

Worksheet 15

The Mass – “The How”

Reading and Worksheet

Structure of the Mass

The Mass unfolds in four major parts:

- **Introductory Rites** – we gather, repent, and prepare for worship
- **Liturgy of the Word** – we listen to God speak in Scripture
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist** – we offer, consecrate, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ
- **Concluding Rites** – we are blessed and sent forth in mission

Together, these parts form one act of worship in which Christ gathers his Church, speaks to her, feeds her, and sends her into the world. The parts of the Mass are also totally grounded in Scripture.

Watch the following video for more details [Here](#)

1. The Introductory Rites

- Sign of the Cross
- Greeting
- Penitential Act
- Kyrie
- Gloria
- Collect (opening prayer)

2. Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith
- Universal Prayer

3. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of the Altar
- Presentation of the Gifts
- Prayer Over the Offerings
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Holy, Holy, Holy
- Words of Institution
- Memorial Acclamation
- Great Amen
- Lord’s Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion
- Period of Silence
- Prayer After Communion

4. Concluding Rites

- Blessing
- Dismissal

The Introductory Rites

In the Introductory Rites – we gather, repent, and prepare for worship. At the start of Mass the priest, the deacon, and the servers process reverently to the altar. When they arrive at the sanctuary, they bow before the altar. The priest and deacon then kiss the altar as a sign of reverence. This act honors the altar as the place of sacrifice and the table of the Eucharist. The Mass formally begins with the **Sign of the Cross** and the **Greeting**. In making the Sign of the Cross, we invoke the Holy Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and we acknowledge that the sacred action we are about to enter into is done in God’s name, and not in our own name.

This is followed by the **Penitential Act** during which the faithful call to mind their sins and ask for God’s mercy. This is an act of humility in which *both* priest and people acknowledge their need for forgiveness. The form often begins with the words, “I confess to almighty God...” and leads into the **Kyrie**, meaning, “Lord, have mercy.” In this prayer, the Church calls upon the mercy of Christ the Savior. Except for Mass during Advent and Lent the **Gloria** follows which is a hymn of praise that echoes the song of the angels at the birth of Christ.

The Introductory Rites conclude with the **Collect**, or opening prayer. In this prayer, the priest gathers the prayers of the people and offers them to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Collect asks God to guide and prepare us for the sacred mysteries we are about to celebrate.

- Key Point: The Introductory Rites prepare the assembly to worship God with faith, humility, and attentiveness.

The Liturgy of the Word

In the Liturgy of the Word we listen to God speak in Scripture. God speaks to his people through Sacred Scripture and the Church responds in faith. The readings are not merely reminders of past events. They are the living Word of God proclaimed here and now. The **First Reading** is usually taken from the Old Testament, except during the Easter season when it is often taken from Acts. This reading is chosen in relation to the Gospel and helps illuminate it. After this comes the **Responsorial Psalm**, which allows the assembly to respond prayerfully to the Word just proclaimed. Then comes the **Second Reading**, usually from one of the apostolic letters.

The high point of the Liturgy of the Word is the **Gospel**. Just before proclaiming it, the priest or deacon bows and prays silently that he may proclaim the Gospel worthily. If a deacon is proclaiming the Gospel, he first receives the priest's blessing. The people stand for the Gospel as a sign of reverence, recognizing that Christ speaks to his Church in a special way through the words and deeds recorded in the Gospel. Before the Gospel is read, the priest or deacon, and then the people, trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, lips, and heart. This expresses the prayer that the Gospel may be in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. At the conclusion of the Gospel, the people respond, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ."

The **Homily** follows. Unlike an ordinary speech or lecture, the homily is meant to explain the readings and help the faithful understand how to apply God's Word in their lives today. After the homily, the people stand and make the **Profession of Faith**, usually by reciting the Nicene Creed. On some occasions, especially when baptismal themes are emphasized, the renewal of baptismal promises may be used.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the **Universal Prayer**, also called the Prayers of the Faithful. In these petitions, the Church prays for the needs of the whole world: for the Church, for civil authorities, for those in need, for the local community, and for the dead.

- Key Point: In the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to his people, and the people respond with faith, creed, and intercession.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we offer, consecrate, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ

The Liturgy of the Eucharistic begins with the **Preparation of the Altar**, in which the altar is set, and the **Presentation of The Gifts**, in which the bread and wine are brought forward. It unfolds in three main movements: 1. the Preparation of the Gifts, 2. the Eucharistic Prayer, and 3. The Communion Rite. You can think of it like this: at an ordinary meal we prepare the table, pray before eating, and share the food. We see these same movements and order of progression in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

1. Preparation of the Gifts

During this part of the Mass the altar is prepared with the vessels and linens needed for the Eucharistic sacrifice: the *corporal*, the *chalice*, the *ciborium*, and *purificator*. Bread and wine are then brought forward, along with the collection for the needs of the Church and the poor. The priest offers the bread and wine to God using prayers of blessing. These prayers acknowledge that the gifts come from God and are now being returned to him. The bread, “fruit of the earth and work of human hands”, will become the bread of life. The wine, “fruit of the vine and work of human hands”, will become our spiritual drink.

Then comes the **Invitation to Prayer** when the priest says, “Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” The people respond by asking the Lord to accept the sacrifice for his glory and for the good of the Church. The priest then prays the **Prayer over the Offerings**, and the people respond, “Amen.”

- Key Point: The Preparation of the Gifts shows that the Church brings forward the offerings of creation and human labor to be transformed by God.

2. The Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is the central prayer of the whole Mass. There are several approved Eucharistic Prayers, but they all contain the same essential structure and meaning. The prayer begins with the dialogue:

- The Lord be with you
- Lift up your hearts
- Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

This leads into the Preface, in which the priest gives thanks and praise to God for his saving works. The Preface culminates in the **Holy, Holy, Holy**, in which the Church joins the praise of the angels and saints in heaven.

After the assembly kneels, the Eucharistic Prayer continues with praise for God’s saving actions and the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine. The calling down of the Holy Spirit is known as the *Epiclesis*, a Greek word meaning “invocation” or “calling upon.”

Then come the **Words of Institution**, in which the priest repeats the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper. At this moment, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine truly become the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

After the consecration, the priest invites the people to proclaim the mystery of faith, and the people respond with the **Memorial Acclamation**. The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with the **Great Amen**, by which the whole assembly affirms and ratifies all that has taken place.

- Key Point: In the Eucharistic Prayer, the Church gives thanks, recalls Christ's saving sacrifice, invokes the Holy Spirit, and is drawn into the mystery of Christ's real presence.

3. The Communion Rite

The Communion Rite prepares the faithful to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. It begins with the **Lord's Prayer**, in which we praise God as our Father, ask for daily bread, and seek forgiveness. Since communion with Christ also requires communion with one another, the faithful then exchange the **Sign of Peace**. Next comes the **Lamb of God**, in which the Church addresses Christ as the one who takes away the sins of the world and asks for mercy and peace. After his private prayers of preparation, the priest shows the consecrated host to the people and says, "Behold the Lamb of God..." The people respond, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof..." This expresses humility and faith before receiving **Communion** which is the consuming of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The priest then first receives communion, followed by the deacon, other ministers, and the faithful. After communion, any remaining consecrated hosts are placed in the tabernacle, and

there is a **Period of Silence** for prayer and thanksgiving. The priest then prays the **Prayer after Communion**, asking that the sacrament bear fruit in the lives of the faithful. Brief announcements may follow.

- Key Point: In the Communion Rite, the faithful prepare to receive Christ with reverence, humility, and gratitude.

The Concluding Rites

In the Concluding Rites we are blessed and sent forth in mission. The Mass ends with the **Blessing** in which the priest blesses the people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and the **Dismissal** in which Then the deacon or priest dismisses the assembly, sending them forth to live what they have celebrated. The dismissal reminds us that the Mass does not end when we leave the church building. Having been nourished by the Word and the Eucharist, we are sent into the world to glorify the Lord by our lives and to bring Christ to others.

- Key Point: The Concluding Rites send us forth to live the Gospel in daily life.

Worksheet 15 Questions

If you need help answering the questions you may look at the answer sheet but please put it in your own words, and do not copy word-for-word what is on the Answer Sheet

What happens in the Introductory Rites at Mass?

What happens in the Liturgy of the Word?

What happens in the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

What happens in the Concluding Rites?