

Life and Liturgy

Life leads to liturgy: Everything that God's children do can be a preparation for offering the Sunday Eucharist:

Our daily living. When we try to live each day in God's love by obeying the commandments and carrying out the duties of life, we are offering our daily sacrifice of praise. We bring this gift to our Sunday celebration. The more we live each day for God, the better the gift we bring in the Mass.

Introductory rite. At the beginning of each Mass, we pause to remember that we are God's holy people, called to give praise by our life and in this Eucharist. We reflect on our sinfulness and ask for God's mercy.

During the Mass we join our daily sacrifices to Jesus' sacrifice, asking him to help us continue to live each day for him.

Concluding rite. The priest blesses us in the name of the Trinity and the deacon sends us forth in Christ's peace to continue to love and serve the Lord by our daily living this week.

Liturgy leads to life: After Mass, our Christian vocation continues. Nourished by God's word, encouraged by the prayer and example of our sisters and brothers, strengthened by the Eucharistic food for our journey, we go forth as God's holy people. We are sent to build up God's kingdom by our love and to defeat the power of evil by our humble, obedient service. We go forth to love and serve Christ, to pray for the world and to praise the Father by our daily life and prayer.

Liturgy and life come together in the Mass. Life gives context to our prayer and our gifts; our praise and offering show that our life is being lived for God.

Ministries

Jesus was sent by God the Father to be the servant of all and to teach us to serve others in love. Our God invites the Church and all its members to be ministers or servants with Jesus, and so build up the kingdom of God on earth.

In life. Everyone is called to serve others in daily living, and to look for ways of loving and helping others. Some work at jobs where they directly serve other people: teachers, police, firefighters, social workers, people who care for the sick, the aged and the young. Parents serve the Lord by guiding their children day by day to become mature Christians. Everything we do should be done as well as we can for Jesus and his people. Our daily work is our gift to God.

In liturgy. Some exercise special ministries to the community at Mass: the celebrating priest, deacon, readers, communion ministers, servers, musicians and ushers help the whole assembly to offer worship to the Father. These forms of ministry must flow from the love and service of our daily living.

*Lord Jesus, our brother and our Saviour,
we join with you in praising our Father,
in giving thanks for all the gifts
we have received,
and in praying for the world.
Help us to celebrate Mass well,
for you have called us
to be your holy people of praise.*

*Blessed are you, Lord Jesus,
now and for ever. Amen!*

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CELEBRATING SUNDAY MASS

God gathers us to be nourished
by word and sacrament

We praise and thank our God
and pray for the world

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Called to Celebrate

God calls us: We have been called to be the holy people of God. When we were baptized, we became the beloved children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus and of one another, temples of the Spirit. Our Father has saved us by the dying and rising of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday our God calls us together. He invites us to listen to the word as it is spoken to us; to give praise and thanks to the one who saves us; to be nourished with the eucharistic food; and to go back to our daily life with renewed strength and love.

All celebrate: Catholics are invited to celebrate the Eucharist. By baptism, we have the privilege and responsibility of taking a full part with Christ and his people. While the priest and the other ministers have special tasks to do during the Mass, the whole assembled community is celebrating Jesus' triumph over sin and death and our share in his victory.

We rejoice because Jesus is Lord. He is the Son of God and one of us, our Saviour and our brother. Jesus has overcome the power of Satan, and helps us to conquer sin and evil in our lives and in our world.

We ask our Father to help us and others to grow in love. We ask for strength to love and serve other people as Jesus did, so that we can build up the kingdom of God with him.

How do we celebrate? Many ways of taking part in the Mass are described in this leaflet. By doing them well each Sunday, we can increase our full and active participation. As we learn to celebrate better with Jesus and his people, we become more pleasing to our Lord and grow in his love. We celebrate this Eucharist in memory of Jesus and with him; we look forward to sharing with all God's people in the unending banquet of heaven.

Liturgy of the Word

In the reading of the Scriptures, God is present among us, speaking to us in his word and inviting us to respond in faith and love.

God speaks

In the readings we hear of God's deep love for us shown in his mighty deeds in the history of his people. The Old Testament speaks of the ways we have been called back from sin and error, and of God's desire to forgive and give us hope. The apostles teach us to show our love in our daily living. In the gospel, Jesus speaks to us of God's great love and saving deeds.

In the homily the priest has the responsibility of reflecting and praying about the word and about the daily life of this believing community. He breaks open the word and shares it with all who are present, helping them to come a little closer to God through this celebration. The homily is not a time for parish bookkeeping; it is food, refreshment and strength for God's family.

We respond

We listen. We listen carefully, with faith and love, because our God is speaking to us. We believe in God and let the Spirit guide us in this Mass and each day.

We reflect. A moment of silence after each reading and the homily gives us time to think and pray about what we have heard. We are open to the way the Spirit wants to lead us. In the responsorial psalm, we sing about God's saving love for each of us.

We pray. In the prayer of the faithful, we pray for all God's people: the Church, our country, our families, the world, with special attention to people in need or trouble, and ourselves.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the gifts: In the collection, we share our gifts with the Church and the poor. Bread and wine are brought to the altar in preparation for the holy meal.

Eucharistic prayer: This is the centre of the Mass, its most important part. The priest invites us to join in praise and thanks as he proclaims this prayer. We offer this prayer to the Father, through Jesus the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer and action. The whole community is actively praying. We thank our Father for countless gifts to us. The goods of creation are ours; in love, God has given us Jesus as our Lord, our brother who died and was raised for us; in baptism we share in his dying and rising; in this Eucharist, we thank God for saving us and for loving us all.

Offering. We offer ourselves and our efforts to serve God. We offer our daily work, our joys and crosses, our attempts to love God by loving and serving others. These offerings are taken by Jesus and joined with his own total gift of himself to the Father, who accepts them from Jesus and from his Church.

Sharing in the prayer. We join in the action by our singing; by listening to the prayer and agreeing with it; by giving thanks and praise with the community; and by offering ourselves in union with the prayer.

Communion rite: We pray the "Our Father" in preparation for Communion. We show that we are at peace with God and God's people by sharing the sign of peace. Bread is broken to feed us, signifying that we are one in Christ. We come to the altar to eat the bread of life and drink the cup of our salvation. After silent prayer, the priest prays that we may continue to benefit from this celebration.