

Mens group Notes 2025_01_21

Our special speaker at this meeting was Fr. Joe. He gave a detailed discussion regarding the various symbols, meanings and parts of the Mass.

He started by talking about the vestments that are worn by the priest during Mass. In a Roman Catholic Mass, a priest typically wears several vestments, each with specific symbolic meanings. The main vestments include:

1. **Alb:** This is a long white garment that the priest wears as a sign of purity and the baptismal garment. It covers the entire body and is usually fastened with a cincture (a rope belt) around the waist.
2. **Stole:** The stole is a narrow strip of cloth worn around the neck, with the ends hanging down in front. It is a symbol of the priest's office and authority. The stole's color changes with the liturgical season or occasion. The Stole needs to be worn when performing a sacrament
3. **Chasuble:** which means little house and represents the congregation. This is the outermost garment worn by the priest, and it is typically the most ornate. It symbolizes charity and the yoke of Christ. The chasuble comes in various colors, depending on the liturgical season (e.g., green for Ordinary Time, purple for Advent or Lent, white for feast days, etc.).
4. **Maniple (optional):** Historically worn on the left arm, the maniple is a small cloth that has become optional in modern times. It symbolized the priest's service and sorrow, but it is not always used today.
5. The **Amyst (amice?)** which hides the priest collar. It is a rectangular piece of cloth, usually white, that is worn around the shoulders and neck, with the ends tied around the back. It is worn under the alb.

Part I- the Introductory Rites

(NOTE: the handout from our session has more details on all the parts of the mass and I will just highlight the major points presented by Fr. Joe)

The service begins with the priest processing front the front doors of the church towards the altar. This puts the focus on the altar and signifies the new Jerusalem Road. As Roman Catholics, the altar is the focus for the Mass. The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice and not just a memorial representation. We place bread, wine and ourselves on the altar as part of the sacrifice. When the priest reaches the altar, he kisses the altar because there is a relic

placed inside the altar. The relic is a tangible way to honor the saint's life and witness. In our church, it is a relic of St. John the Evangelist.

The mass begins and ends with the sign of the cross

The Penitential Act prepares us to receive the Eucharist. is a prayer or series of prayers said at the beginning of the Roman Catholic Mass, which allows the congregation to acknowledge their sins and seek God's forgiveness. It usually includes the **Confiteor and the Lord, Have Mercy prayers.**

PART II. The Liturgy of the WORD

First reading: A passage from the Old Testament (except during Easter season when it is from the Acts of the Apostles). This reading connects to the Gospel.

The **homily** should be 7-8 minutes. (the entire Mass should be less than 1 hour)

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar where the altar is prepared for the celebration of the Eucharist, and the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward. The wine and a little water are poured into the Chalice. The **Wine:** Represents the blood of Christ, which He shed on the Cross for the salvation of humanity. The water represents the water that flowed from Jesus' side when he was pierced on the cross, blood and water flowed out.

The **Epiclesis** is the moment when the priest asks the Holy Spirit to come down and consecrate the bread and wine, transforming them into the Body and Blood of Christ. The word *epiclesis* comes from the Greek word *ἐπίκλησις*, which means "calling down" or "invocation."

The **Consecration** is the central and most sacred part of the Mass, when, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of the priest, the bread and wine become the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This transformation is called **Transubstantiation** — the substance of the bread and wine changes, even though their appearances (bread and wine) remain the same. Underlying substance is changed into the body and blood of Jesus. Materially it is still bread. The Consecration re-presents (not repeats) Christ's one sacrifice on the cross in a mystical way. The Mass is not a new sacrifice, but rather a participation in the eternal and perfect sacrifice that Jesus offered for the salvation of humanity. Through the Consecration, the sacrifice of Jesus is made present to us in time and space.

Christ is truly present—body, blood, soul, and divinity—under the appearances of bread and wine.

The **Anamnesis** is a key part of the **Eucharistic Prayer** in the Catholic Mass, and it refers to the **memorial** or **remembrance** of Christ's saving acts, particularly His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. It reminds us of the **central mysteries** of the Christian faith — Christ's death, Resurrection, and eventual return.

The term "**Fractus**" refers to the act of breaking the **Host** (the consecrated bread) during the **Eucharistic Prayer** in the Roman Catholic Mass, specifically during the **Fraction Rite**. It comes from the Latin word *frangere*, which means "to break."

IV. Concluding Rights

The final blessing is given by the priest to end the mass where the priest dismisses the congregation. As the priest gives the blessing, he makes the **sign of the cross** over the congregation. This is a physical and spiritual sign of God's grace and protection.