



HOLY FAMILY PARISH

Teaching Masses: Encountering Jesus Christ & Participating in Eucharistic Worship

**The Liturgy of the Word
April 18th and 19th, 2026**

The Meaning, Structure and Importance of the Mass

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist Teaching Masses will be held on
May 16th and 17th, 2026**

My brothers and sisters of Holy Family Parish,

This outline provides teaching points drawn from the liturgical documents of the Church, from the wisdom of Church leaders, and from the witness of the saints. Together, these sources form a strong foundation for liturgical catechesis as we enter into these weekends dedicated to learning more about the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. It is my personal hope that by offering formation in the area of Christian worship – especially centered on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass – we will foster deeper growth among our parishioners both spiritually and intellectually. These presentations are also offered with the hope of strengthening participation in the liturgical life of our parish.

This Sunday, we will begin by focusing on the Liturgy of the Word, exploring its meaning, structure, and importance within the Mass. At a later date, we will turn our attention to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, deepening our understanding of this sacred mystery and sacrament. Looking ahead, we are also planning a Liturgical Summit in the early summer, which will serve as a broader opportunity for reflection, formation, and renewal in our parish's life.

Within our parish's pastoral strategic vision, we remain committed to four central values: "A Welcoming Home," "Encounters with Jesus," "Eucharistic Worship," and "Inspiring Saints." These priorities are seen not only within this studying of the Church's liturgical life which we participate in weekly, but they also resonate strongly with our Bishop's recent pastoral letter, *"A Flourishing Apostolic Church,"* which calls us to renewed focus on Worship, Evangelization, and Service. In light of these guiding principles, it is my pastoral desire to proactively cultivate a renewed liturgical awareness – one that engages the mind, heart, and lived practice of our faith. Through these parish-wide efforts, we hope to bear fruit in a deeper understanding of the liturgy and a more authentic participation in the Church's worship.

At the heart of this effort is also a desire to foster a spirit of evangelization and clear communication of Church teaching. In a time marked by increasing relativism and secularism, as well as an increase in those inquiring about the Catholic Faith, it is essential that we are well-formed in our faith and can testify about it. By seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we hope to deepen knowledge and understanding among our parishioners, forming disciples who are not only faithful participants but also confident witnesses and evangelizers.

I invite you both now and in the time ahead to seek and learn more about the Church's ways of worship that have been revealed in Scripture, practiced throughout both Jewish and Christian times, modeled by the apostles and early Church, and offer to us still today a great participation into the life of the Trinity.

Peace and Goodness,

Fr. Michael

Outline of Teaching Material & References - Liturgy of the Word

I. ¹Introductory Rites and General Introduction

1. General

- a) Entrance and Hymn, Greeting, Penitential Act, Glory to God, Collect
- b) Liturgy of the Word: First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel Acclamation, Gospel, Homily, Profession of Faith/Creed, Universal Prayer or Petitions
- c) *The purpose (of the Introductory Rites) is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.*²

2. Entrance

- a) The Mass begins with the entrance chant/song. The celebrant and other ministers enter in procession and reverence the altar with a bow and a kiss. The altar is a symbol of Christ at the heart of the assembly and so deserves this special reverence. All make the Sign of the Cross and the celebrant extends a greeting to the gathered people in words taken from Scripture.
- b) *When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins. Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers.*³
- c) See also in Matthew 28, how the Lord Jesus directs His apostles to baptize and minister "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

3. Sign of the Cross and Greeting

- a) *When the Entrance Chant is concluded, the Priest stands at the chair and, together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of the Cross. Then by means of the Greeting he signifies the presence of the Lord to the assembled community. By this greeting and the people's response, the mystery of the Church gathered together is made manifest. After the greeting of the people, the Priest, or the Deacon, or a lay minister may very briefly introduce the faithful to the Mass of the day.*⁴
- b) See the various greetings of St. Paul to his communities; for example: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...to the holy ones who are in Ephesus...grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" - Ephesians 1:1-2

4. Penitential Act & Gloria

- a) The Penitential Act follows the greeting. At the very beginning of the Mass, the faithful recall their sins and place their trust in God's abiding mercy. The Penitential Act includes the *Kyrie Eleison*, a Greek phrase meaning, "Lord, have mercy." This litany recalls God's merciful actions throughout history. On Sundays, especially in Easter Time, in place of the customary Penitential Act, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.
- b) Numerous moments of Scripture include the invitation or modeling of confessing one's sins, or seeking God's mercy in a penitential way.
- c) Glory to God/Gloria
 - i) On Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, the *Gloria* follows the Penitential Act. The *Gloria* begins by echoing the proclamation of the angels at the birth of Christ: "Glory to God in the highest!" In this ancient hymn, the gathered assembly joins the heavenly choirs in offering praise and adoration to the Father and Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

¹ <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>

² General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 46

³ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 47

⁴ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 50

- ii) See the descriptions of the “heavenly court” in the Book of Revelation, who are praising God unceasingly in humble adoration; “Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things; because of your will they came to be and were created.” - Revelation 4:11 Or, see Luke 2:14 and the words of the angels upon Christ’s birth: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”

5. Collect

- a) The Introductory Rites conclude with an opening prayer, called the Collect. The celebrant invites the gathered assembly to pray and, after a brief silence, proclaims the prayer of the day. The Collect gathers the prayers of all into one and disposes all to hear the Word of God in the context of the celebration.
- b) *Next the Priest calls upon the people to pray and everybody, together with the Priest, observes a brief silence so that they may become aware of being in God’s presence and may call to mind their intentions. Then the Priest pronounces the prayer usually called the “Collect” and through which the character of the celebration finds expression. By an ancient tradition of the Church, the Collect prayer is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and is concluded with a Trinitarian ending, or longer ending...⁵*

II. Liturgy of the Word

1. General

- a) *The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. As for the Homily, the Profession of Faith, and the Universal Prayer, they develop and conclude it. For in the readings, as explained by the Homily, God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present through his word in the midst of the faithful...By silence and by singing, the people make this divine word their own, and affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith; finally, having been nourished by the divine word, the people pour out their petitions by means of the Universal Prayer for the needs of the whole Church and for the salvation of the whole world...In the readings, the table of God’s Word is spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to them...It is preferable that the arrangement of the biblical readings be maintained, for by them the unity of both Testaments and of salvation history is brought out...The reading of the Gospel constitutes the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches the great reverence that is to be shown to this reading by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honor...⁶*
- b) The Lectionary Cycle of the Church demonstrates how the Life of Christ (Paschal Mystery) is apparent in the course of the liturgical year. The Lectionary is arranged in two cycles, one for Sundays and one for weekdays.

(1) The Sunday cycle is divided into three years, labeled A, B, and C. In Year A, we read mostly from the Gospel of Matthew. In Year B, we read the Gospel of Mark and chapter 6 of the Gospel of John. In Year C, we read the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read during the Easter season in all three years. The first reading, usually from the Old Testament, reflects important themes from the Gospel reading. The second reading is usually from one of the epistles, a letter written to an early church community. These letters are read semi-continuously. Each Sunday, we pick up close to where we left off the Sunday before, though some passages are never read.

⁵ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 54

⁶ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 55-60

(2) The weekday cycle is divided into two years, Year I and Year II. Year I is read in odd-numbered years and Year II is used in even-numbered years. The Gospels for both years are the same. During the year, the Gospels are read semi-continuously, beginning with Mark, then moving on to Matthew and Luke. Typically, a single book is read semi-continuously until it is finished and then a new book is started.⁷

c) In considering the Sunday Eucharist...we need to assess how well the word of God is being proclaimed and how effectively the People of God have grown in knowledge and love of Sacred Scripture. There are two aspects of this — that of *celebration* and that of *personal appropriation*...At the level of celebration, the fact that the Council made it possible to proclaim the word of God in the language of the community taking part in the celebration must awaken a new sense of responsibility towards the word, allowing "the distinctive character of the sacred text" to shine forth "even in the mode of reading or singing". At the level of personal appropriation, the hearing of the word of God proclaimed must be well prepared in the souls of the faithful by an apt knowledge of Scripture and, where pastorally possible...If Christian individuals and families are not regularly drawing new life from the reading of the sacred text in a spirit of prayer and docility to the Church's interpretation, then it is difficult for the liturgical proclamation of the word of God alone to produce the fruit we might expect....It should also be borne in mind that *the liturgical proclamation of the word of God*, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, is... *a dialogue between God and his People*, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands of the Covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the task of continual "conversion". The Sunday assembly commits us therefore to an inner renewal of our baptismal promises.⁸

2. First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, and Second Reading

a) In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church feeds the people of God from the table of his Word (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 51). The Scriptures are the word of God, written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures, God speaks to us, leading us along the path to salvation. The Responsorial Psalm is sung between the readings. The psalm helps us to meditate on the word of God.

3. Gospel Acclamation & Gospel

a) The high point of the Liturgy of the Word is the reading of the Gospel. Because the Gospels tell of the life, ministry, and preaching of Christ, it receives several special signs of honor and reverence. The gathered assembly stands to hear the Gospel and it is introduced by an acclamation of praise. Apart from Lent, that acclamation is "Alleluia," derived from a Hebrew phrase meaning "Praise the Lord!" A deacon (or, if no deacon is present, a priest) reads the Gospel.

(1) Gesture of the Sign of the Cross on one's forehead, mouth, and heart/chest.

4. Homily

a) After the Scripture readings, the celebrant preaches the homily. In the homily, the preacher focuses on the Scripture texts or some other texts from the liturgy, drawing from them lessons that may help us to live better lives, more faithful to Christ's call to grow in holiness.

⁷ <https://www.usccb.org/offices/new-american-bible/liturgy>

⁸ St. John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, 41

- b) *The Homily is part of the Liturgy and...is necessary for the nurturing of the Christian life. It should be an explanation of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass of the day and should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.*⁹

5. Profession of Faith/Creed

- a) In many Masses, the Profession of Faith then follows the homily, either the Nicene or Apostles' Creed. The Nicene Creed is a statement of faith dating from the fourth century, while the Apostles' Creed is the ancient baptismal creed of the Church in Rome. If baptismal promises are renewed, from a formula based on the Apostles' Creed, this takes the place of the Creed.
- b) *The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the Homily and that they may also honor and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use and before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist begins.*¹⁰
- c) *“The Creed is how we say to God: We have heard you and we believe you! The Creed is a summary of Scripture. It expresses our faith in God who is a Trinity of Persons that has acted in historical events and is revealed definitively in the person of Jesus. This revelation continues to mature and grow through the Holy Spirit present in the Church. We are proclaiming that we believe all this revelation, not just part of it, and that God offers it to us as an effective testament of his saving and redeeming love for us”*¹¹

6. Universal Prayer/Petitions

- a) The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Universal Prayer, also called the Prayer of the Faithful. The gathered assembly intercedes with God on behalf of the Church, the world, and themselves, entrusting their needs to the faithful and loving God.
- b) *In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal Priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that petitions may be offered for the Holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world...The series of intentions is usually to be: a) for the needs of the Church; b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; d) for the local community. Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion.*¹²

⁹ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 65

¹⁰ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 67

¹¹ <https://nwcatholic.org/voices/daniel-mueggenborg/why-do-we-say-the-creed-at-every-sunday-mass>

¹² General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 69-70