



The Liturgy of the Eucharist

In the same way that the Mass begins with prayers to help us prepare to hear the Scriptures proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word, so now we prepare ourselves to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Our participation in the Liturgy of the Word was centered on opening ourselves fully to the Word of God proclaimed to us. Now we prepare ourselves to join our sacrifices with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ that is offered at this Mass.

Our Lord, on the night before He died, took bread and wine and instructed His apostles to do this in commemoration of Him. In this part of the Mass we bring the bread and wine to the altar. The priest will “take the bread” from the congregation and say the “blessing” over it. This will lead us into the next part of the Mass, when we pray a great prayer of “giving thanks” (literally what “Eucharist” means), before the priest “breaks the bread” and “gives it to us” in communion.

Reflecting on this, Saint Paul told the Corinthians: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes,” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Both bread and wine are made by gathering the many and crushing them into a unified substance. Crushing many grains of wheat and molding them into one substance makes bread. Crushing grapes into juice and letting the juice age and ferment makes wine. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, is made up of the “many,” who are made one through the sacrifice of Jesus.

In the preparatory rites of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we prepare to offer ourselves, along with the priest, to God the Father in union with the one sacrifice of Christ. And this is precisely what takes place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The sacrifice of the cross is continuously present in the Church when the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord did and commanded his disciples to do in his memory. We can identify three steps in the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

The Preparation of the Gifts. The bread and wine with water, the elements that Christ used, are brought to the altar.

The Eucharistic Prayer. The Church gives thanks to God for the whole work of salvation and the gifts of bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.

Communion Rite. Through the breaking of the bread, the unity of the faithful is expressed; and through Communion, they receive the Lord’s body and blood in the same way that the apostles received Communion from Christ’s own hands.

In the next three inserts, we will discuss more fully the Preparation of the Gifts.

THE MASS

I. INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance
- Veneration of the Altar
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- “Lord, Have Mercy”
- “Glory to God in the Highest”
- Opening Prayer

II. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Scripture Readings
- Homily
- Profession of Faith
- Prayers of the Faithful

III. THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Preparation of the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
 1. Preface
 2. Acclamation Sanctus
 3. Epiclesis
 4. Consecration
 5. The Mystery of Faith
 6. Anamnesis
 7. Offering
 8. Intercessions
 9. Final Doxology & Amen
- Communion Rite
 1. Lord’s Prayer
 2. Rite of Peace
 3. Breaking of Bread
 4. Communion
 5. Prayer After Communion

IV. CONCLUDING RITES

- Announcements
- Blessing
- Dismissal
- Veneration of the Altar
- Personal Thanksgiving