

# Knowing Our Catholic Faith

(9)

## The Mass



For all Catholics, Sunday is a HOLIDAY! We are glad, we put on our best clothes, we do not work, we spend time with family, because this day we celebrate something big: the resurrection of Jesus! Yes, every Sunday of the year we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

## THE MASS

### WHAT IS THE MASS?

First of all, the Mass is a party. Why have a party? Because, thanks to Jesus' resurrection, all men can be saved, or, in other words, after we die we can go to heaven and live there forever with God. Of course we have celebrate this!

In addition:

1) The Mass is the MEMORIAL of the sacrifice of Our Lord. This means that Jesus Christ when he left this world, did not leave us only a painting or a statue of himself, but he left the TRUTH of his PRESENCE in every Mass that is celebrated.



2) The Mass is a BANQUET. Just as our body needs to eat to live, our soul needs Jesus to be happy and to get to heaven. In the Mass we receive communion and Jesus comes to our soul.

3) The Mass is a SACRIFICE. The Church teaches that in every Mass we relive Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, Christ offers himself to die for us and forgive us our sins.

### WHY GO TO MASS?

When Catholics go to Mass:

1) The most important thing is that in the Mass we PRAISE God, that is, we say that He is the greatest thing that exists, that we love Him and that we respect Him.

2) In the Mass we GIVE THANKS to God for all the good things he has given us.

3) In the Mass we ASK God's FORGIVENESS for the times that we have offended Him, although we know that serious sins are forgiven only in Confession.

4) In the Mass we OFFER OURSELVES to God, because we love him, and we promise that we will try to be better. Each of us knows what it is that Jesus wants us to change.

5) In the Mass we ask Jesus for his HELP. Remember that alone we can not accomplish many things, but with God's help we can. We need to put ourselves in His hands.

# WHAT HAPPENS AT MASS?

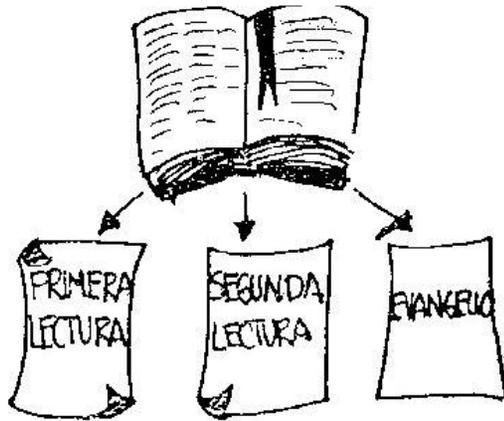
- The Mass is divided into two parts. The first is called THE LITURGY OF THE WORD and the second THE EUCHARIST. We will explain what we do in each one of them:

## The Liturgy of the Word:

- In the first part of the Mass, we prepare to receive the message of Christ. How do we prepare?

- 1) First, we ask God for forgiveness for our offenses in the PENITENTIAL RITE. "
- 2) Then we pray the GLORIA. With this prayer we say HE is the greatest thing and that we respect Him.

Now that we are prepared, we hear Jesus' message in three readings. All of them are from the Bible:



- 1) The FIRST READING consists of messages that were written many years before Jesus was born.
- 2) In the SECOND READING, we almost always read letters written by the Apostles.

3) The GOSPEL tells us about the life of Jesus, and tells us how He wants us to behave and what we should do to be saved. This is the most important reading and that is why we listen to it standing up.

4) Then follows the priests SERMON where he explains the readings and gives us advice.

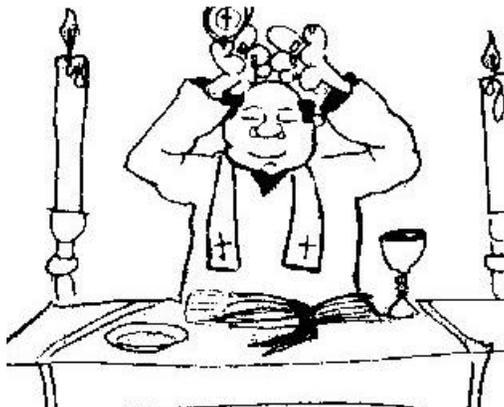
5) Then all pray the CREED, where we state everything we Catholics believe.

6) At the end of this part of the Mass, all ask God for different things and all answer: "We pray to the Lord".

## The Eucharist

- This is the second part of the Mass and the most important because it is here that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus.

- 1) First the offerings of bread and wine are brought to the altar.
- 2) Then the priest washes his hands, this is done to remember that his soul should be clean to say Mass.



3) Then comes the most important part: THE CONSECRATION. In it the priest repeats the same words that Jesus said in the Last Supper, it is then that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.

4) Then we pray the Our Father.

5) Then we share sign of peace, we shake hands in token of the love that should exist between all the people.

6) At the end, comes something very important: COMMUNION. Imagine, you are able to receive Jesus himself in your soul! The following moments are perhaps the sweetest of the entire Mass. We can talk to the Jesus himself in our hearts, to tell Him things, and ask for His help!

GOAL OF THE MONTH: Now that you know better what the Mass is, try to pay close attention and feel closer to Jesus during it.



## The Gospel Reading

Before proclaiming the Gospel the priest or deacon traces a small cross with his thumb on the page of the book, on his forehead, on his lips, and on his breast.

Priest or deacon:

**"The Gospel of the Lord,"**

Response:

**"Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ."**

You can pray silently like this:



"May the Lord be in my mind,



on my lips,

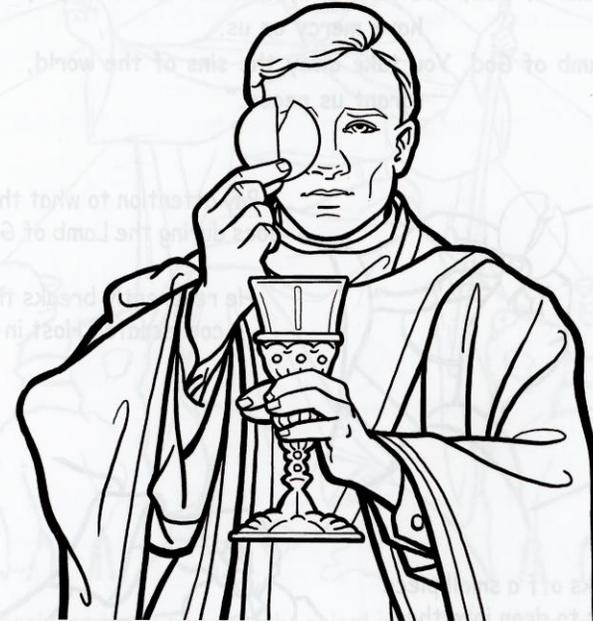


and in my heart. Amen."

## Invitation to Communion

The people KNEEL and the priest raises the Host and chalice so everyone can make a silent act of faith and sorrow for sins.

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."**



Respond: **"Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof,  
but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."**

In the Gospel of Matthew, a Roman soldier told Jesus he was unworthy for Jesus to enter "under his roof" in order to heal a servant. He asked Jesus to "just say the word" to heal his servant from afar. Jesus praised the centurion's faith. When we say this response, we are imitating the faith of that centurion.

## Guide To What To Do At Mass

How many of these things do you already know?

1. On entering a church at any time, near the door is a font of Holy water. Dip your fingers into it and make the sign of the cross. The reason we do that is to remind us that we are Baptized Catholics.
2. When passing in front of the tabernacle it is customary to bow and make the sign of the Cross, because Jesus is there. At Saint Ignatius, the tabernacle is in the middle of the back altar.
3. As a sign that Jesus is in the tabernacle a red candle is lit nearby.
4. Before entering the pew we genuflect to honor Jesus who is present in the tabernacle. It reminds us that He is our King and we have promised to follow Him.
5. When you are in your spot in the pew, kneel and say a prayer. Greet Jesus and talk to him. When you are done you may sit down.
6. The primary purpose of a church is to be a place to pray. While you are in church do not do anything that could distract someone else from praying. Activities that are distracting are talking, making noises in any way, moving around a lot. What else do you think distracts people from praying?
7. A kneeler is a tool for kneeling on. It is much easier on the knees than the floor. It is not meant for standing on. As a courtesy to others, lift the kneeler if someone needs to walk by and when you leave the pew. Remember to do it quietly.
8. When kneeling, keep your back straight and both knees on the kneeler. Fold your hands. The only times you should rest on the pew while kneeling is if you are pregnant or just had knee surgery. If you have a broken leg, you probably won't be able to kneel at all. Otherwise, kneel properly.
9. Fold your hands when you are in church. Folded hands are a sign of prayer. We are here to pray.
10. Look around you when you are in church, and Mass hasn't begun yet. There are many objects in the church whose purpose is to help you think about Jesus. Look at things and ask yourself, why is that object here? What does it mean? What is the story it is telling? Even the other people in church have a meaning.
11. Stand up, sit down, or kneel when everyone else does during the Mass. Many books about the Mass will tell you when to do that and even why. Each position has a meaning. Can you figure out what it is?
12. Pray out loud with everyone during Mass. The blue book in the pew has the prayers in it and some information about the Mass. The Creed is #161. Think about the words we are saying. Think about what they mean.
13. Listen to the readings from the Bible and especially the Gospel. Do not go to the bathroom or move around the church during the Gospel.
14. Listen to what the priest is saying all through Mass. Every word is full of meaning and has a lot of history behind it. Every time you go to Mass, listen for something you may not have noticed before. Silently talk to Jesus about it.
15. Sing the songs during Mass. The saying goes that singing is praying twice. Why do you think that is?
16. We kneel at Mass to show special reverence for what is happening at the time. So pay special attention when we are kneeling. What is happening that is so special? When we are kneeling, avoid getting up to go to the bathroom or returning from the bathroom. Wait until we are done kneeling.

**font** – a *container* for Holy water at the entrance to the church

**genuflect** *touch one knee to the floor, bow your head, and make the sign of the cross*

**tabernacle** - a *special container holding consecrated Hosts, i.e. Jesus*