

**THE ANNUAL GATHERING
OF LITURGICAL MINISTERS
FOR ON-GOING FAITH FORMATION**

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ROMAN MISSAL

THE MASS IN SLOW MOTION



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH

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REV. MATTHEW D. STANLEY – PASTOR
NORA LUNDIN – LITURGY COORDINATOR

HOW TO PRAY THE (ORDER OF) MASS

Key:

Words in **Blue** in plain type are spoken by the Commentator.

Words in Bold are to be spoken by the priest or the deacon as indicated.

Words in **Red** indicate rubrics; these, too, are spoken by the Commentator.

Words in *italic bold* are spoken by people.

[Words in brackets] indicate options.

WORDS IN ALL CAPS are subheads, indicating the parts of the Mass.

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Introduction by Fr. Matt: In the 2nd part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY, the purpose of the liturgy is described in these words: [1067]

“The wonderful works of God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving glory to God.

He accomplished this work principally by the Paschal Mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby ‘dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.’

For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth ‘the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.’ For this reason, the Church celebrates, in the liturgy above all, the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.”

Commentator: Today's Mass is designed to help each of us to learn how to pray the Mass as the most important prayer Catholics pray. We also would like to introduce and explain some of the changes that appear in the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal which the Church in the United States will begin to use on the First Sunday of Advent.

During Mass, time and space are changed, bread and wine are changed, and every part of our lives can be changed. All the centuries between this moment and The Last Supper, all the years between this moment and Jesus' death on the Cross, all the hours between this moment and Jesus' rising from the dead, and all the minutes between this moment and Jesus' sending of the Holy Spirit— all time disappears. All the miles between us and Jerusalem disappear and we are there and there is here.

And, for a moment, all the time between now and our death, all the time between now and when we see Jesus and Mary and all of the saints and all of our beloved dead, all the time between now and when we take our seat beside Jesus at the heavenly banquet – that time too disappears.

We call this miracle – when past and future come into the present, when heaven is wedded to earth – the Real Presence. God has chosen to become really present to us now and we have the choice to become really present to God.

During Mass every part of our lives can be changed. All that we do, everything and everyone we care about, everything that gives us joy and everything that makes us suffer – we can put it all on the altar and offer it and ourselves to God through Jesus and receive the Spirit's light and comfort and strength. If we are in serious, grave sin, we receive the call and grace to go to the sacrament of reconciliation; all other sins of omission and commission can be forgiven by hearing the gospel, praying the Our Father, and by receiving Holy Communion.

To accomplish this astounding miracle of presence, forgiveness, and promise, God has given the Church the Mass. Every Mass has four parts, two big parts and two smaller parts. The big parts are the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Commentator: The gateway to the Mass are the Introductory Rites and the gateway from the Mass are the Concluding Rites. The hinge of the Mass are the General Intercessions or the Prayer of the Faithful. The climax of the Introductory Rites is the Opening Prayer; for us lay people, the climax of the Liturgy of the Word is the General Intercessions; for us lay people the climax of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is receiving communion, and the climax of the Concluding Rites is getting our marching orders and blessing for the week ahead.

In the Introductory Rites which we are about to experience, the two most important parts are the Entrance Song and the Opening Prayer.

So, choose to be present, NOW. Join with all of your fellow Catholics here and around the world and all the choirs of angels and saints; pick up the hymnal; and lift up your voice (the worse the better – it will force everyone around you to sing louder). Choose to be present, NOW.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Song [led by Chris]

Veneration of the Altar

Commentator: Our priest [and the deacon] has [/have] just purified himself [themselves] by kissing the altar, the chief symbol of Jesus in any Catholic church. Now our priest is ready to sign himself. He will invite us to sign ourselves with the sign of the cross which unites heaven and earth, past and future, north and south, east and west.

He will greet us with the dialogue prayer for the Holy Spirit for the first of four times during the Mass. The priest invites us to rekindle the gift given us in our baptism. And our priest receives from us our prayer that the Spirit given him at ordination will enable him to lead us at this Mass.

Greeting of the Assembly

The priest says: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

The people answer: **Amen.**

Commentator: The priest chooses one of three options to greet the people, and they make a common response. The greetings are all inspired by scripture. The one chosen for today is from St. Paul's 2nd Letter to the Corinthians 13:14.

Then the priest, facing the people, extends his hands and greets all present:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.**

The people answer: **And with your spirit. [chant response] (Chris)**

Commentator: This reply, "And with your spirit" is based on the conclusion to many of the Pauline letters. Paul prays that the Lord will be with the spirit of those who receive his letters.

After the introduction to the day's Mass, the Penitential Act opens with an invitation to the whole community— the priest included— to recall their sins and to repent of them in silence. The Confiteor used to be part of the prayers at the foot of the altar, which were abbreviated and rearranged.

A pause for silent reflection follows. After the silence, the priest leads one of the forms of the penitential rite,

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
And, striking their breast, they say:
(strike breast) through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

Then they continue:

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The absolution by the Priest follows:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to
everlasting life.

The people answer: Amen.

Commentator: The Introductory Rites now take on a celebratory character on the occasions when the Gloria is sung. It is prescribed for Sunday outside of Advent and Lent, as well as solemnities and feasts. No rules govern when the Gloria should be sung or recited.

Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Opening Prayer or Collect

Commentator: We have reached the climax of the Introductory Rites. The priest is about to lead us into the first of the three ancient silences in the Mass, the silence when we are to bring to mind the reasons why we came to Mass. God is here, bending low to hear the prayers we need to pray, especially the intentions we bring with us. Our priest cannot go on until we have prayed in the silence of our hearts. Our priest cannot go on until we give our assent with our “Amen.”

*The priest says: **Let us pray.** He allows a generous time of silence for the silent prayer of all.*

He then continues with the opening prayer. This one is for the Solemnity of All Saints:

**Almighty ever-living God,
by whose gift we venerate in one celebration
the merits of all the Saints,
bestow on us, we pray,
through the prayers of so many intercessors,
an abundance of the reconciliation with you
for which we earnestly long.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.**

*The people make the prayer their own and give their assent by the acclamation: **Amen.***

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Commentator: We are now in the first major part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word.

We humans do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. God now speaks to us and tells us the ways in which he wants to be present to us and the ways he wants us to be present to him and to each other.

The reader/cantor of the first three scripture texts should be someone other than the priest or deacon. The readings should be proclaimed from the ambo, which is reserved for the key elements of the Liturgy of the Word. The assembly, which has been standing, changes its posture and sits in order to listen.

The reader's acclamation at the conclusion of the scripture text, "The Word of the Lord," acknowledges that the reading has come to its end. The people respond "Thanks be to God" for the proclamation of the divine Word.

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel [18:25-28]

Commentator: The Psalm that follows the First Reading is “responsorial” because of its form, not because of its function. It is designed to be sung in alternation between the psalmist and the people. Although it usually echoes a theme from the First Reading, the Psalm is not a “response” to the reading. The Psalm may be sung from any suitable place, although the ambo is recommended because its text comes from sacred scripture.

Psalm 25 – Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Commentator: The weekly proclamation of a Second Reading before the Gospel is a much appreciated contribution of the 1970 Missal. However, there is evidence for multiple readings in some earlier sources.

A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians [2:1-5]

Commentator: Notice that the gospel reading is so important that it is accompanied by a special procession with a special book, the deacon bows to receive the priest’s blessing or the priest bows to receive the altar’s blessing, and we sometimes use incense.

The Gospel Acclamation announces the coming of the Gospel. The Hebrew word “alleluia” means “Praise God.” Its origins in liturgical worship are quite ancient. It appears several times in the Book of Psalms, and yet only once in the New Testament, in the Book of Revelation.

[Chris leads us in a simple sung “Alleluia.”]

Commentator: We have arrived at the climax of the Liturgy of the Word, the Gospel. The ordained greets us for the second of the four times during the Mass with the prayer for the Holy Spirit and he receives from us our prayer that the spirit given him at ordination will enable him to worthily proclaim the gospel. As he begins, he “picks up” the whole text of the gospel reading with his thumb, and prints it on his head, on his lips, and on his heart. We do the same. A familiar call and response precede the proclamation of the Gospel.

The priest or deacon says: “The Lord be with you.”

And the people respond: “And with your spirit.”

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew [21:28-32]

Commentator: At the end, he concludes “**the Gospel of the Lord.**” The people respond “**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**” affirming our belief in the presence of Jesus Christ in his proclaimed word; he kisses the book and says a private prayer, “**May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins.**”

The Church encourages our priests to invite us to listen deeply to the Word of God and to begin to think about asking God on behalf of the whole world for the good things mentioned in the readings.

Homily

Commentator: In theory, and hopefully in practice, the homily usually springs from the scriptures of the day to exhort the faithful to a better way of life, ADA Sunday is a rare exception. Homilies vary in quality from preacher to preacher and from Sunday to Sunday; however, the faithful have a better opportunity for enrichment on the scriptural and liturgical texts of the Mass than they did before 1970.

If catechumens are present [during the Mass of the pre-sanctified] they are dismissed after the homily.

Creed

At the end of the Homily, the Symbol or Profession of Faith or [the Apostles] Creed, is either sung or said.

**I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.**

**God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

[At the words that follow up to and including “and became man,” **all bow.**]

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,**

and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Commentator: The Creed unifies the voices of the assembly into the common faith it professes. After the death of Jesus, it took the Church several centuries to formulate the Creed it now professes. Assemblies often recite the Creed without intense thought, but week by week, generation after generation, these words unite the faith of the Church around the world and across ages. It gives a weekly assent to the core of Christian belief.

The new Missal provides the option to recite the Apostles' Creed because it is "the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church," making it especially fitting for the seasons of Lent and Easter.

General Intercessions

Commentator: The hinge of the Mass is the General Intercessions or the Prayer of the Faithful. In the Opening Prayer of Mass we had the chance to pray for our own intentions. Now we broaden our intentions to include all of our sisters and brothers around the world. In our Baptism we are given the privilege of interceding for all humanity. Our Church encourages our priests to stir this prayer up in us with their introduction and to gather all of our petitions together in a common prayer at the end.

The intercessions proceed as usual.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts

Commentator: It is time for us to prepare to offer our works, our joys, and sufferings at this Mass.

Our money is the symbol of what we do for a living. We give our money to God as a sign of our gratitude to him for everything he has given us. We give our money to the Church so that God's work on earth can continue. God receives our tithes and enriches our work.

We offer food and drink – humble, unleavened bread, a sign of all our sufferings, and wine, a sign of our joys. Ordinary food and drink sustains our life here on earth. Our bodies turn them into the energy we need for life – but ordinary food and drink cannot rescue us from aging, sickness, and death.

Commentator: Bread and wine are the very gifts Jesus took into his own hands the night before he died. When the Holy Spirit makes them Jesus' body and blood during the Eucharistic prayer, this food and drink has the ability to transform us, to so renew our bodies that, on the other side of death, our bodies will live forever, ageless, healthy and full of life. When the Holy Spirit makes them Jesus' body and blood during the Eucharistic prayer, this food and drink has the power to make us one – one with God and one with each other – the very intention Jesus spoke at the Last Supper.

Bread and wine become the appetizers of the heavenly banquet, the down payment on the wedding feast that begins here and goes into full swing when, at the end of human history, all of us arrive at the table.

Sometimes you will see the gifts on the altar, the altar itself, then the ordained and all of baptized incensed during the preparation of the gifts. This is a symbol of the Church's offering and prayer going up to God.

At the climax of the preparation of the gifts, the priest leads us into the second of the three ancient silences in the Mass, the silence when we offer our works, joys, and sufferings to God. Think about these things before coming to Mass so you are ready to offer them to God.

Blessings over the Bread and Wine

The Priest, standing at the altar, takes the paten with the bread and holds it slightly raised above the altar with both hands and says:

**Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.**

And the people respond: Blessed be God for ever.

The Deacon, or the Priest, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying:

**By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.**

Commentator: Both this prayer and the action remind us of the Christmas mystery and probably originated at a time when the wine was thicker and need to be thinned before drinking.

The Priest then takes the chalice and holds it slightly raised above the altar with both hands, saying:

**Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink.**

And the people respond: Blessed be God for ever.

After this, the Priest, bowing profoundly, says:

**With humble spirit and contrite heart
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day
be pleasing to you, Lord God.**

Commentator: This prayer originates from the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace in the Book of Daniel. Azariah offers this prayer from within the flames, asking that the sacrifice of his very life be pleasing to God. The priest, mindful of his sins, offers his suffering together with the gifts on the altar.

Turning to the side of the altar, the Priest washes his hands saying:

**Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.**

Commentator: Standing at the center of the altar, facing the people, the priest invites the people to pray for the acceptance of the sacrifice, and the people in turn entrust their sacrifice to the hands of the Priest.

**Pray, brothers and sisters,
that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.**

The people respond:

***May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good,
and the good of all his holy Church.***

Commentator: This is an important acknowledgement that the baptized exercise their priestly ministry by offering sacrifice as well. Each person participates in the one sacrifice.

Prayer over the Gifts

Commentator: The Priest now offers a Prayer over the Offerings of bread and wine. Usually this prayer asks that they will be pleasing to God, and it may make a reference to the season of the year or the day on the liturgical calendar. The people respond “**Amen**” to make this prayer of the Priest, their prayer as well. This is the revised Prayer over the Gifts for Easter Sunday.

**Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord,
we offer the sacrifice
by which your Church
is wondrously reborn and nourished.
Through Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Commentator: In the next minute, the priest will greet us for the third of four times during the Mass with the prayer for the Holy Spirit and receives from us our prayer that the Spirit given him at ordination will enable him to lead us in the Eucharistic prayer.

Then he will ask us to lift up our hearts. The key to getting more out of Mass is to keep lifting up your heart all during the Eucharistic prayer. The meaning of the Eucharistic prayer is that all of us are choosing to join ourselves to Christ in acknowledging the great things God has done and in offering the sacrifice. During this prayer, time and distance drop out: the upper room, the cross, the empty tomb are here.

Preface

Commentator: The Eucharistic Prayer is the “center and highpoint” of the entire celebration. It offers praise, and asks God to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The people unite their hearts and minds, bodies and spirits with the priest as he offers the prayer on behalf of the entire Mystical Body of Christ. The introductory dialogue of the Preface has its roots in Jewish worship.

The Lord be with you. *And with your spirit.*

Lift up your hearts. *We lift them up to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *It is right and just.*

Commentator: The following is Preface I of Advent

**It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
Always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
Through Christ our Lord.**

**For he assumed at his first coming
The lowliness of human flesh,
And so fulfilled the design you formed long ago,
And opened for us the way to eternal salvation,
That, when he comes again in glory and majesty
And all is at last made manifest,
We who watch for that day
May inherit the great promise
In which now we dare to hope.**

**And so, with Angels and Archangels,
With Thrones and Dominions,
And with all the host and Powers of heaven,**

**We sing the hymn of your glory,
As without end we acclaim:**

Holy, Holy, Holy

Commentator: The Sanctus or Holy, Holy, Holy appears next after the opening dialogue and Preface which extols God for creation and salvation. All the people are invited to sing with myriads of angels. The first part of this hymn, the Sanctus comes from Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8; the second part, the Benedictus, quotes Matthew 21:9 and Psalm 118.26.

***Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.***

Eucharistic Prayer

Commentator: There is so much happening during the Eucharistic prayer that it is difficult to single out any words and gestures for special attention. However, one of the most important things the priest does is to ask the Father twice to send the Holy Spirit, once to do the easy thing (to make the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ) and a second time to do the harder thing (to make us one body, one spirit in Christ).

There are two notable changes in the Institution Narrative of the Eucharistic Prayer. The revised English translation changed the word from “cup” to “chalice.” Jesus, of course, used a cup of some sort at the Last Supper, but the liturgical vessel has come to be known as a chalice. The word “chalice” evolved from the Latin word “calix,” which appears in the Vulgate and the liturgical history of this prayer.

Second, when the revised English translation appeared, the words for the Latin expression “pro multis” changed. Previously, the priest said Jesus shed his blood “for all,” but now he says the more literal phrase “for many.” There is ample evidence that Jesus died for all, but in Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of the Last Supper, Jesus said he was pouring out his blood for many. He is surely alluding to Isaiah 53:12 which says God’s servant will take away the sins of many. Thus, this text has more to do with Jesus’ fulfillment of that prophecy than about any restriction of those who are saved.

The Priest, with hands extended, says:

**You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
the fount of all holiness.**

He joins his hands and, holding them extended over the offerings, says:

**Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall,**

He joins his hands, and makes the Sign of the Cross once over the bread and the chalice together, saying:

**So that they may become for us
the Body and + Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

He joins his hands.

In the formulas that follow, the words of the Lord should be pronounced clearly and distinctly, as the nature of these words requires.

**At the time he was betrayed
and entered willingly into his Passion,**

He take the bread and, holding it slightly raised above the altar, continues:

**He took bread, and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
saying:**

He bows slightly.

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.**

He shows the consecrated host to the people, places it again on the paten, and genuflects in adoration. After this, he continues:

In a similar way, when supper was ended,

He takes the chalices and, holding it slightly raised above the altar continues:

he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying:

He bows slightly.

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVINESS OF SINS.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.**

He shows the chalice to the people, places it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration.

MYSTERY OF FAITH

Commentator: After the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Jesus, the priest announces the time for the Memorial Acclamation with the words: “The mystery of faith.”

The people continue, acclaiming one of three options. There is a clear distinction between the words “proclaim” and “acclaim.” The people are making an “acclamation,” thus the reason for removing the priest’s invitation “Let us proclaim.” He simply states: “The mystery of faith.”

A proclamation is about someone or something, but an acclamation is directly addressed to someone. Thus, the people acclaim Christ; that is, they address words **to** him, not about him. “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again” is a proclamation. “Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free” is an acclamation concerning the “mystery of faith.”

The Priest sings: “The mystery of faith.”

And the people sing:

***When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.***

Then the Priest, with hands extended, says:

**Therefore, as we celebrate
the memorial of his Death and Resurrection,
we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation,
giving thanks that you have held us worthy
to be in your presence and minister to you.**

**Humbly we pray
that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,
we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.**

**Remember, Lord, your Church,
spread throughout the world,
and bring her to the fullness of charity,
together with Benedict our Pope
and Patrick & Thomas our Bishops,
and all the clergy.**

**Remember also our brothers and sisters
who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection,
and all who have died in your mercy:
welcome them into the light of your face.
Have mercy on us all, we pray,
that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,
with the blessed Apostles,
and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages,
we may merit to be co-heirs to eternal life,
and may praise and glorify you**

Through your Son, Jesus Christ.

The entire Eucharistic Prayer reaches its conclusion with a doxology. He takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, raising both, he says:

**Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All glory and honor is yours,
For ever and ever.**

The people acclaim: **Amen.**

Commentator: In the United States, where people kneel through the doxology, the change from the Eucharistic Prayer to the Lord's Prayer is made more evident by their change of posture [**AFTER** the completion of the Amen.]

Communion Rite

Commentator: The Communion Rite of the Mass begins with the Lord's Prayer. As the faithful prepare to share Holy Communion, they offer the best prayer they know, the one that Jesus taught his disciples. It probably ended up as a prayer before Holy Communion because of the petition for both daily bread and its promotion of mutual forgiveness. The Amen is omitted probably because there is no Amen in Matthew's account.

Lord's Prayer and Doxology

Commentator: Following the Lord's Prayer, the priest prays that the community may be delivered from every evil as it awaits the second coming of Jesus. Because it is an insertion, this prayer is called an embolism which closes with a doxology that is well known today among Protestant Christians. This longer ending was probably added by early Christians to give the Our Father a resounding conclusion.

After the chalice and paten have been set down, the Priest, with hands joined says:

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

The Priest extends his hands and, together with the people, continues:

Our Father...

With hands extended, the Priest alone continues:

**Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil,
Graciously grant peace in our days,
That, by the help of your mercy,
We may always be free from sin
And safe from all distress,
As we await the blessed hope
And the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

He joins his hands.

The people conclude the prayer, acclaiming:

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Then the Priest, with hands extended, says aloud:

**Lord Jesus Christ,
Who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
Look not on our sins,
But on the faith of your Church,
And graciously grant her peace and unity
In accordance with your will.**

He joins his hands:

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

The people reply:

Amen.

Sign of Peace

Commentator: The earliest record for the sign of peace comes from Justin, who placed it after the Prayer of the Faithful and just before the bread and wine were brought forward; it later fell into its current place as an expression of the mutuality implied by the just concluded Eucharistic Prayer.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Breaking of the Bread

Commentator: In the time of the apostles, the breaking of the bread – a gesture of Christ at the Last Supper – gave the entire Eucharistic action its name. This rite is a sign that in sharing in the one bread of life, which is Christ, we who are many are made one body. Using words from St. John the Baptist, we call out to the Lamb of God to free the world from sin. During the priest's silent prayer, we prepare ourselves for communion by praying that we may receive Christ's body and blood to good effect.

Commentator: The priest now shows us the Eucharistic bread and wine and we recite together the prayer of humility in the words of the Roman soldier from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The priest genuflects. Taking the host, he raises it slightly over the paten and, facing the people, says aloud:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

He adds, once only, with the people:

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Rite

Commentator: The official teaching of the Church says that the purpose of the communion song is “to express outwardly [our] union in spirit by means of the unity of [our] voices, to give evidence of joy of heart, and to make the procession to receive Christ’s body more fully an act of community.” In the Liturgy of the Word, God promised to be present to us. In communion, God delivers on that promise to us and prepares us to deliver his presence to others. Let us sing of our joy at his presence.

Communion and singing as usual.

Period of silence or song of praise

Commentator: During this time of silent prayer, the priest leads us into the third and last of the three ancient silences in the Mass, the silence when we reach out to be in communion with Jesus and with everyone to whom he leads us.

You are now seated beside Jesus. What is he saying to you? What have you to say to him? Is our Lord calling you to serve him in a special way by reaching out in active, loving service of any particular person or group? Is he inviting you to enjoy the vocation he has already given you – to be single, a husband, a wife, a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a neighbor, a co-worker? Is he calling you to be single, to be married, to be a parent, a priest, a deacon, a religious sister or brother? Is he leading you to someone whom you have hurt or who has hurt you?

You are now close to the saints and all our beloved dead; tell them of your love and receive theirs. Listen to Jesus comfort you in your suffering. See him reveal himself as the ultimate source of your joy. Let him give you strength for your work. Hear him answer your prayer.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Commentator: In the prayer after communion, the priest petitions for the effects of the mystery just celebrated and by our acclamation, Amen, we make the prayer our own.

The priest says: Let us pray.

Priest and people pray in silence for a while, unless a period of silence has already been observed. Then the priest extends his hands and sings or says the prayer after Communion, at the end of which, the people respond: **Amen.**

Commentator: This Prayer After Communion is taken from the Feast of St. Leo the Great:

**Be pleased, O Lord, we pray,
To govern the Church you have nourished by this holy meal,
So that, firmly directed,
She may enjoy ever greater freedom
And persevere in integrity of religion.
Through Christ our Lord.**

CONCLUDING RITE

Commentator: We have reached the concluding rites when God the Holy Trinity gives us our marching orders for the week ahead and blesses us. If there are any brief announcements, they are made at this time.

(Announcements)

Commentator: The Church tells our priest and deacon to send each of us to do good works, praising and blessing the Lord. As we leave, the priest [and the deacon] kiss[es] Jesus good-bye and we reverence Jesus as well.

Now, for the fourth and last time, the priest prays the spirit greeting and receives from us our prayer that the Spirit will enable him to bless us. As we receive this blessing, let us imagine that Jesus is laying hands on each one of us and is breathing the Holy Spirit upon us to strengthen us for our week. If it seems appropriate, we might put a hand on the shoulder of (or an arm around) our spouse, our children, our friends. Even if nobody is near us, all the angels and all the generations of the saints are near us; our beloved dead are near us. Receive their blessing and the blessing God is giving you right now.

Greeting

Facing the people, the priest extends his hands and sings or says:
The Lord be with you.

The people answer: And with your spirit.

Blessing

The priest blesses the people with these words:
May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, † and the Holy Spirit.

The people answer: Amen.

Dismissal

The deacon (or the priest), with hands joined, sings or says:

Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Or:

Go in peace.

The people answer: Thanks be to God.