

Our series *On the Liturgy* begins by discussing what is meant by “liturgy.” Catholic liturgy refers to the Church’s official, public worship, particularly the Mass, which is our central act of worship. Liturgy also includes other sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, and other rites and sacramentals.

Catholic liturgy employs various symbols, including ritual actions, words, music, and sacred images, to express and convey spiritual realities. It is centered on the Holy Trinity, with worship directed to the Father, through the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic liturgy is also an action of the whole Christ, the entire Church, where the head and members participate in worship. Furthermore, it anticipates the heavenly glory and the coming Kingdom, connecting past, present, and future events.

The central act of worship; namely, the Mass, is a sacrifice where bread and wine are consecrated and become the body and blood of Christ. Indeed, the Mass is a representation of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary, making it present on the altar in an unbloody manner. Thus, the Mass is the “source and summit” of Christian life, offering a way to connect with God and receive His grace.

The Mass is divided into the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from sacred scripture, a homily, and the Creed. The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes the preparation of the gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and Holy Communion.

An important practice for Christians is to devote the first day of the week, Sunday, to God. A Catholic does this especially by attending Mass, a practice begun from the very beginning of the Church founded by Christ, as attested by the Acts of the Apostles and many early Christian documents (e.g., the *Didache*, Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*, St. Ignatius of Antioch’s *Letters*, Irenaeus of Lyon’s *Writings*, and Hippolytus of Rome’s *Apostolic Tradition*).

So, as we continue our series *On the Liturgy*, may we resolve to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. And, considering the importance of the Mass as being our central act of worship and the event where we receive Jesus’ *Real Presence* in the Most Holy Eucharist, we might also consider attending daily Mass, even if we can only do so once or twice a week, thus giving the words of our Lord their intended meaning: *Give us this day our daily bread*.

Father Frei