

Mass In a Moment

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Mass in a Moment

Introduction

This resource consists of the texts of 60-second video clips developed to precede the NCBC televised Daily Mass. There are a total of twenty-four texts. Their intent was to provide liturgical education for those who regularly watch the broadcast. Margaret Bick, current editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy, composed the texts.

Each segment is no more than 140 words and focuses on a single element of the Mass. Each is intended to capture attention quickly and to highlight the theological dimensions rather than simply describing what happens. Because of the brevity imposed there is no intention to be complete, but to bring to light some oft-neglected foundations of the liturgy:

- the Church as the household of God,
- the action of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy and in the life of the Church,
- the centrality of the paschal mystery in Christian spirituality,
- the on-going presence of the kingdom of God in our midst, and
- the eschatological nature of the liturgy and of Christian life.

Dedication

This resource is dedicated to the memory of **Monsignor Patrick Byrne**, in honour of his commitment to the work of the liturgical renewal and the promotion of the liturgy among the people of God.

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Gathering for Eucharist

In the celebration of the Eucharist

God calls us together

around the table of the Lord,

for this is our destiny

and the destiny of the world:

ever since time began

it has been God's intention

that all people would be gathered into one—

one family sharing life with God and with one another.

And so we gather for Eucharist

to be a sign

under which the scattered children of God

may be gathered together.

To recall our sharing in the life of the Trinity

we cross ourselves with holy water that reminds us of our Baptism.

To signal our shared life

we greet each other warmly as we arrive.

We open ourselves to the presence of Christ already here among us.

By the action of the Spirit in and among us,

God's great in-gathering has indeed begun!

The Entrance Song & The Procession

Have you ever noticed that

the celebration of the Eucharist usually begins with song?

And that everyone sings?

From beginning to end

the Mass is a very musical activity.

The Roman Missal notes that

song is a way of showing and intensifying

our unity with one another.

Our singing opens us to the action of the Holy Spirit.

What a wonderful way

to begin our celebration of this sacrament of unity!

Our song and procession at the beginning of Mass

mark the formal beginning of our celebration.

The entrance of the priest and other ministers

signals that the gathering of this sacred assembly is now complete.

Our song is one with Christ's eternal hymn of praise to the Father

and with the song of all creation to its Creator.

“Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Come before God, singing for joy.”

The Sign of the Cross & The Greeting

The sign of the cross is action wedded to word:

the action interprets the words
and vice versa.

In this action,

we proclaim the mystery of the cross of Christ,
whose impress we have borne since Baptism
as our entry into the life of the Trinity.

It has only been used in the Mass since the fourteenth century.

The greeting, “The Lord be with you,”

used in our liturgy since earliest Christian times,
is an echo of Christ’s greeting after the resurrection,
“Peace be with you.”

Here, at the beginning of the Mass,

the closing words from Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians
are often added to the greeting:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.”

The Sprinkling and Penitential Rites

Dying Christ destroyed our death;
 rising he restored our life.

This is the cornerstone of our faith
 and the cause of our celebration.

St. Paul says that
 we must consider ourselves
 dead to sin and alive to God
 in Christ Jesus.

The liturgy offers us two possibilities
 for bringing this mystery of faith into sharper focus
 from the very beginning of Mass:

in the “Lord have mercy”
 we recall that
 God’s unconditional love and mercy
 sent Jesus
 to bring us to fullness of life
 with God and each other;

in the rite of blessing and sprinkling holy water
 we recall the eternal newness
 of the divine life we have shared since our Baptism.

May almighty God continue to have mercy on us,
 forgive our sins,
 and bring us to everlasting life.

The Glory to God

The “Glory to God” is sung only on Sundays and other highly festive days;
and not at all during Lent or Advent.

This “angelic hymn,” as it is sometimes called,
was not composed for use in the Mass

but there is evidence of its use,

in pontifical Masses only, in the early sixth century
and possibly even earlier.

First evidence of its use in a Mass with a priest

is during Easter night sometime in the eighth century.

The opening lines evoke the song of the angels

on the night of the Nativity

and flow into an outpouring of pure praise of God.

The latter portion moves to praise of Christ:

Son of God, Saviour of the world.

It is a wonderful expression of Christian joy

that we do well to carry in our hearts at all times.

The Opening Prayer

The opening prayer of the Mass begins with the priest's invitation:

“Let us pray.”

We hear this invitation again

after the priest has finished preparing the bread and wine,
as well as after communion.

These prayers are called “collect prayers”

because in them

the priest gives voice
to the collective silent prayer
of the whole assembly.

Like most liturgical prayer,

collect prayers follow a predictable pattern.

They begin by naming God

and calling to mind the marvellous deeds God has done in our midst.

The prayer then gives voice

to the deepest longings, needs and concerns of the people gathered.

The familiar ending,

“through Christ our Lord”

expresses the truth that

this prayer and the whole celebration,

by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit,

is an action of Christ the Lord and Head—and only
mediator—

and of his body the Church.

The Liturgy of the Word

In the Liturgy of the Word,

God speaks to us,

opening up to us the mystery of redemption and salvation
and nourishing our spirit;

and Christ is present in his own word.

Just as in ancient biblical times,

we, God's assembled people are cut to the heart;

we cry out in joyful psalms and alleluias.

God's story is one we know well;

and we have come to celebrate and give thanks.

Assembled as God's royal and priestly people,

and stirred by the indwelling Holy Spirit,

we respond to this proclamation

with a profession of faith

and with the offering of prayers of petition

on behalf of the Church and the world.

After the celebration we will go back out into the world.

May the Lord be in our hearts and on our lips

that we may worthily proclaim his gospel with our lives.

The Lectionary

In its lectionary,

the Church has collected certain Bible texts
which best express the mystery of salvation
within the liturgy.

On most Sundays

the first reading is related to the gospel text
and gives it focus.

This is not true, however, of the first reading on weekdays,
nor of the second reading during the Sundays Ordinary Time.

These are passages from a single book of the Bible
proclaimed day-by-day or Sunday-by-Sunday in biblical order.

The responsorial psalm is related to the first reading.

It is a proclamation of the word of God sung at the ambo.

This proclamation is shared by the cantor and the rest of the assembly.

In the singing of the psalms

the risen Lord unites the voice of his body, the Church,
with his own eternal hymn of praise.

In the words of Psalm 122,

“Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.”

The Gospel & Gospel Acclamation

The scriptures record the great love story of God and humanity.

It is a story of God's call and our response,

of steadfast love in the face of infidelity,

of divine covenanting despite human fickleness.

It is the story of salvation,

the word of God,

good news.

John, the evangelist, calls Jesus "the Word-made-flesh."

Jesus is the good news in human flesh.

And when this good news is proclaimed

Christ himself is present.

This is a privileged moment; we stand.

This is **good** news;

we greet its coming with boisterous songs of "alleluia."

The one who proclaims the gospel text

venerates the word with incense, a sign of the cross, and a kiss.

The proclaimer and the assembly together trace the cross

on their forehead, lips and heart

so that the gospel may find a dwelling place there.

The rest of the assembly venerates the word they have received in song and posture.

"Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal glory."

The Homily

The homily was restored to the liturgy
by the Second Vatican Council.

It is the Church's original form of liturgical preaching:
an integral part of the liturgy
bound to the readings and liturgy of the day
which is never omitted on a Sunday.

In an often troubled and tumultuous world
the homily explains and announces the good news of the kingdom of God
as fulfilled in our very midst
even as we listen.

The goal of the homily is
to build up the assembly
as the covenanted people of God,
and to move the community to boundless praise of God
in the eucharistic prayer.

It is our bridge between the table of the word and the table of the Eucharist.

The homily inspires us to see that
it is indeed right to give our thanks and praise.

The Profession of Faith

The Creed,

recited at Mass only on Sundays and festive days,
originated in the rite of Baptism.

It came into the Roman liturgy

under the influence of Eastern Christianity
as an attempt to counteract various heresies.

It is recited at this point in the liturgy

by the entire assembly
as a faith-filled “yes” to the good news.

We have the option of using either the Apostles’ Creed,
the oldest profession of the faith of the Roman Church,
or the Nicene Creed.

We might even use a question and answer form.

Whichever style our community chooses,

the profession of faith is intended to carry us back to our own Baptism.

Truly we can say:

“This is our faith.

This is the faith of the Church;

we are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

The General Intercessions

In praying the general intercessions,

restored to the liturgy

by the Second Vatican Council,

the Church shares in the priesthood of Christ,

making supplication on behalf of the Church and the whole world.

The needs of all humanity are addressed under general categories:

the Church,

civil authorities,

the needy

the local community,

and all the world.

The assembly invokes God's intervention:

“Lord, hear our prayer,”

or “Lord, have mercy.”

In earlier centuries

the list and form of intentions grew so long that

the pope adopted a shorter style

and moved the prayers to the beginning of the Mass.

Pope Gregory the Great further shortened them

by completely removing the statement of intention,

so only the repeated cry, “Lord, have mercy” remained.

This is the origin of the “Lord, have mercy” of the modern penitential rite.

The Preparation of the Gifts and Altar

During a sacred Passover meal

Jesus commanded his followers to remember him in a meal.

Before the eucharistic meal begins, the table is prepared.

Cloths are laid;

bread and wine are brought forward.

In a prayer of praise in the Jewish “berakah” style,

the priest acknowledges the bread and wine

as gifts of God to us

that we will share

as divinizing sacred food.

The priest’s action of adding a little water to the wine

is rooted in the ancient practice

of diluting all wine.

But his quiet prayer

speaks of the profound and unique reality of Christian life:

communion of life with God in Christ.

The priest’s handwashing

is probably rooted in an ancient ritual of purification

in preparation for prayer.

May the Lord accept the eucharistic sacrifice

for the praise and glory of his name.

The Eucharistic Prayer Pt. I

The eucharistic prayer is the heart of the Mass.

It is a thanksgiving prayer.

As we begin it

we say,

“It is right to give our thanks and praise.”

We give thanks to God for our salvation in Christ,

the mystery of our faith.

“Father, calling to mind

the death your Son endured

for our salvation,

his glorious resurrection and ascension

into heaven,

and ready to greet him

when he comes again,

we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.”

At the same time

we ask that

both we and the bread and wine

be transformed

into the Body of Christ

for the life of the world.

“Through Christ, with him and in him

in the unity of the Holy Spirit

all glory and honour are yours almighty Father,

for ever and ever.”

The Eucharistic Prayer Pt. II

The eucharistic meal is a sacrificial meal,
a meal that is both sacred and sanctifying.

In his words

over the bread and wine of the Last Supper,
which we recall during the eucharistic prayer,
Christ eternally bound the Christian eucharistic meal
to his sacrificial outpouring of his life
for the life of the world.

In the celebration of the Eucharist,

Christ unites our sacrifice of praise
with his sacrifice on the cross.

At the same time

we proclaim and celebrate the eternal covenant
that God established
in the Blood of Christ himself.

“Lord,

look upon this sacrifice
which you have given to your Church:
and by your Holy Spirit,
gather all who share this one bread and cup
into the one body of Christ,
a living sacrifice of praise.”

The Lord's Prayer & The Sign of Peace

The Lord's Prayer is one of the Church's treasures.

Its reference to daily bread

probably inspired the Church

to place it within the communion rite.

The phrase, "Thy kingdom come,"

recalls Jesus' words,

"I will never drink of this fruit of the vine
until the day when I drink it new with you
in my Father's kingdom."

How often do we consider the fact that

these words are fulfilled

in our celebration of Eucharist?

The petition to be forgiven as we forgive

expresses our desire

to enter into true communion

with the risen Lord

and with one another.

However,

the sign of peace is the assembly's clearest expression

of its readiness for sharing in communion,

the act that completes the sacramental action

whose goal is the unity of the Church.

Communion Pt. I

The communion rite is a moment of boundless joy.

Indeed, how can we keep from singing?

Our song expresses our unity of spirit

by the unity of our voices.

It gives evidence of our joy.

And singing makes the procession to communion

truly an act of community

rather than a line-up of private individuals.

At communion time our participation is at its greatest:

We sing our way to the table.

We say our 'Amen' and eat the Body of the Lord.

We say our 'Amen' again and drink his sacred Blood.

We sing our way back to our place

and we keep singing until all have shared in the feast.

Then we all share in the silent communal prayer that follows.

Indeed, happy are we who are called to the Lord's Supper!

Communion Pt. II

Communion.

Holy communion.

What is communion?

At the heart of the word and of the reality is “union.”

Our Eucharist leads to union.

We may be used to thinking about

“my” union *with* Jesus at communion time,
but this by itself is only a beginning.

Communion of life is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The communion rite is about shared life.

It is about sharing life with the triune God and with each other

in Christ and *through* Christ.

It is about unity made possible and brought about only by the Holy Spirit.

When we say our communion Amen’s,

we say yes at many levels:

YES to sealing the new covenant with God in the Body and Blood of Christ

YES to becoming what we eat and drink

YES to living the lifestyle of the kingdom of God.

The Blessing

God is the origin of all blessings.

In the first few chapters of the Bible

God is the only one who blesses, who “speaks well of”.

And God’s blessing is life-giving.

But, even in the earliest biblical times,

the people of God felt free

to invoke God’s blessings on one another.

Heads of households and community leaders, like Isaac and Aaron of old,

offer us early examples of blessings.

Jesus even commanded his followers

to bless those who hate, revile and persecute them.

The Christian custom of blessing before parting is old indeed.

We remember that even though the family or community is dispersed,

our bond of unity is empowered by God

and is not to be taken lightly,

not forgotten, forsaken or violated in any way.

Let us look for opportunities to bless one another throughout our day, every day.

The Dismissal

We do not simply leave the celebration of the Eucharist;
we are sent forth.

Although the eucharistic table is the source, summit and centre of our lives,
we cannot live our whole lives there.

“Go,” we are told.

“Go in peace.”

Our communion with Christ and with one another
demands that our shared life be lived in peace.

We cannot be a sign of the kingdom of God
for all the world to see,
if we do not live the peace we preach.

Parking lot problems,
encounters at parish meetings,
community controversies
may tempt us toward other behaviour;
but the God who binds our lives together with Christ’s
and who dwells within us as in a temple
says, “Go in peace.”

May the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Taking Our Leave

Have you noticed that

in many families

it takes about a half-hour

to say good-bye after a family celebration?

The more closely knit we are,

the longer it takes to “unravel” ourselves

and go our separate ways.

So it is, too, with the family of God.

We are not simply leaving a shopping mall,

or a movie theatre,

or factory

by the quickest route possible.

As we leave the celebration of the Eucharist,

we offer final words of encouragement and friendship to all;

we remind each other

of commitments we have made to the community

for the coming week;

we say good-bye.

There is no rushing this moment of departure.

We part gently and in the peace of Christ.

Eucharist Without Walls

The closing words of the Mass send us into the world.

Like every action of Christ,

our Eucharist is not simply for us,
but for the life of the world.

As the Spirit-filled body of Christ

we who gather for Eucharist

are sent to bring the good news to the poor,

to proclaim liberty to captives,

to heal the sick,

to be a sign for all the world,

under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together,

until there is one sheepfold and one shepherd.

If we are to transform the world,

we must go out and meet it head on.

We live now no longer for ourselves, but for Christ.

And God sends us from the eucharistic table to the hungry of world

so that all may share in the heavenly feast.

Rehearsal for Kingdom Life

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

calls the Eucharist “a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.”

Every action in the Mass speaks of eternal life,

tells something about that life

and rehearses us for life forever with God.

The joy of our song proclaims the joy of the kingdom.

The unity of our voices in song, action and prayer

proclaims the communion of life in God’s kingdom.

Our sign of peace proclaims the peace and reconciliation of the kingdom of God.

In the Eucharist we touch eternity.

Our life together around the table of the Eucharist

prepares us for communion of life with and in God.

This is why we put so much care into preparing both ourselves and the celebration.

Truly, the liturgy is the source and summit of our lives.

Keeping Sunday Holy

Daily Mass

is a privileged means of reinforcing
the eucharistic character of Christian life.

But it is the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist
that shapes the very life of the Church.

In his pastoral letter, *Dies Domini*, “The Lord’s Day,”

Pope John Paul II draws attention to the pre-eminence of the Sunday
Eucharist.

Nothing can adequately substitute for

our full, conscious and active participation in the Sunday Eucharist.

But the Pope goes on to say that

participation in the Eucharist must be supported
by and in everything else we do on the Lord’s Day.

Keeping the Lord’s Day holy means

making it a day of joy, rest and fellowship
both for ourselves and for those whose lives we touch.

Let us open wide the doors to Christ

and live every Sunday as truly the Lord’s Day.