

*A walk through the Mass*  
**Parts 4: Communion Rites and Concluding rites**

This is when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ as our spiritual nourishment. Before we receive the Body and Blood of Christ we must be one with Him and our brothers and sisters in the Church.

**Our Father:**

Explanation	Prayer
The priest invites the assembly to pray the Our Father. There are several suggested options for this invitation.	<b>At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say</b>

Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Since to do real justice to an explanation of this prayer would be a 20-page paper, I am only going to make a few short general comments:

The Our Father is the prayer which Christ taught the Apostles when they asked Him to teach them to pray (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11, 2-4). It is the basic formula for all Christian prayer. It has seven petitions that synthesize our Faith. It was formally added to the Mass in the 300's. The Our Father fits naturally as a preparatory prayer for Communion as we request our daily bread, the bread we need for this life and the bread that gives Eternal life - the Body of Christ.

### The Doxology:

Explanation	Prayer
<p>This prayer prayed by the priest elaborates the last petition of the Our Father asking for deliverance from evil. Peace is more than an absence of war and hostility. It is an inner peace that then flows into the world and all of our relationships. Peace is the security, satisfaction, fulfillment, peace of mind – untroubled and it comes only from God through our faithfulness to the Covenant.</p> <p><b>from all distress:</b> The prayer is concerned with circumstances that cause distress, not just with an interior feeling of anxiety. Sin and distress destroy our inner peace.</p>	<p>P: Deliver us, Lord, <b>we pray</b>, from every evil, <b>graciously</b> grant peace in our days, <b>that, by the help of</b> your mercy, <b>we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress,</b></p>
<p><b>await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ:</b> Hope in the coming of Christ gives us inner peace. This is from the Letter to Titus (2:13), and affirms that Christ has come and we wait for his coming to us when we receive the Eucharist and at the end of time even if we are having a bad day and are not joyful.</p>	<p>as <b>we await the blessed hope and</b> the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ</p>
<p>The congregation response with the prayer. This acclamation is from the celebration of the Eucharist in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and is a prayer of thanksgiving. It is similar to the heavenly liturgy (Rv 5:12; 19:1) and also draws from King David’s praising God and acknowledging that all good is from God (1 Chr 29:10-11). Protestants added it onto the Our Father. Catholics do not. In the oldest manuscripts of the Gospels, in Greek, some have it added and some do not</p>	<p>All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.</p>

### Sign of Peace:

This offer of peace is a symbol of our union and love with God and with one another. It goes back to Luke 7 and Romans 16. This exchange of peace is a connection between the petition in the Our Father, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”, and Communion. It is a prayer, a pledge of reconciliation and peace between members of the Congregation because of the Communion to follow and of forgiveness that we prayed for and pray to give in the Our Father. In the sign of peace, we are offering to each other, as Members of Christ’s Body the peace of God to each other and our own forgiveness and peace to each other. The sign we usually give is a hand shake. It can be a hug, bow or kiss, - a kiss, here in the US, only if you are married. It is not a time for hand squeezing, or talking other than to offer the Peace of Jesus and yourselves to others.

Explanation	Prayer
<p>We pray for peace and unity in the Church. Jesus said, “<b>Peace</b> I leave you, my peace I give you” (Jn 14:27). <b>Her:</b> Pronouns referring to the Church are now feminine and recall the Church’s image as the</p>	<p>Lord Jesus Christ, <b>who</b> said to your apostles: <b>Peace</b> I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and <b>graciously</b> grant <b>her</b> peace and unity <b>in accordance with your will, Who lives and</b></p>

bride of Christ.	<b>reign</b> for ever and ever. All: Amen.
	The peace of the Lord be with you always. All: <b>and with your spirit.</b>
We now offer the peace of Christ to each other.	Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

**The Fraction Rite  
Lamb of God:**

Prayer
All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, Grant us peace.

The “Lamb of God” prayer is usually sung but may be spoken. It is from the angels’ song of praise (Rv 5:11-12). “Lamb of God” was a title given to Jesus by John the Baptist and is applied to Jesus several times in the New Testament. Jesus is the Paschal Lamb. In the Old Testament, the Jews sacrificed lambs in the temple in atonement for their sins and on the Passover to redeem themselves from the Shadow of Death that passed over Egypt. Jesus is the Lamb of the New Testament (1 Cor 5:7; Rv 5:6; 13:8), the Lamb sacrificed for our forgiveness and redemption. St. Peter says “We were ransomed ... with the precious blood of Christ as a spotless unblemished lamb.” (1 Pt: 1; 18-19). The prayer is repeated three times connecting it to the Penitential Rite where we ask for mercy three times, and the Holy, Holy, Holy where we praise God three times.

**Comingling Rite:**

Prayer
May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it

While the Lamb of God is sung, the priest breaks the Eucharistic Host into smaller pieces. This rite comes from the ancient Jewish custom when the head of the household would start a meal by taking and breaking bread and then sharing it with all those present. Jesus breaks bread four times in the Gospels. The first two times were when He fed the crowds (Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 6:41; 8:6). The third time is at the Last Supper (Mk 14:22; Mt 26:26; Lk 22:19). The fourth time takes place after His Resurrection on the road to Emmaus and the disciples “recognize Him in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:30-31). Indeed the term “Breaking of Bread” is an early name for the Mass (Acts 2:46). St. Paul uses this as a sign of unity – we all receive from the one bread (1 Cor 10:16-17). The priest places a small piece of the Body of Christ into the Chalice. This rite goes back to the 300’s AD. When priests first started celebrating Masses separately from the Bishop, the Bishop would celebrate a Mass in the early morning and then special runners would carry a Host from the Bishop’s Mass to each location where a priest was celebrating Mass. This would be added to the Host that the priest Consecrated. It showed that the priest and the people in a particular Church, like all of us here today, were and are united with the Bishop in forming the Local Church of our Diocese. At the Crucifixion, when Blood flowed from the side of Jesus, His Body and Blood were separated. Now on the Altar, they are united again in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Priest Prayers:

Explanation	Prayer
The priest now quietly prays for himself to be saved and protected from evil and sickness of all kinds. In doing this, he also prays to Jesus to save and protect all those in the Congregation.	<b>May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body, and a healing remedy.</b>

**Elevation of the Eucharist:**

The priest lifts up the Body and Blood of Christ for all to see and adore. He says:

Explanation	Prayer
<b>Behold:</b> This address is closer to the Latin. It is both more majestic and closer to the words of John the Baptist when he points out Jesus to his followers (Jn 1:29, 36). John recognizes Jesus as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Is 53:7). Jesus is the Lamb who offers his life as a sacrifice for sin. <b>Blessed:</b> You can be blessed even if you are unhappy. <b>Blessed and the supper of the Lamb</b> come from the angels' proclamation "blessed all those call to the wedding banquet of the Lamb" (Rv 19:9). In a wedding, the two -bride and groom- become one. In Communion, Jesus is united with us and this is a foretaste of the union we will have in Heaven. We will walk down the aisle to receive Communion as a bride walks down the aisle to meet her husband.	<b>Behold</b> the Lamb of God <b>behold him</b> who takes away the sins of the world. <b>Blessed</b> are those <b>called to the supper of the Lamb.</b>
<b>that you should enter under my roof:</b> This makes a more direct connection to the centurion's request to Jesus to heal his servant (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:6). We acknowledge that we are sinners and need Jesus' healing. <b>Roof:</b> Refers to the place you live and to your heart and soul. <b>say the word and my soul shall be healed:</b> This is a statement of faith that Jesus can forgive and heal us. <b>my soul:</b> This change makes clear that we are asking mainly for spiritual healing not physical healing.	All: Lord, I am not worthy <b>that you should enter under my roof</b> , but only say the word and <b>my soul</b> shall be healed.

**Reception of Communion:**

This is when we unite ourselves with God and receive His graces. In receiving the Eucharistic, we are united with Jesus. This Communion with Christ changes us to be more like Christ. It helps us to do acts of love for God and neighbor, to resist sin and it forgives lesser sins. To receive the Eucharistic you must 1) be Catholic, 2) free of mortal sin, 3) have an understanding about what the Eucharist is, 4) have fasted from food and drink, except water, for 1 hour beforehand unless for medical reasons; 5) participated fully consciously and actively in the Mass at which you receive the Eucharist.

Reception of the Blood of Christ is optional. It was the custom of the Church to receive both the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century after which usually only the body of Christ was received. In the 1970's The Church again started having the Eucharist offered at Mass in both the Body and Blood of Christ.

### Prayer after Communion:

This is a prayer said by the priest in the name of the whole community giving thanks to the Father for the gifts of the Body and Blood of Jesus which have been received. These prayers also ask God that the fruits of the Sacraments will be produced in us as we prepare to go forth and live what we have learned and received.

### Parts of the Mass: Concluding rites

#### Announcements:

Any announcements are made at this time.

#### Final Blessing:

Explanation	Prayer
This is the same as the greeting at the beginning of Mass.	P: The Lord be with you. All: And with your <b>spirit</b> .
The priest is giving the blessing of God upon the entire congregation.	P: May almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All: Amen.
<b>Go forth the Mass is ended:</b> There are several different possibilities give here for the priest to use. This is a formal dismissal and has been part of the Mass since the 300's. We are commissioned to go into the world and live what we celebrated, by doing good works and praising God. " <b>Mass</b> " comes from the Latin word, " <i>Missa</i> " meaning dismissal or sending. The Liturgy of the Mass ends with us being sent to fulfill God's will in our daily lives. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). The Mass is a celebration of the Passion, Death and Resurrection. We are now sent forth to bring these Mysteries to the whole world.	P: <b>Go forth the Mass is ended.</b> All: Thanks be to God.

#### Closing song or Recessional

This is sung by the assembly as the priest and other ministers leave the altar. It is a song of farewell and thanks; of going forth to do God's will.

I hope you have enjoyed this short paper explaining our chief liturgy – the Mass, and have gained a better understanding of and greater appreciation for what we celebrate each week. As I stated at the beginning, I used the book written by Fr. Paul Turner, "Understand the Mass" and Professor Edward Sri's book "A Biblical Walk Through the Mass" in addition to the Roman Missal and my own notes and understanding. Both these books are very good reading and I encourage you to purchase them and study them more thoroughly. May almighty God bless each of us, may He touch our hearts to grow in the love of our Lord Jesus.

Tabernacle: One last item, I wish to point out in the Church building is the Tabernacle. This is where to Body of Christ is kept in reserve. We do this for three reasons. 1) First and most importantly, if someone is dying, the Eucharist can be brought to them; 2) the Second

reason is for prayer. So people can stop by during the day and pray before the Blessed Sacrament; and 3) third, so that we also have sufficient Eucharist at Masses or for Communion Services.