

Session 3



WALK THROUGH
THE MASS
EXPLORING THE SACRED LITURGY

WALK THROUGH THE MASS

Exploring the Sacred Liturgy

INTRODUCTION

One of the things that makes the Roman Catholic Mass unique is that no matter where in the world you go, the Mass will be the same. Of course, the language may be different and so may the music and decorations, but the essence will be the same from Australia to Zimbabwe. Every Mass will have the Scripture readings and the Consecration of the Bread and Wine. It's one reason why it is "Catholic"—the very word means "universal," and the Mass is indeed universal.

The sacred rites that make up the Mass come to us directly from the days of the Apostles. In Acts and the Epistles we read how believers gathered on the Lord's Day to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Readings from Scripture, a homily, prayers of petition, and offering of bread and wine were key aspects of the Mass then, just as they are today.

In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we participate in the one sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary. In order to understand what is happening, in this session we will look at how the Mass is constructed and what happens in the two major parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We will see how, when we participate in Mass, we truly enter into the most profound union possible with God.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How the Mass we celebrate today links back to apostolic times**
- **The four main sections of the Mass**
- **How we encounter God in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist**
- **What we can do to "get more" out of every Mass**
- **Why we must attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation**



OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
 behold I come to the Sacrament
 of thine only-begotten Son,
 our Lord Jesus Christ:

I come as one infirm to the physician of life,
 as one unclean to the fountain of mercy,
 as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness,
 as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.
 Therefore I implore the abundance of thy measureless bounty
 that thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my infirmity,

wash my uncleanness,
 enlighten my blindness,

enrich my poverty

and clothe my nakedness,

that I may receive the Bread of Angels,
 the King of kings, the Lord of lords,

with such reverence and humility,

with such sorrow and devotion,

with such purity and faith,

with such purpose and intention as may be profitable to my soul's salvation.

Amen. — From the Prayer Before Mass by St. Thomas Aquinas

*"The celebration of Holy
 Mass is as valuable as
 the death of Jesus on the
 cross."*

—St. Thomas Aquinas



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some examples of words in the Mass that come directly from Scripture? What are some examples that come from the earliest days of the Church?
2. In the video presentation, we learned that in the Mass, Christ's sacrifice is made present. In what ways are we called to unite our lives to Christ's sacrifice made present in the Mass?

CALL TO CONVERSION

After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:



#1 Do I come to Mass to receive or to give? What am I doing to prepare my soul for Mass?

#2 In the video, we learned some ways to “get more out of the Mass,” including praying in the car on the way to church, listening for a specific point or prayer that particularly touches us, and remaining for a few minutes after Mass to give thanks. What is one thing that you could do this week to prepare for Mass?

#3 Reflect on the following quote from St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina:

“It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass.”

Prayerfully consider how St. Padre Pio’s statement expresses the importance of the Mass. How does this change the way you view the “obligation” to attend Mass? How can you more completely give yourself to Jesus at each Mass?



CLOSING PRAYER

I give thanks to thee, O Lord,
most holy, Father almighty, eternal God,
that thou hast vouchsafed,
for no merit of mine own,
but out of thy pure mercy,
to appease the hunger
of my soul with the precious
body and blood of thy Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ.
Humbly I implore thee,
let not this Holy Communion
be to me an increase of guilt
unto my punishment,
but an availing plea unto pardon
and salvation.

Amen.

— From the Prayer After Mass

by St. Thomas Aquinas



SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:



"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." —John 6:53

DO YOU WANT TO FURTHER EXPLORE THE MASS?

Visit www.SymbolonCatholic.org

To help answer your questions and enrich your faith, visit our website to discover additional online resources from throughout the Catholic world.

For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about the Mass, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *The Structure of the Mass: CCC 1346*
- *Introductory Rites: CCC 1348*
- *The Liturgy of the Word: CCC 1349*
- *The Offertory: CCC 1350*
- *The Liturgy of the Eucharist: CCC 1351-1353*

Other Resources:

- *The United States Catechism for Adults Chapter 14*
- *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass: Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy* by Dr. Edward Sri
- *The Mass: The Glory, the Mystery, the Tradition* by Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina
- *The Mass of the Early Christians* by Mike Aquilina
- *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* by Scott Hahn