

## Teaching Mass 2019 Mass - Our Highest Prayer

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1074 *"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows." It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God. "Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men."*

1324 *The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch."*

1327 *In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith...*

2558 *"Great is the mystery of the faith!"... This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.*

2559 *"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."*

2655 *In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays. The spiritual writers sometimes compare the heart to an altar. Prayer internalizes and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration. Even when it is lived out "in secret," prayer is always prayer of the Church; it is a communion with the Holy Trinity.*

2565 *In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father, who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit.*

Having a good relationship involves humility and openness to real conversations, which takes listening. Having good relationships requires a level of curiosity for the other person, always knowing that that we can never fully know someone.

The Word Eucharist can be translated as "thanksgiving." Mass on our part is first and foremost coming to God with a thankful heart.

Gathering- kissing the altar symbolizes the sacredness of the altar. It is a symbol of the sacrifice of Christ and is a symbol of Christ. Kissing is a sign of greeting for those who have a deep relationship.

When incense is used, it symbolizes our prayers rising up to God, the mystery that we are entering into, and hopefully, that our prayers are good. (fragrant)

Greeting- exchange of greeting, not casual but formal, and a greeting not just of priest and people but one that involves God and the roles we are called to during the Mass.

Penitential Rite- calls us to humility before God, placing ourselves in our proper place before his altar of sacrifice.

Gloria- song of praise to God, recalls the words of the angel when Christ came into the world.

Collect- the opening prayer puts into context our celebration; it addresses God by a title and asks God for something for a purpose.

Readings- The first reading is from the Old Testament (or Acts of the Apostles during the Easter season). The Psalm is a song from the Old Testament that often helps us to understand the Old Testament reading that precedes it. Since it is written to be sung, we sing it whenever we can. Times that it is not sung would be at weekday Mass or during special circumstances. The second reading is a New Testament reading, usually from one of St. Paul's letters. Then we have the Gospel. We use a 3-year cycle of readings. The blessing for the Deacon, or prayer before the priest

proclaims the Gospel is, "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The homily is guided by the four readings, or the theme they imply, or the feast of the day. To get the most out of the homily, we must prepare. Reading the Scriptures before Mass and then reflecting on them will help us prepare. We are then guided by the homily throughout the rest of the week.

Side note on reverence shown the Eucharist: You can receive the Eucharist up to twice a day even if you go to the same Mass (readings and prayers). Outside of Mass, we always reverence the presence of the Eucharist with a genuflection (or if unable, then a profound bow). Genuflection is appropriate as we enter and leave the sanctuary for those who do not have something in hand or for those entering the pews. Once in the sanctuary, the servers and priest are in the presence of Christ, so no reverences are necessary except during the Consecration and when placing Christ in the tabernacle. It is somewhat complicated by the fact that our altar and tabernacle are separated, and the Eucharist can be present in two places. The Eucharist receives a genuflection, the altar a bow. (Some churches have a separate room for the tabernacle.) For cantors and readers entering the sanctuary, it is not completely clear what is expected. Certainly, a profound bow is warranted, but we might change to genuflection after the church renovation is completed.

Eucharistic Adoration- the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Christ, is reserved in our tabernacle. When we come to a Catholic Church, the true presence of Christ is with us. Adoration is a time when we come before the Lord and put ourselves before that Real Presence. We bring the Eucharist out for special times of Adoration so we can not only be in the presence of the Lord but look upon Him. Our times of Adoration allow us to sit quietly with the Lord so that we can speak to Him, but more importantly, we can quiet ourselves to listen to Him.

Creed and petitions -the Creed is a profession of our shared faith; the petitions bring our needs before God in a general but local way.

Setting of the altar and presenting the gifts- the altar is prepared for Mass and the gifts are brought forward. The gifts are both the bread and wine that will be presented back to God as well as our monetary gifts that are also given back to God. We are to see our entire selves in these gifts. The bread and wine, which will turn into the Body and Blood of the Lord, also symbolize our body and blood being used for the Lord. Our monetary gifts return a portion of what God has given us. When the gifts are laid before the altar, we should see our entire life being laid on the altar and it should cause us to reflect on whether our past week was indeed a sacrifice for our Lord. If not, we are called to be better. If so, then we give thanks to God for the grace we have received.

The Eucharistic Prayer- thanksgiving, acclamation, epiclesis, institution narrative and consecration, anamnesis, oblation, intercessions, doxology.

Lord's Prayer- holding hands or not holding hands, either is currently acceptable in our diocese. Holding hands has developed over time, but is not required nor should it be forced, particularly since the Sign of Peace follows.

Communion- this a time for the entire congregation to prayerfully receive the grace given either when we receive the Body and Blood, or when we simply participate in Communion by our prayers and reflections. Processing up is not a time to greet others but is a time to prepare to receive the Lord. After receiving, we prayerfully reflect on the gift given to us and ask for the grace to be Christ's body in the world.

A note on the Extraordinary Ministers- Please show up when you are assigned or find a replacement. Not doing so shows disrespect not only for the ministry but for all parishioners. Ministry involves sacrifice and for the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion it means sacrificing our time and convenience. If you cannot do this, then you should take your name off the list. This goes for all our liturgical ministries. They are not a right, but a privilege, and that privilege comes with responsibility and sacrifice.

Concluding rites and dismissal- Mass abruptly ends. There is no greater thing than the Eucharist. Once we have carried this out, it is time to go- and do the work Christ calls us to. The Eucharist gives us the grace to perform this work.