

Overview of the Mass

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1 Man's thirst and God's thirst meeting

1.1 What are the effects of the Fall?

- Sin, suffering, and death enter the world.
- We are stained with original sin.

1.1.1 How does our suffering point us to God?

- We realize we're not in charge of life and we need God.
- We realize that the things of this world don't fully satisfy us.

1.1.2 How else do we thirst for God?

- We long for communion.
- We long to be loved.
- We long for deep happiness.
- We long for more than the world has to offer.

1.1.3 How does God meet us in our need for Him?

In the fullness of time, he sent his Son to save us.

1.1.4 How do we encounter the mystery of God saving us today?

In the liturgy: in sacraments and sacramentals.

1.2 What is the central question of moral theology?

Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?

1.2.1 Where do we find this question?

Matthew 19:16-30

1.2.2 What are the 3 key words that question?

- Eternal life
- Good
- Teacher

1.2.3 What do we mean by eternal life?

Happiness and the meaning of life.

1.2.4 What do we mean by good?

Virtuous deeds and the call to holiness.

1.2.5 What do we mean by teacher?

The call to holiness is a relationship with a Person (Jesus).

1.2.6 How do we grow in holiness?

1. Keep the commandments.
2. Discover Spirit-infused virtue in a relationship with Jesus.
3. Encounter Christ in His Church.

1.2.7 What is Spirit-infused virtue?

The Holy Spirit makes it possible to do what He asks of us when we ask for that grace in the present moment.

1.2.8 Why did God make me?

God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

1.3 What do all men desire but disagree as to what causes it?

Happiness.

1.3.1 What are things which people think might make them happy?

1. Wealth
2. Honor
3. Fame
4. Power
5. Bodily health
6. Pleasure
7. Knowledge
8. Virtue
9. Friendship

1.3.2 If I choose A for the sake of B, why can A not be the source of my deepest happiness?

If A serves B, A is merely a means to the end of B; it cannot be its own end

1.3.3 Why does wealth not make us truly happy?

- Wealth merely buys other contenders for happiness.
- So wealth is not an end in and of itself.

1.3.4 Why does honor not make us truly happy?

- We honor someone because they have some good which makes them happy
- Honor is a byproduct of happiness.

1.3.5 Why does fame not make us truly happy?

- Fame is others knowing that a person has some good which makes them happy.
- Fame is a byproduct of honor.

1.3.6 Why does power not make us truly happy?

Power merely obtains one of the other contenders for happiness.

1.3.7 Why does bodily health not make us truly happy?

- Man's bodily nature serves his spiritual nature.
- Animals can be physically healthy, but we do not call animals truly happy in a deep sense.

1.3.8 Why does pleasure not make us truly happy?

- It is merely the effect of some other contender for happiness
- Those who indulge the most in pleasure are the least happy: you were made for more than pleasure
- Because pleasure is governed by the law of diminishing returns, it is less pleasing with time

1.3.9 Why does knowledge not make us truly happy?

Man desires not just truths, but Truth itself.

1.3.10 Why does virtue not make us truly happy?

Man desires not just good deeds but Goodness itself.

1.3.11 Why does earthly friendship not make us fully happy?

- Earthly friends sometimes hurt us.
- Earthly friends are sometimes not available.
- Earthly friends eventually die.
- Earthly friends do not always understand us.
- We desire not only earthly friendship but also friendship with God.

1.3.12 What does make us most happy?

- Friendship with God, particularly in prayer and liturgy.
- Virtue as a way of living out our friendship with God.
- Knowledge of the highest truths, particularly about God.
- Friendship with other people.
- Ideally, some amount of the other things.

2 Sacraments and Sacramentals

2.1 Why does God use sacraments and sacramentals?

God knows we tend to focus on physical things, so He hides in physical things so we can encounter Him there.

2.2 Sacraments

2.2.1 What is a sacrament?

An outward sign of a spiritual reality **instituted by Christ** that confers grace.

2.2.2 What are the 7 sacraments?

- 3 of initiation: baptism, confirmation, and communion
- 2 of healing: confession and anointing of the sick
- 2 of vocation: matrimony and holy orders

2.3 Sacramentals

2.3.1 What is a sacramental?

An outward sign of a spiritual reality **instituted by the Church** that confers grace.

2.3.2 What are examples of sacramentals?

- Liturgical vestments (albs, cassocks, etc.)
- Crucifix
- Altar
- Book of the Gospels
- Almost everything in the liturgy is a sacramental

3 Liturgy

3.1 What are the three kinds of liturgy?

1. Sacraments (e.g. confession, baptism, but especially the Eucharist as celebrated in the Mass)
2. The Liturgy of the Hours (praying the psalms 5 times daily, prayed by all priests and religious)
3. Blessings (e.g. a house blessing)

3.2 What is the problem liturgy solves?

- It is how we experience theology and encounter God: our thirst meets God's thirst.
- St. Augustine: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you."
- It answers the question of how to lead all people of all different personalities and cultures in prayer.

3.3 What is liturgy?

Liturgy is the public and solemn prayer of the worship of Christ to the Father in which we participate under a system of signs because of our baptism.

3.3.1 What do we mean by public?

Together with the whole Church—it's not just me and Jesus.

3.3.2 What do we mean by solemn?

It's serious because it's the greatest gift God has given us.

3.3.3 What do we mean by prayers and rites?

Liturgy is an action, not a physical thing.

3.3.4 What do we mean by the worship of Christ to the Father?

Jesus offers himself to the Father.

3.3.5 What do we mean in saying that liturgy is systematic?

There are no surprises, so you can just pray—once you learn the liturgy.

3.4 Signs in the liturgy

3.4.1 What is the language, other than English, Spanish, and Latin, used in the Mass?

A language of signs.

3.4.2 What do we mean by a language of signs?

Each action in the liturgy has a spiritual meaning (it's a sacramental).

3.4.3 What's the risk of not understanding the language of signs?

1. We'll miss half of what's happening at Mass and become bored.
2. The Mass won't change our lives. If the Mass isn't changing our lives, we're missing something.

3.4.4 How is Christ present in the liturgy?

1. In the people at prayer.
2. In the Scriptures proclaimed.
3. In the person of the priest.
4. In the sacraments themselves (e.g. baptism within Mass).
5. Above all, in the Eucharist.

3.4.5 What distinguishes Christian liturgy from Jewish liturgy?

- Jewish liturgy merely recalls a saving event.
- Only the power of the Resurrection can make us holy.
- "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4).

3.4.6 What 3 mysteries come together in every liturgy?

1. The physical signs of the liturgy.
2. The saving event of Jesus' life.
3. The power of the Resurrection: God's grace to transform our lives.

3.4.7 What are the two kinds of grace?

1. Sanctifying grace
2. Actual grace

3.4.8 What is sanctifying grace?

The indwelling of God in me.

3.4.9 What is actual grace?

God's help to do a particular good act.

3.4.10 What are some examples of actual grace?

- The grace to do your work well.
- The grace to be patient with people who aggravate us.
- The grace to be respectful to others and not to gossip.
- The grace to be honest.
- The grace to do any good action.

4 The Source of the Liturgy

4.1 What is the whole aim of the spiritual life?

To live in intimate and unceasing union with the Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (and with Mary).

4.1.1 What is one daily practice that helps me be more aware of how God is moving in my life?

The examen prayer.

4.1.2 What is the examen prayer?

- A prayer in which we look at how God has blessed us in the last 24 hours and in which we consider our response to grace.
- St. Ignatius of Loyola said that it is the most crucial element of your personal prayer life.

4.1.3 What acronym can I use to remember the examen prayer?

PATREM (*father* in Latin).

4.1.4 What are the steps of the examen prayer?

- **Presence of God:** Recognize God is present to me in this prayer: It is God who moves first in prayer—my prayer to Him is my response (CCC 2567). He has earnestly waited through all eternity to encounter me in this time of prayer. He has pursued me this day and my whole life with His grace. It will be His Spirit who prays in me. I rely on His mercy and not myself even to be able to pray.
- **Ask for light:** Ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to recall His blessings and my response. Spend time asking if you get stuck on the next steps.

- **Thanksgiving for blessings:** Consider concrete examples of God’s recent blessings. Especially trials, which we often overlook. This helps us develop an attitude of gratitude, the key to happiness. Recall He loves me more than I love myself.
- **Response:** Recognize my response to God’s blessings—both in virtue and in vice. See my sins not as a laundry list but as offenses in a relationship with the God whose love I have just recognized.
- **Embrace:** Embrace Jesus and receive His forgiveness. Let Him reveal your identity as a beloved child of God. Speak to God what’s on your heart, and listen what He wants to say to you.
- **Moving Forward:** Make concrete resolutions and keep them.
- **Journal:** Write down anything that sticks out so you can see patterns in how God is moving over weeks and months.

4.2 What is the central reality we encounter in the liturgy?

The Blessed Trinity.

4.3 How did God most fully reveal Himself?

In the person of Jesus.

4.4 What are the principal mysteries of Jesus we experience at Mass?

1. The Incarnation
2. The Epiphany
3. The Cross
4. The Resurrection
5. The Ascension
6. Pentecost
7. The Transfiguration

4.4.1 What is the significance of the Incarnation?

- The world receives the Savior it has desired since the Fall.
- Jesus gives himself to us when Mary says “yes.”
- Jesus works with human hands.
- Jesus loves with a human heart.
- Jesus resists temptation.
- Jesus experiences our suffering.

4.4.2 What are some examples of how we see the Incarnation in the liturgy?

- In choosing to come to Mass, we give our “yes” to God.

- In the Creed, we give our “yes” to God.
- Jesus becomes sacramentally present to us in the Eucharist.

4.4.3 How does the Incarnation affect daily life?

- We accept God’s will by saying “yes” with Mary.
- God meets us and “takes flesh” in ordinary situations (e.g. while doing work).

4.4.4 What is the significance of the Epiphany?

God manifests himself to us (e.g. appearance to the Magi, his whole public life).

4.4.5 What are some examples of how we see the Epiphany in the liturgy?

- Jesus reveals himself to us in the Scriptures.
- In the homily, we see the connection between the Scriptures and daily life.

4.4.6 How does the Epiphany affect daily life?

- We constantly encounter Jesus in the present moment.
- All events of life are seen in the light of the Gospel.

4.4.7 What is the significance of the Cross?

- Jesus loves us by dying for us.
- Jesus takes on our sin, suffering, and death.

4.4.8 What are some examples of how we see the Cross in the liturgy?

- In the Eucharistic Prayer, we are spiritually present at Calvary to witness Jesus’ death.
- God meets his people in their sufferings throughout the Scriptures.

4.4.9 How does the Cross affect daily life?

- We see the impact of our sins on Jesus.
- We encounter Jesus in our suffering.
- We can embrace our suffering as Jesus did.
- Our suffering, united to Jesus’ Cross, is an act of love for God and others.

4.4.10 What is the significance of the Resurrection?

- Jesus gives us new life.
- Jesus gives purpose to our suffering.
- Jesus overcomes our sin.
- Jesus heals our wounds.
- Jesus destroys our death.

4.4.11 What are some examples of how we see the Resurrection in the liturgy?

- We witness Jesus rising from the dead in the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Jesus brings us new life in the Scriptures proclaimed.

4.4.12 How does the Resurrection affect daily life?

- Jesus gives us the power to overcome our sin.
- Jesus gives us the power to love others as he has loved us.
- Jesus heals our fear of death.
- Jesus heals our wounds.
- Jesus makes it possible to suffer as an act of love.

4.4.13 What is the significance of the Ascension?

- Jesus moves us to offer everything to the Father.
- Jesus makes us more like God.
- Since Jesus is no longer present in his physical body, we now meet him in the sacraments.
- We participate in the heavenly liturgy.

4.4.14 What are some examples of how we see the Ascension in the liturgy?

- Jesus offers Himself to the Father.
- We offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father.
- “Lift up your hearts”: we enter into the heavenly liturgy.

4.4.15 How does the Ascension affect daily life?

- All our work becomes an offering to the Father.
- Jesus moves us to be holy in daily life.

4.4.16 What is the significance of Pentecost?

- The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church.
- The Church manifests God to the world.
- The Church quenches the world’s thirst for God.
- The Church sanctifies the world.

4.4.17 What are some examples of how we see Pentecost in the liturgy?

- God dwells in us in receiving Holy Communion.
- We are sent out at the end of Mass.

4.4.18 How does Pentecost affect daily life?

- The Holy Spirit empowers us to know God intimately.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to overcome sin.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to surrender to God.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to sanctify the world.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to love the people around us.

4.4.19 What is the significance of the Transfiguration?

- Jesus reveals to us his glory.
- Jesus draws us to communion with himself.

4.4.20 What are some examples of how we see the Transfiguration in the liturgy?

- Clouds of incense remind us of the clouds of heaven and God's heavenly glory.
- The Scriptures reveal God's glory.

4.4.21 How does the Transfiguration affect daily life?

- We better recognize God's presence in the present moment.
- We are strengthened to recognize God in our suffering.
- Jesus' glory encourages us to strive to be holy.

5 What is the purpose of going to Mass?

1. The worship of God
2. The sanctification of man

5.1 Why isn't receiving Holy Communion the reason we go to Mass?

- Not everyone can receive Holy Communion at Mass (e.g. people in mortal sin), but they're still obligated to go.
- You can receive Holy Communion outside of Mass (e.g. if you're in a hospital).

5.2 Why isn't being in community with other Christians the reason we go to Mass?

- You can find community in other avenues.
- Even if the community is lacking at a parish, you're still obligated to go to Mass.

5.3 Why isn't listening to good preaching the reason we go to Mass?

No one guaranteed that Catholic preaching would be good, but you're still obligated to go to Mass.

5.4 Why isn't listening to the readings the reason we go to Mass?

- Even if the only Mass you can attend is in a language you don't understand, you're still obligated to go to Mass.
- You can read the readings by yourself at home.

6 What is expected of me during during Mass?

Full and active participation.

6.1 What is meant by full and active participation?

- Say the Mass responses and sing the songs.
- Understand what's happening in the sanctuary.
- Unite my spirit to what's happening in the sanctuary.

6.2 How do I unite my spirit to what's happening in the sanctuary?

Each action has a meaning. Learn it, and pray accordingly.

7 What are the 4 parts of the Mass?

1. Introductory Rites
2. Liturgy of the Word
3. Liturgy of the Eucharist
4. Concluding Rites

8 Introductory Rites

8.1 What are the parts of the Introductory Rites?

1. Sign of the Cross
2. Greeting
3. Penitential act
4. Gloria
5. Collect (opening prayer)

8.2 Sign of the Cross

8.2.1 What's the significance of the Sign of the Cross?

- It summarizes the whole history of salvation.
- It recalls our baptism.
- It recalls the Blessed Trinity whom we are about to encounter.

8.2.2 How do I pray the Sign of the Cross?

- I recall the presence of God and the mystery of salvation.
- I recall my baptism and my identity as God's son/daughter.

8.3 Greeting

8.3.1 What's the significance of the Greeting?

The priest greets the people in his sacramental role of acting in the person of Christ, the Head of his Body.

8.3.2 What is meant by the phrase "And with your spirit"?

The people call out to the deepest part of the priest where he was ordained to lead the Church in prayer in the person of Christ, the Head of his Body.

8.3.3 How do I pray the Greeting?

Recognize the presence of God in the person of the priest.

8.4 Penitential Act

8.4.1 What are the most common versions of the Penitential Act?

- "I confess to almighty God..."
- "Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy."

8.4.2 What's the significance of the Penitential Act?

In the presence of God, I'm aware of my sin.

8.4.3 How do I pray the Penitential Act?

- I recall my sins.
- I strive to be sorry for them.
- I ask God for grace to sin no more.

8.5 Gloria

8.5.1 What are the opening words of the Gloria?

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will.”

8.5.2 What’s the significance of the Gloria?

After I acknowledge my sins, I praise God for his goodness.

8.5.3 How do I pray the Gloria?

Praise God for the ways he’s moving in your life, even if it’s amidst suffering.

8.6 Collect

8.6.1 What does the priest say right before the Collect?

“Let us pray.”

8.6.2 What is the significance of the collect?

It collects all the movements of prayer so far and focuses us towards what God is about to do.

8.6.3 How do I pray the Collect?

- Pay attention to what the priest is recalling about what God has done.
- Pay attention to what the priest is asking for us from God.
- Ask for the same grace from God.

9 Liturgy of the Word

9.1 What are the parts of the Liturgy of the Word?

1. First Reading
2. Psalm
3. Second Reading
4. Gospel Acclamation
5. Gospel
6. Homily
7. Creed
8. Universal Prayer

9.2 What is the purpose of the Liturgy of the Word?

To prepare our hearts to offer ourselves to God and receive God in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

9.3 First Reading

9.3.1 From where is the First Reading usually taken?

The Old Testament.

9.3.2 What is the significance of the First Reading?

Events of salvation history become present to us.

9.3.3 How do I pray the First Reading?

I experience the drama of God saving his people in salvation history, and I see him also saving me in my life.

9.4 Psalm

9.5 From where is the Psalm taken usually?

The Book of Psalms.

9.5.1 What is the significance of the Psalm?

The people of God respond to God's saving action.

9.5.2 How do I pray the Psalm?

I strive to identify with the psalmist's feelings so I can use the words of the psalm to communicate my heart to God.

9.6 Second Reading

9.6.1 From where is the Second Reading taken?

An epistle (i.e. letter) of the New Testament.

9.6.2 What is the significance of the Second Reading?

The people of God are drawing out the consequences of the Gospel for our lives.

9.6.3 How do I pray the Second Reading?

I let the epistle challenge me and ponder the mystery of the gospel in the lives of Christians.

9.7 Gospel

9.7.1 What are the four books from which the Gospel can be taken?

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

9.7.2 What is the significance of the Gospel?

Christ himself makes himself present to us and speaks to us.

9.7.3 How do I pray the Gospel?

I experience it as an encounter with Jesus just as it was for the people Jesus encounters in the story.

9.8 Homily

9.8.1 What is the point of the Homily?

- It explains the readings, the liturgical celebration, the saint of the day, or the liturgical texts.
- It encourages us to live the Christian life.

9.8.2 How do I pray the Homily?

Let the homilist challenge me and ponder the significance of what's proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word for my life.

9.9 Creed

9.9.1 What is the significance of the Creed?

Having heard the proclamation in the readings and homily, we give our assent to living the Christian life.

9.9.2 How do I pray the Creed?

- I say the words.
- I bow at the mention of the Incarnation out of reverence and awe for that event.
- I re-commit my life to God.
- I recall the triumph of the Church in proclaiming these truths of the faith which caused so much controversy throughout history.

9.10 Universal Prayer

9.11 What is the typical response to the Universal Prayer?

Lord, hear our prayer.

9.11.1 What's the significance of the Universal Prayer?

- We ask God for things so we can better live the Christian life.
- We exercise our royal priesthood in praying for the world.

9.11.2 How do I pray the Universal Prayer?

- I pray for all those intentions which are asked.
- I ask God for what I need.

10 Liturgy of the Eucharist

10.1 Broadly, what are the parts of the Liturgy of the Eucharist?

1. Preparation of the Gifts
2. Eucharistic Prayer
3. Communion Rite

10.2 How does the Liturgy of the Eucharist respond to the Liturgy of the Word?

We asked God for things in the Universal Prayer. God's primary answer is giving his Son in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

10.3 Preparation of the Gifts

10.3.1 What is the significance of the Preparation of the Gifts?

- We offer to God the fruit of our work (money, bread, and wine).
- We offer to God our whole lives.

10.3.2 How do I pray the Preparation of the Gifts?

I put my life on the altar to offer it to God.

10.3.3 What is the primary function of a priest?

To offer sacrifice.

10.3.4 What is a priestly sacrifice?

- The offering of a victim to God by a priest in which the victim dies.
- It acknowledges that God is the creator of all in that He is worth more than the sacrifice just offered.

10.3.5 What is the ordained priesthood?

- The priesthood requiring ordination by a bishop.
- It gives the priest the power to consecrate the Eucharist and to absolve sins.

10.3.6 How do ordained priests offer sacrifice?

An ordained priest primarily offers the sacrifice of the Mass on an altar in a church.

10.3.7 What is the royal priesthood?

- The priesthood of all the baptized.
- Through baptism, we share in Jesus being priest, prophet, and king.
- It differs in degree and kind from the ordained priesthood.

10.3.8 How do members of the royal priesthood offer sacrifice?

- The baptized primarily offer the sacrifice of their work on the altar of their desks (or wherever it is that they do their work).
- In the Mass, the baptized exercise their royal priesthood by offering their lives on the altar in union with the priest.

10.3.9 In what sense is the Mass a sacrifice?

- Through the priest, Jesus offers the sacrifice of himself to the Father on the Cross.
- That one sacrifice of Calvary becomes spiritually present to us.
- Jesus dies so we don't have to go to hell because of our sin.

10.3.10 In what sense do I die on the altar?

- I die to my own will.
- I die to my sin.
- I offer to God all that I am and have to be used as God asks.

10.4 Eucharistic Prayer

10.4.1 What is the significance of the Eucharistic Prayer?

The priest calls the Holy Spirit down on the bread and wine to turn them into Jesus.

10.4.2 What is transubstantiation?

The changing of the bread and the wine into Jesus' own Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—even though it still has the appearance of bread and wine.

10.4.3 What is the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist?

- While God is present in many ways, only in the Eucharist can we say that this *is* Jesus Christ.
- He remains in all the tabernacles of the world to be with us sacramentally.

10.4.4 Do the bread and wine physically change during the consecration?

The appearances of bread and wine remain, but what the bread and wine *are* is Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

10.4.5 What is a Eucharistic miracle?

Through a miracle, sometimes the physical appearances of the Eucharist physically change into human flesh and blood.

10.4.6 What is the epiclesis?

- The calling down of the Holy Spirit on the gifts of bread and wine.
- The priest extends his hands over the gifts.
- One version of the words: "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall."

10.4.7 What is the consecration?

- The liturgical action in which transubstantiation occurs.
- "This is my body."
- "This is my blood."

10.4.8 What is the doxology in the Mass?

- Praising God for his gifts (in Mass, for the Eucharist).
- "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever."

10.4.9 How do I pray the Eucharistic Prayer?

I unite myself to Jesus' gift of himself to the Father.

10.5 Communion Rite

10.5.1 What is the significance of the Communion Rite?

Jesus sacramentally offers himself to us in the Eucharist.

10.5.2 How do I pray the Communion Rite?

I ask that God transform me so I can more fully act as part of the mystical Body of Christ.

11 Concluding Rites

11.1 What are the parts of the Concluding Rites?

1. Blessing
2. Dismissal

11.2 Blessing

11.2.1 What is the significance of the Blessing?

The priest invokes the Sign of the Cross on the people and blesses us in God's name.

11.2.2 How do I pray the Blessing?

I strive to feel the effects of God encouraging and blessing me.

11.3 Dismissal

11.3.1 What is the significance of the Dismissal?

God sends us out to share what and whom we have received.

11.3.2 How do I pray the Dismissal?

I renew my commitment to sanctify the world around me.

11.3.3 How do I sanctify the world around me?

- I do my work well, uniting it to the sacrifice of the Mass.
- I love the people around me prudently.
- I explicitly share Jesus with people when there is an opportunity.

11.4 After Mass

11.4.1 What should I do immediately after Mass?

Give thanks to God for the gift of the Mass and of receiving the Eucharist.

11.4.2 What's an example of a prayer of thanksgiving after Mass?

Pierce the depths of my soul, O sweetest Lord Jesus, with the most delightful and most wholesome wound of your love, with true, serene, and most holy apostolic charity, that my soul may always languish and melt with love and longing for you. May it yearn for you and swoon for your courts, and long to be detached and be with you.

Grant that I may hunger for you, the bread of angels, the refreshing food of holy souls, our daily, life-sustaining bread, containing all sweetness and relish, and all delicate delight.

May I always hunger for you and feed on you—you on whom the angels desire to gaze. May the depths of my soul be filled with the sweetness of your taste.

May my heart always thirst for you, the flowing source of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the gushing stream of pleasure, the abundance of the house of God.

May my heart always desire you, seek you and find you. May I run to you and reach you; meditate on you, speak of you and do all things to the praise and glory of your name, with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with ease and affection, and with perseverance until the end.

May you always be my only hope, my complete assurance, my wealth, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest and tranquility, my peace, my delicacy, my fragrance, my sweetness, my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help, my wisdom, my inheritance, my possession and my treasure—in you, may my mind and heart be fixed and fastened and immovably rooted now and always. Amen. (Prayer by St. Bonaventure)

12 Signs used in the liturgy

12.1 What does the altar mean?

- The original symbol of Christ (even before the tabernacle).
- The place where the saving mysteries occur.

12.2 What does incense mean?

- It is the rising of the prayers of the saints to God.
- It is the sweetness of the fragrance of Christ.
- It reminds us that we are in heaven.

12.3 What does the use of incense mean?

- It reverences things (e.g. the Book of the Gospels).
- It prepares gifts for sacrifice (including the people).

12.4 What do candles mean?

- It's a sign of the presence of God.
- It's a sign of Christ himself.
- It's a sign of the heavenly kingdom.
- It's a sign of our life in Christ.

12.5 What does the crucifix mean?

The mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

12.6 What is the significance of the gathering of the people?

- God gathered these people.
- It's a sign of the heavenly assembly.

12.7 What's the significance of the priest?

He acts in the person of Christ the Head.

12.8 What's the significance of bread and wine?

- It is the fruit of our labor.
- It implies all of creation by what it takes to produce them.

12.9 What's the significance of the paschal candle?

It's a sign of Christ's definitive triumph over sin and death.

12.10 What's the significance of collecting money?

- Money is the fruit of our work.
- We offer our work (and spiritually, our whole lives) to God.

12.11 What does standing mean?

- It's a sign of attention (e.g. when reading the Gospel).
- It's the prayer of the risen Christ.

12.12 What does kneeling mean?

- It indicates the prayer of the sinner before God.
- It is an act of reverence.

12.13 What does sitting mean?

- It's the position of the student.
- We are relieved of the burden of standing so we can be more attentive in listening.

12.14 What does genuflecting mean?

- It is an act of deep reverence.
- It is done on the right knee because most people are right handed, so you are putting yourself in a place of great vulnerability before God: in a medieval context, a king could slay a soldier who genuflects to him.

12.15 What does striking the breast mean?

- It's an act of humility.
- It "shakes up" our interior life as a kind of wake-up call.

12.16 What does the priest lifting up his hands mean?

- It's known as the *orans* position, the position of the Christ the priest at prayer.
- It comes from Exodus 17, where Moses raising up his hands over the Israelites fighting the Amalekites: the outcome of the battle depended on whether Moses' hands were raised.

12.17 Why do we bow at the mention of the Incarnation in the Creed?

It's an act of reverence to the mystery of the Incarnation.

12.18 Why are the altar and the Book of the Gospels kissed?

- It's an act of reverence.
- The minister is expressing love for the thing kissed:
 - Kissing the altar is essentially kissing (1) Jesus and (2) the Cross and embracing the mystery of suffering in union with Christ.
 - Kissing the Book of the Gospels is an act of reverence for the words which save us.

12.19 What is the significance of formal processions?

- It borrows from military culture: it's a triumphant act (we process in with the crucifix as a mockery of the enemies of Christians who thought that Jesus would die—we now boast in the Cross).
- The entrance procession is a formal movement in from the ordinary to the sacred.

- The Gospel procession is a movement from heaven to earth (like Moses coming down Mount Sinai with the 10 commandments).

12.20 Amice

12.20.1 What is the amice?

- A cloth that goes around the neck and shoulders.
- When it is put on, it is first put around the head before settling it around the neck and shoulders.
- It covers the priest's collar.

12.20.2 What does the amice mean?

It is a kind of spiritual helmet.

12.20.3 What is the prayer the priest prays as he puts on the amice?

“Lord, set the helmet of salvation on my head to fend off all the assaults of the devil.”

12.21 Alb

12.21.1 What is the alb and the surplice?

- The alb is a white garment covering the whole person from the neck down.
- The surplice is a smaller version of an alb which is worn on top of a cassock.

12.21.2 What does the alb and the surplice mean?

It's a sign of the innocence and the white garment we were given at baptism.

12.21.3 What is the prayer the priest prays as he puts on the alb?

“Purify me, Lord, and cleanse my heart so that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal bliss.”

12.22 Cinture

12.22.1 What is the cinture?

It is a rope belt that goes around the alb and also holds the stole in place.

12.22.2 What does the cinture mean?

It is a kind of armor against disordered desires within the one wearing it.

12.22.3 What is the prayer the priest prays as he puts on the cincture?

“Lord, gird me with the cincture of purity and extinguish my fleshly desires, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide within me.”

12.22.4 What is continence?

Willingly embracing celibacy, that is, the state of giving up marriage for the sake of the kingdom of God.

12.23 Stole

12.23.1 What is the stole?

- A thin fabric hanging from the priest’s neck (or across the torso of the deacon).
- It matches the liturgical color of the day.

12.23.2 What does the stole mean?

It is a sign of the authority and sacred power of the priest.

12.23.3 What is the prayer the priest prays as he puts on the stole?

“Lord, restore the stole of immortality, which I lost through the collusion of our first parents, and, unworthy as I am to approach Thy sacred mysteries, may I yet gain eternal joy.”

12.24 Chasuble

12.24.1 What is the chasuble?

- It is the outermost garment of the priest.
- It matches the liturgical color of the day.

12.24.2 What does the chasuble mean?

It is a sign of the responsibility entrusted to the priest which he carries with Jesus.

12.24.3 What is the prayer the priest prays as he puts on the chasuble?

“O Lord, who has said, *My yoke is sweet and My burden light*, grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy grace.”

13 How can I prepare for Mass?

- Read the readings (<https://usccb.org/bible/readings>).
- Fast an hour before communion.
- Wear nice clothes.

- Get to Mass early.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Go to confession.
- Actively participate.
- Be honest with God about what's going on in life, and offer that to Him.

13.1 What's an example of a prayer to prepare me for Mass?

Lord, Jesus Christ, I approach your banquet table in fear and trembling, for I am a sinner, and dare not rely on my own worth but only on your goodness and mercy.

I am defiled by many sins in body and soul, and by my unguarded thoughts and words.

Gracious God of majesty and awe, I seek your protection, I look for your healing, poor troubled sinner that I am, I appeal to you, the fountain of all mercy.

I cannot bear your judgment, but I trust in your salvation.

Lord, I show my wounds to you and uncover my shame before you.

I know my sins are many and great, and they fill me with fear, but I hope in your mercies, for they cannot be numbered.

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and man, crucified for mankind, look upon me with mercy and hear my prayer, for I trust in you.

Have mercy on me, full of sorrow and sin, for the depth of your compassion never ends.

Praise to you, saving sacrifice, offered on the wood of the cross for me and for all mankind.

Praise to the noble and precious blood, flowing from the wounds of my crucified Lord Jesus Christ and washing away the sins of the whole world.

Remember, Lord, your creature, whom you have redeemed with your blood.

I repent of my sins, and I long to put right what I have done.

Merciful Father, take away all my offenses and sins; purify me in body and soul, and make me worthy to taste the holy of holies.

May your body and blood, which I intend to receive, although I am unworthy, be for me the remission of my sins, the washing away of my guilt, the end of my evil thoughts, and the rebirth of my better instincts.

May it incite me to do the works pleasing to you, be profitable to my health in body and soul, and be a firm defense against the wiles of my enemies. Amen. (St. Ambrose)

14 Sunday obligation

14.1 What are the two kinds of sin?

- Mortal sin: serious sin that spiritually kills us.
- Venial sin: less serious sin.

14.1.1 What are the conditions for an act to be a mortal sin?

1. Grave matter (it's serious).
2. Sufficient knowledge (you know it's wrong).
3. Sufficient consent of the will (you willingly do it anyway).

14.1.2 How serious is missing Mass?

Missing Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a mortal sin.

14.2 Why must we go to Mass?

- <https://bit.ly/why-go-to-mass>
- The worship of God and the sanctification of man.
- Jesus, through His Church, has asked us to be with Him as He is dying for us.

14.2.1 Does livestreaming Mass satisfy our obligation?

No.

14.2.2 Why does livestreaming not fulfill our obligation to attend Mass?

- Sacraments (and sacramentals) involve real physical things.
- You are both a soul and a body, so what you do with your body matters.
- Being in the same physical space as the liturgy matters.

14.2.3 Where will a person go who dies in mortal sin?

Hell.

14.3 How can I get back into a state of grace?

- Go to confession.
- In danger of death, resolve to go to confession as soon as possible and then make a perfect act of contrition.

14.3.1 What is a perfect act of contrition?

Being sorry for your sins out of love of God rather than fear of hell.

14.4 How has Jesus encouraged us through St. Faustina's Diary to trust in Divine Mercy?

“Write, speak of My mercy. Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy [i.e., the Sacrament of Confession]. There the greatest miracles take place [and] are incessantly repeated... Were a soul like a decaying

corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no [hope of] restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full” (*Diary*, 1448).

“Daughter, when you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul and ennobles it. Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy. Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity” (*Diary*, 1602).

“My daughter, just as you prepare in My presence, so also you make your confession before Me. The person of the priest is, for Me, only a screen. Never analyze what sort of a priest it is that I am making use of; open your soul in confession as you would to Me, and I will fill it with My light” (*Diary*, 1725).

15 What happens when I pray the Mass well?

- The celebration of the Eucharist becomes the source and summit of the Christian life (CCC 1324).
- My life is transformed by the Mass, and I make all of my life an offering at the next Mass.