



Growing in Faith Step 6

Appreciating the Mass - purpose and structure

Why the Mass?

The Mass is central to Catholic faith. We gather to:

- **fulfill the command** given by Jesus at the Last Supper to ‘*do this in memory of me*’
- **to acknowledge the sacrifice** offered for us – one single sacrifice, offered once, for all people, for all time (*Heb 10:12*)
- **to become one with Christ** – Jesus is the sacrifice, we offer his sacrifice and offer ourselves with him. We gather to grow in holiness, becoming closer to God by acknowledging our failings, asking for our sins to be taken away, receiving Christ who is able to bring healing and transformation into our lives
- **to grow as a community** – we are called to belong to the family of God, to be unite in our prayer and praise, our service to one another and our work for justice

Origins and Development:

From the earliest times after the resurrection the disciples and followers of Jesus gathered for the Breaking of Bread / Celebration of the Lord’s Supper. They sang hymns, read from the scriptures, broke and shared bread. The Mass is a sign of our faith in the Risen Lord, of our commitment to God and to our fellow Christians.

The Call of our Baptism:

From the early days of the Church the Bishop, or others appointed by him, were the only ones able to preside at the Mass. This remains true today. However, all the baptised have a role to play both in the liturgy and the life of the Church.

Living up to the call of our baptism requires us to share in the 3-fold mission of Christ as Priest, (to take part in worship) Prophet (to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and live as witnesses to this) and King, (to serve those in need.)

What is celebrated at Sunday Mass should be drawn from, and so reflect the life of the community. All that is celebrated is then given back to the community, to enrich it. The Mass is both the summit and source of our spiritual life.

As we approach the Eucharistic Table, we are at one with God and with one another in the consecrated Bread and Wine. Through this action we proclaim the death of the Lord, Jesus. Therefore, our approach to the table is an offering of our life, plus our daily living of the Cross Jesus carried. (Demonstrated by our willingness to forgive, to share, to live with integrity.) Having taken part in the celebration and received the sacred gifts we leave renewed in our commitment to be of service to others, particularly those in greatest need.

God's Presence in the Mass

When we come together as a worshipping community we know that God is truly present amongst us. Within the Mass we acknowledge God's 4-fold presence in:

- **the people** – the assembled congregation
- **the word** – the readings, through which God speaks to us, especially through the Gospel where the words and actions of Jesus reveal God to us.
Many of the prayers used are drawn from the scriptures and the last supper
- **the actions** of the priest – who by virtue of his ordination acts in the person of Christ asking God to change the Bread and Wine for us
- **the sacrament** - the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ that we receive

Other avenues that could be discusses / explored...

Historical Development and Changes

- Mass attendance, reception of Communion and significance of bells.
- Periods of fasting.
- Vatican II - language, furniture and lay involvement.

Eucharistic Devotion:

- Personal - Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- Public - Adoration, Divine Mercy, Benediction.

Liturgical Seasons

Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter Triduum, Easter Season, Pentecost - the Birthday of the Church, Feasts of the Lord – Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, the Sacred Heart.

Solemnities and Feasts:

Presentation of the Lord, The Annunciation, Our Lady Help of Christians, SS Peter & Paul, The Transfiguration, The Assumption, All Saints, All Souls, K Christ the King, The Immaculate Conception, The Holy Family, the Baptism of the Lord.

Ritual Masses:

Funeral, Wedding, Baptism, Confirmation.

The Structure of the Mass

The Mass	Life Celebrations	Music – * highpoints
<i>Introductory Rite</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering - praise in song Welcome - setting the scene, Penitential Rite Gloria and Opening prayer 	<i>Greeting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General mingling and chatter Apologies for lack of contact Paying tribute and acknowledging why gathered 	Gathering hymn Kyrie Gloria *
<i>Liturgy of the word</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings Homily - breaking open the word Creed Profession of Faith 	<i>Sharing Stories</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering, story telling Making connections Common identity Recalling others not here 	Psalm Gospel Acclamation* Creed Response to prayers
<i>Liturgy of the Eucharist</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of the gifts Preface – prayer of thanksgiving Eucharistic prayer Great Amen 	<i>Gifts and food</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents are given Individuals are thanked and speeches given Toasts are made 	Music or song Holy, Holy * Memorial Acclamation* Amen
<i>Rite of Communion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Prayer – The ‘Our Father’ Sign of Peace Lamb of God Holy Communion 	<i>Sharing Food</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invitation to gather round the table to share food Grace before the meal Enjoy the food 	Our Father Great Amen * Lamb of God Reflective songs Thanksgiving song
<i>Concluding Rite</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcements Blessing Dismissal 	<i>Farewells</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parting messages Hugs and Kisses Promises and Reminders 	Recessional Hymn