the United States, the recommended sign is a bow of the head just before receiving.

88) What is the proper way to receive the Host?

When receiving Holy Eucharist, as the minister says, *“The Body of Christ,”* we respond, *“Amen,”* which means, *“I believe.”* We may receive the Eucharist on the tongue, or in the hand. When receiving in the hand, one hand could be cupped over the other.

89) Why is the Eucharist sometimes distributed with the Hosts and the consecrated wine, and other times with the Hosts only?

Christ is fully present in both the host and in the chalice. Both species must be present for a valid Mass, and the priest must consume both. However, it is not required for anyone other than the priest to receive Communion under both kinds, even if both are offered. We may choose to receive the Precious Blood. In that case, we make an act of reverence as described in #87 for receiving the Body.

90) Is there another way to receive the Eucharist?

Though not very common in the United States, Holy Communion may be offered by intinction, whereby the minister dips the Host into the chalice before giving It to you on the tongue, saying: *“The Body and Blood of Christ,”* In either case, you respond with an *“Amen”* as you receive the dipped Host, after an external act of reverence.

91) What should I do after receiving Holy Communion?

After receiving Holy Communion, you should spend time with Jesus in personal and intimate prayer in sacred silence. You may join in the Communion song to express the joy of your heart and communal thanksgiving. If there is no song, the antiphon may be said or sung. With the local customs as a guide, you may sit or kneel after Communion. What is most important is the expressing of gratitude and adoration of the Lord Whom you have received. It is even recommended that the faithful stay behind after Mass to pray for a suitable time in thanksgiving before leaving the church. A beautiful prayer to say to the Lord during this time is: *“O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.”*

92) After Communion, why are the remaining Hosts placed in the Tabernacle?

From the beginning of the Church, the Eucharist has been reserved in the form of the Hosts in churches. One reason is so that Holy Communion may be taken to the sick after Mass. Jesus cares for the sick and the dying, and so the Church sees to their needs in bringing Christ to them in the Eucharist. When someone is dying, there is no better remedy and gift of grace than to give them their last Eucharist, called viaticum (food for the journey into eternal life). If you know someone who is sick or dying, you can call the parish or priest at any hour to come and give Holy Communion to that person.

93) Can I come and visit the Lord in the Tabernacle?

The second reason Christ is present in the Tabernacle outside of Mass is for the purpose of being with us continually in His Real Presence for Eucharistic Adoration. We should make regular visits to be with Christ in the Eucharist outside of Mass when possible. He is waiting for us – longing to see us, talk with us, and help us. St. Maria Goretti says: “*He loves, He hopes, He waits*” for us everyday and every moment in the Tabernacle or in Exposition in every Catholic church.

CONCLUDING RITES



94) How does Mass end?

Just as Mass began with certain prayers, so it ends in a similar fashion. The priest gives a final blessing and dismisses (*missa*) the assembly. Sometimes, a few brief announcements precede the priest's prayers at this time. Then, priest says: “*Go in peace.*” And we respond: “*Thanks be to God.*” The priest kisses the altar, as when he began Mass, and he leaves with the others, as in the entrance procession, usually accompanied by a song. All give thanks and praise to God!

Eucharistic Devotion

95) What is the most precious treasure on earth and of the Catholic Church?

The most precious treasure is the Holy Eucharist, the Real Presence of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist is the greatest pledge of Christ's immense love for us and His continued Presence with us until the end of time. It is “*the source and summit of the whole Christian life*” (Vatican II). The Eucharist is Jesus Christ now on earth no less than He is now in Heaven, and no less truly than He was on earth in the first century Holy Land, now under the appearance of bread and wine.

96) What is Mary's role in relation to the Eucharist?

The Church calls Mary the Mother of the Eucharist. She gave to her Son, Jesus, His Flesh and Blood from her own body. St. Augustine said that in the Eucharist, “*the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary.*”

97) Why is the Eucharist present in the church outside of Mass?

From the beginning of the Church, the Eucharist has been reserved in a Tabernacle in the churches, in the form of the Hosts. The Eucharistic Hosts have always been regularly exposed for adoration by the faithful and carried in processions. The Hosts have always been protected and shown great reverence since they are Jesus Himself. Jesus is with us and is present among us, as much as He is in Heaven, here on earth in our Tabernacles.

98) Many churches have Eucharistic Adoration. What is that?

In chapels and churches that organize Eucharistic Adoration, the Eucharist is placed in a monstrance on the altar for us to spend time with Him “*Face to face*” in adoration and prayer. Many people gather to worship the Lord over the hours, days, or perpetual time He is present in Exposition on the altar. Some people commit to a weekly Holy Hour during Exposition times to answer Christ’s call to His Apostles in the Garden of Olives when He asked: “*Can you spend one hour with Me?*” During time of Adoration, we may sit quietly and speak with Christ from our heart, kneel and adore Him, read from the Bible or a spiritual book that pertains to Eucharistic devotion or understanding, pray the Holy Rosary, or simply gaze upon Him with love.

99) What are the benefits of adoring the Lord in the Eucharist outside of Mass?

When we visit with the Eucharistic Lord, we visit with our best friend. Conversation with the Lord forms us in holiness when we spend time with Him. Pope Paul VI recommended that the faithful make a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament with lively faith to show the Lord their love and gratitude. In the Eucharist, the Lord, Who is the Model of humility, shows us how to be humble and how to trust in Him.

100) What have the Saints said about how important Eucharistic Adoration is?

St. Alphonsus Liguori said: “*Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us.*” John Paul II said: “*The worship of the Eucharist is of inestimable value.*”

101) Do the Saints really say that the best time we can have on earth is Eucharistic Adoration?

The Saints have said that the greatest time we will ever spend on earth and the time we will be most thankful for in Heaven is the time we spend with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. St. John Vianney said: “*In Heaven we will consider these moments with the Lord as the happiest of our earthly lives.*” Ven. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said: “*I make a Holy Hour each day in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament... through our daily Holy Hour our love for Jesus becomes more intimate, our love for each other more understanding, and our love for the poor more compassionate... The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in Heaven, and will bring about everlasting peace on earth.*” The Eucharist is Love par excellence!

COMMON PRAYERS



Divine Praises

Blessed be God.
Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be His most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in His angels and in His saints.

The Angel's Prayers at Fatima

My God, I believe, I adore, and I love You!
I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which He is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.

O most Holy Trinity, I adore You!
My God, my God, I love You in the most Blessed Sacrament.

Prayer of St. Faustina before the Eucharist

I adore You, Lord and Creator, hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I adore You for all the works of Your hands, that reveal to me so much wisdom, goodness and mercy, O Lord. You have spread so much beauty over the earth and it tells me about Your beauty, even though these beautiful things are but a faint reflection of You, incomprehensible Beauty. And although You have hidden Yourself and concealed Your beauty, my eye, enlightened by faith, reaches You and my soul recognizes its Creator, its Highest Good, and my heart is completely immersed in prayer of adoration.

My Lord and Creator, Your goodness encourages me to converse with You. Your mercy abolishes the chasm which separates the Creator from the creature. To converse with You, O Lord, is the delight of my heart. In You I find everything that my heart could desire. Here You light illumines my mind, enabling it to know You more and more deeply. Here streams of graces flow down upon my heart. Here my soul draws eternal life. O my Lord and Creator, You alone, beyond all these gifts, give Your own self to me and unite Yourself intimately with Your miserable creature.

O Christ, let my greatest delight be to see You loved and Your praise and glory proclaimed, especially the honor of Your mercy. O Christ, let me glorify Your goodness and mercy to the last moment of my life, with every drop of my blood and every beat of my heart. Would that I be transformed into a hymn of adoration of You. When I find myself on my deathbed, may the last beat of my heart be a loving hymn glorifying Your unfathomable mercy. Amen.

Prayer before Mass - St. Ambrose

Lord, Jesus Christ, I approach Your banquet table in fear and trembling, for I am a sinner, and dare not rely on my own worth but only on Your goodness and mercy. I am defiled by many sins in body and soul, and by my unguarded thoughts and words. Gracious God of majesty and awe, I seek Your protection, I look for Your healing; Poor troubled sinner that I am, I appeal to You, the fountain of all mercy. I cannot bear Your judgment, but I trust in Your salvation. Lord, I show my wounds to You. I know my sins are many and great, and they fill me with fear, but I hope in Your mercies, for they cannot be numbered. Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and man, crucified for mankind, look upon me with mercy and hear my prayer, for I trust in You. Have mercy on me, full of sorrow and sin, for the depth of Your compassion never ends. Praise to You, saving Sacrifice, offered on the wood of the cross for me and for all mankind. Praise to the noble and precious Blood, flowing from the wounds of My crucified Lord Jesus Christ and washing away the sins of the whole world. Remember, Lord, Your creature, whom You have redeemed with Your Blood. I repent my sins, and I long to put right what I have done. Merciful Father, take away all my offenses and sins; purify me in body and soul, and make me worthy to taste the holy of holies. May Your Body and Blood, which I intend to receive, although I am unworthy, be for me the remission of my sins, the washing away of my guilt, the end of my evil thoughts, and the rebirth of my better instincts. May it incite me to do the works pleasing to You and profitable to my health in body and soul, and be a firm defense against the wiles of my enemies. Amen.

A Prayer before Mass - St. Thomas Aquinas

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the Sacrament of Your only-begotten Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, I come sick to the Doctor of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.

Lord, in Your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness.

May I receive the Bread of angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with humble reverence, with the purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me to salvation.

May I receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and its reality and power.

Kind God, may I receive the Body of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His mystical Body and numbered among His members.

Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive Your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see Him Face to face in glory, Who lives and reigns with You forever. Amen.

Short Prayer after Communion - St. Thomas Aquinas

Sweetest Jesus, Body and Blood most Holy, be the delight and pleasure of my soul, my strength and salvation in all temptations, my joy and peace in every trial, my light and guide in every word and deed, and my final protection in death. Amen.

Thanksgiving after Mass - St. Thomas Aquinas

Lord, Father all-powerful and ever-living God, I thank You, for even though I am a sinner, your unprofitable servant, not because of my worth but in the kindness of Your mercy, You have fed me with the Precious Body and Blood of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that this Holy Communion may not bring me condemnation and punishment but forgiveness and salvation. May it be a helmet of faith and a shield of good will. May it purify me from evil ways and put an end to my evil passions. May it bring me charity and patience, humility and obedience, and growth in the power to do good. May it be my strong defense against all my enemies, visible and invisible, and the perfect calming of all my evil impulses, bodily and spiritual. May it unite me more closely to You, the One true God, and lead me safely through death to everlasting happiness with You. And I pray that You will lead me, a sinner, to the banquet where You, with Your Son and Holy Spirit, are true and perfect light, total fulfillment, everlasting joy, gladness without end, and perfect happiness to Your Saints. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer after Mass - St. Ignatius Loyola

Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom,
my memory, my understanding, and my will.
All that I have and cherish
you have given me.
I surrender it all to be guided by Your will.
Your grace and Your love
are enough for me.
Give me these, Lord Jesus,
and I ask for nothing more.

Prayer of St. Bonaventure

Pierce, O most sweet Lord Jesus, my inmost soul with the most joyous and healthful wound of Your love, and with true, calm and most holy apostolic charity, that my soul may ever languish and melt with entire love and longing for You, may yearn for You and for Your courts, may long to be dissolved and to be with You.
Grant that my soul may hunger after You, the Bread of Angels, the refreshment of holy souls, our daily and super substantial Bread, having all sweetness and savor and every delightful taste.
May my heart ever hunger after and feed upon You, Whom the angels desire to look upon, and may my inmost soul be filled with the sweetness of Your savor; may it ever thirst for You, the fountain of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the torrent of pleasure, the fullness of the house of God;
may it ever compass You, seek You, find You, run to You, come up to You, meditate on You, speak of You, and do all for the praise and glory of Your Name, with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with ease and affection, with perseverance to the end; and be You alone ever my hope, my entire confidence, my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest and tranquility, my peace, my sweetness, my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help, my wisdom, my portion, my possession, my treasure; in Whom may my mind and my heart be ever fixed and firm and rooted immovably. Amen.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Your wounds conceal me.
Do not permit me to be parted from You.
From the evil foe protect me.
At the hour of my death call me.
And bid me come to You,
to praise You with all Your saints for ever and ever. Amen.

Spiritual Communion - St. Alphonsus Liguori

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to possess You within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there, and unite myself wholly to You; never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Prayer while visiting the Blessed Sacrament - St. Alphonsus Liguori

My Lord Jesus Christ, for the love which You bear to men, You remain night and day in this Sacrament full of compassion and of love, awaiting, calling, and welcoming all who come to visit You. I believe that You are present in the Sacrament of the Altar: I adore You from the abyss of my nothingness, and I thank You for all the graces which You have bestowed upon me and in particular for having given me Yourself in this Sacrament, for having given me Your holy Mother Mary for my advocate, and for having called me to visit You in this chapel. I now salute Your most loving Heart: and this for three ends:

- In thanksgiving for this great Gift;
- To make amends to You for all the outrages which You receive in this Sacrament from all Your enemies;
- I intend by this visit to adore You in all the places on earth in which You are the least revered and the most abandoned.

My Jesus, I love You with all my heart. I grieve for having so many times offended Your infinite goodness. I promise with Your grace never more to offend You in the future. Now, miserable and unworthy though I be, I consecrate myself to You without reserve; I give You my entire will, my affections, my desires, and all that I possess. From now on dispose of me and of all that I have as You please. All that I ask of You and desire is Your holy love, final perseverance, and the perfect accomplishment of Your will. I recommend to You the souls in purgatory; but especially those who had the greatest devotion to the most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I also recommend to You all poor sinners. My dear Savior, I unite all my affections with the affections of Your most loving Heart; and I offer them, thus united, to Your eternal Father, and beseech Him in Your Name to vouchsafe, for Your love, to accept them. Amen.

Prayer at the end of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* - John Paul II & St. Thomas Aquinas

Let us make our own the words of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an eminent theologian and an impassioned poet of Christ in the Eucharist, and turn in hope to the contemplation of that goal to which our hearts aspire in their thirst for joy and peace: *Bone pastor, panis vere, Iesu, nostri miserere...*

Come then, good Shepherd, Bread divine,
Still show to us Thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us, still keep us Thine;
So we may see Thy glories shine
in fields of immortality.
O You, the wisest, mightiest, best,
Our present food, our future rest,
Come, make us each Thy chosen guest,
Co-heirs of Thine, and comrades blest
With saints whose dwelling is with Thee.

Prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas - *Ad Sacrosanctum Sacramentum*

O sacred banquet at which Christ is consumed,
The memory of His Passion recalled, our soul filled with grace, and our pledge of future glory
received:

How delightful, Lord, is Your Spirit, which shows Your sweetness to men, offers the precious Bread
of heaven, fills the hungry with good things, and sends away empty the scornful rich.

V. You have given them bread from heaven.

R. A bread having all sweetness within it.

Let us pray:

God, Who left for us a memorial of Your Passion in this miraculous Sacrament,
Grant we implore You, that we may venerate the holy mystery of Your Body and Blood, so that we
may ever experience in ourselves the fruitfulness of Your redemption.

You who live and reign, world without end. Amen.