

## THE MASS, A SYNOPSIS OF OUR JOURNEY IN FAITH

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Last week, we read about the way the celebration of the Mass moves us along in our journey of faith. We move from the Liturgy of the Word - which creates faith, to the Liturgy of the Eucharist – our response in faith, into our mission in life – to carry the presence of Christ in all settings (evangelize). Even though some of the words of the Mass will change in November, this living dynamic of our communal celebration will remain the same.

The gem of our liturgical celebrations is that everything we say and do in the liturgy is done in relationship to another person. Jesus' ministry was based on relationships: he ate with people, he catechized people, and he dared to talk with those who were considered the lowly of society.

Our liturgical celebrations move us to maintain a relationship with others.

When we are in church, we can imagine ourselves at the family table. In the place of Mom and/or Dad at the family table is the priest. Because there are so many “children of God” in the church, our conversation is arranged for us. In that conversation, we remember that God is the center of our lives, that we are brothers and sisters in Christ because of baptism, and we worship God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

Although what we say to one another is prescribed, the words of the liturgy are set up as a prayerful kind of conversation between people.

In the Liturgy of the Word, we have “conversations” through acclamations before and after each reading from scripture. When we hear, “The Word of the Lord”, we all respond with, “Thanks be to God.” When the Gospel is proclaimed, we hear the greeting for the second time in the Mass, “The Lord be with you,” to which we respond, “And with your spirit.” After the Gospel, the conversation continues, “The Gospel of the Lord,” to which we respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”

The acclamations keep us focused, not on the lector, deacon, or priest but on the Lord. The readers are vessels open to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that the Word of the Lord will be proclaimed through them with conviction and in faith! Reading and listening to the Word of the Lord is also a dialogue. One could say that it is like the dialogue of the storyteller and the listener.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the people presenting bread and wine as gifts we have purchased from our collections on Sunday. We give them to Father who blesses the “Lord God of all creation” through whom we receive the bread and wine fruit of the earth and vine, which will become for us the bread of life and spiritual drink.

Then, we start the Eucharistic Prayer with a dialogue of praise before the Holy, Holy. It is called the preface dialog:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.** (Instead of: And also with you.)

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks

to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right and just.** (Instead of: It is right to give him thanks and praise).

The preface the priest officers functions like an introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer adding images from the scripture of the day.

Then the children of God sing the words of scripture from Isaiah 6:3 who wrote: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! . . . All the earth is filled with his glory!”

We also use the words from the Gospel of Luke 2:13 when we talk recall the “heavenly hosts” who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

The final three lines of the *Holy* come from the Gospel of Matthew 21:9. During his entry into Jerusalem and before his Passion, Jesus heard the people shout, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”

The full text we will sing, starting November 27<sup>th</sup>, then, will be: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of **hosts**. (Instead of “power and might” so it is closer to the scriptural passage). 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.

The Holy is the first acclamation of the Eucharistic Prayer. The second acclamation comes after, what we call, the institution narrative, which is a phrase that refers to the text, “Take this all of you and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.” This is followed with more of the institution narrative, “Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Then the priest will say, simply, “The Mystery of Faith” (instead of “*let us proclaim* the Mystery of Faith). The people respond with one of the following revised acclamations:

- A. We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.  
OR
- B. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.
- C. Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

We notice that the acclamation, “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again,” is not listed. Rome noted that in all the languages of the world, this text existed only in English. It was an adaptation the bishops of ICEL had composed to succinctly state the central element of Catholic spirituality, the Paschal Mystery. But since it is not one of the original three Latin texts in the Order of Mass, it was suppressed. At the same time, however, we will notice that each acclamation still talks about the Paschal Mystery or the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The grand prayer before the sacred meal we call the Eucharistic Prayer continues as Father recalls the story of our family of faith and the promise God made to our ancestors and to their children (us). We listen and remember our ancestors and at the end of this prayer we sing, “Amen” which is our way of saying, “I agree and I thank God for his promise to us and our promise to God.”

Next week, we will discuss the Communion Rite, which follows the Eucharistic Prayer. For more on the revised Mass, see [www.usccb.org/romanmissal](http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal)

