

HOW TO GO TO

Mass



Welcome.

Whether you've never stepped foot in a Catholic church or you've been away for a while, we want to help you encounter Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We're so glad you're here.

Welcome home.

blessed is she

ENTRANCE

When you enter a Catholic church, you can bless yourself with holy water (as a reminder of our Baptism) from the holy water font, making the Sign of the Cross. We generally genuflect before we enter our pew, which is to lower onto the right knee while making the Sign of the Cross towards Jesus' presence in the tabernacle or towards the crucifix hanging in the church.

Grab a missalette before you enter the pew or perhaps one is in the pew-back in front of you. This booklet usually offers the basic prayers and readings for the Mass so you can follow along. We observe prayerful silence when in the body of the church and try to keep talking to a quiet whisper if necessary. Prepare your heart and mind for the holy sacrifice that is about to happen before you.

stand

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON/HYMN

The people sing or chant a hymn as the priest processes in with the altar servers, lectors, deacon (if one is present), and concelebrating priests (if present). When a hymn is not sung, a verse chosen for that day called the entrance antiphon is read from the Missal by the priest or the people recite it together from their seats.

GREETING

The priest begins Mass with the Sign of the Cross and a series of prayers from the Missal.

PENITENTIAL RITE // KYRIE

The priest invites us to call to mind our sins, making a brief examination of conscience and bringing those sins before the Lord. Together we say the words of the "Confiteor," which in English means "I confess." As a sign of contrition, the congregants gently strike their chests three times while saying the words of the prayer, "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

When the Confiteor is not said, there are several alternatives in the Missal through which the priest leads the people to examine their consciences. Next, the priest says the *Kyrie* and the congregation **responds, echoing the words of the priest.** This prayer means, "Lord have mercy," and is the only part of the liturgy in Greek.

GLORIA

The *Gloria* is said on Sundays, with the exception of Advent and Lent, solemnities and feast days, but not at daily Mass. It dates back to the third century and is rooted in Scripture in Luke 2:14. It's beautifully sung, chanted, or simply prayed together as a congregation.

***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.***

COLLECT

The priest offers it to God in the name of all present and all of God's people just before the readings begin. This prayer is different each day from the Missal.

sit

FIRST READING

On Sundays this reading is always from the Old Testament. Its selection helps us weave together parts of Scripture and shows us about salvation history, shedding light on the events of the New Testament. Understanding the Old Testament helps us realize the fullness and beauty of Christ as well as His coming and fulfillment of prophecies.

At daily Mass, the First Reading comes from either the Old Testament or one of the non-Gospel New Testament books.

The congregation responds: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

This selection from the Psalms opens for us these very relatable ancient prayers inspired by God. They are selected to help us reflect on the First Reading. They change every day, and we ***respond with the day's selection.***

SECOND READING

(on Sundays and Solemnities)

This reading is from the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles in the New Testament, *i.e.*, the parts of the New Testament that are not the Gospels. The Second Reading helps guide our minds to live out the path God has for us and inspire us to follow His will in our lives.

The congregation responds: Thanks be to God.

stand

ALLELUIA // VERSE

The people stand to ***join in the chanted or sung Alleluia and Verse*** while the priest or deacon goes to the ambo to proclaim the Gospel. They stand to show reverence for Christ's presence in the Sacred Words of the Gospel. During Lent, the Verse before the Gospel replaces the Alleluia as the Church fasts from this celebratory word in anticipation of Easter.

G O S P E L

Priest (or Deacon): The Lord be with you.

The congregation responds: And with your spirit.

Priest (or Deacon): A reading from the holy Gospel according to _____.

The congregation responds: Glory to you, O Lord.

The priest or a deacon reads the Gospel passage of the day from one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. We receive Jesus' teaching in our own hearts as we listen to His Word.

The congregation responds: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

sit

H O M I L Y // S E R M O N

The priest or a deacon delivers a homily based on the readings to instruct the congregation and unpack the Gospel for us. A sermon, to parse terms, is more specifically on a spiritual topic not necessarily tied to the readings (*i.e.*, on the Sacraments or the Fruits of the Holy Spirit).

stand

C R E E D

(on Sundays, Solemnities, and Special Occasions)

We recite the Nicene Creed, which comes from the Councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). The Creed summarizes the chief truths of the Catholic Church. It differs from the Apostles' Creed (said at the beginning of a Rosary and in a Chaplet of Divine Mercy) in that it has more specifics including Jesus being fully human and fully divine. We bow or genuflect at the words, "by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

***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,
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.***

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

These intentions are shared to allow for all of us to pray together. Usually they start broad and then narrow, starting with praying for the Church or the Pope and ending with people in our own communities.

The congregation responds with something akin to Lord, hear our prayer.

sit

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS AND PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The altar servers or certain congregants will bring the ciborium holding the unconsecrated hosts and cruets with the water and unconsecrated wine to the priest. The servers, deacon, and priest prepare the altar for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. At this time the people offer in their hearts their joys and sufferings of the week, joining with Jesus' offering of Himself. We also offer our tithes to God at this time. An usher may pass a collection basket for financial offerings from the congregation at this time.

stand

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

The priest invites us to pray that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, and the congregation responds. He then prays the Prayer over the Offerings specific to that Mass.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the most important part of the Mass and has many elements. It begins with the preface and ends with the "Amen" after the concluding doxology/prayer.

PREFACE

The preface is the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer in which the priest gives thanks to God for all of His blessings and leads up to the *Sanctus*.

SANCTUS

The congregation joins the priest in praying the words of the Sanctus, or in English, the "Holy Holy Holy." The words are Scripture-based and have been included in the Mass since the fifth century. We praise God with the Angels and Saints as we enter into the most sacred part of the Mass: the Consecration.

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.

kneel

EPICLESIS

At this prayer, the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine, asking God the Father to send the Holy Spirit down to sanctify these offerings so they may become Christ's Body and Blood. At this time, the bells may be rung once to signify the importance of this moment.

CONSECRATION

The Consecration is that part of the Eucharistic Prayer during which the priest prays the Lord's words of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. By praying these words, the substance of the bread and wine change into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, also known as transubstantiation. This is a re-presentation of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins on the Cross on Calvary and unites us with that eternal sacrifice. It's a time for reverence, worship, and respect during which the congregation kneels. The bells may be rung three times when the Body of Christ is elevated and three times when the chalice containing the Blood of Christ is elevated.

Priest: The mystery of faith.

The congregation responds: A – We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

The congregation responds: B – When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

The congregation responds: C – Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest elevates the Body and Blood of Christ and prays the ending doxology, a prayer of praise to God. In response, we all proclaim, "Amen." This is sung at more solemn Masses or simply spoken.

stand

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray the *Our Father* together, the very words that Jesus taught us in Scripture. It guides us to remember our radical dependence on God, Our Father, and to share in His forgiveness to those in our lives.

***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.***

Priest: (offers a brief prayer ending with) . . . and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
The congregation responds: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

THE RITE OF PEACE

The priest will offer the sign of peace to the people based upon Jesus' words found in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" and may invite the congregation to offer one another a reverent and quiet sign of peace as well.

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
The congregation responds: And with your spirit.

AGNUS DEI

We pray the *Agnus Dei*, "Lamb of God," harkening back to the Jewish tradition of sacrificing lambs for the atonement of sins. Saint John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the "Lamb of God," foreshadowing that Jesus Himself would be sacrificed in atonement for our sins.

***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.***

kneel

COMMUNION

The priest holds up the fractured Eucharist, representative of the breaking of the bread at the Last Supper, and invites us to “behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sins of the world.” The congregation responds with a prayer of humility and faith, which starts with the words of the Roman Centurion from the Gospel, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” It is customary to gently strike one’s chest as a sign of contrition and humility while saying the prayer.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Priest: 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.

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

The bell may be rung once when the priest consumes the Body and Blood of Christ.

We then go up to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with true reverence and adoration in our hearts. If you have committed a mortal sin and have not yet had a chance to confess it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you can receive a blessing by crossing your arms across your chest without receiving Holy Communion physically. If you have broken your fast of not eating one hour before receiving, you can similarly receive a blessing instead of receiving physically. A spiritual communion is a beautiful way to enter into this sacred mystery if you are unable to receive Holy Communion.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

During the reception of Communion a hymn of thanksgiving is sung. It expresses our gratitude to God for the gift of Himself and our unity as a Church. If there is no music, the Communion antiphon, which is a Scripture verse, is read aloud from the Missal after the priest receives Communion.

stand

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

When all have received Holy Communion and the sacred vessels have been purified, there is a short time of silent prayer. The purification is important because each particle of the host contains Jesus, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Same for each drop of His Precious Blood. The priest then rises and invites the people to pray. He prays from the Missal a special prayer after communion written for that day, which expresses a desire for us to be helped by grace to grow holier through our reception of Holy Communion.

FINAL BLESSING & DISMISSAL

The priest gives the congregation a final blessing and sends us off to go in peace, sharing the Good News of the Gospel message with everyone we meet.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

The congregation responds: And with your spirit.

Priest: May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The congregation responds: Amen.

Priest (or Deacon): 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 congregation responds: Thanks be to God.

kneel

AFTER MASS

After Mass, stay and pray an extra prayer of thanksgiving for the great gift that the Holy Mass is for us. Often people will pray the Saint Michael prayer for protection for the Church as well.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

SOURCES //

The Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://newadvent.com/cathen/>

Rev. James Socias, Daily Roman Missal. Midwest Theological Forum. Woodridge, IL. 2011.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Washington, DC. 2011.