

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
The Mass
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Tonight's topic is on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It's a very important topic. Last week's topic, on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and this week's topic on the Mass, are two of the most important classes of the whole year. If you were not here last week, please get a copy of last week's tape. Please listen to it, because it really is one of the most important, and the most important sacrament, of all seven sacraments, the Eucharist.

I'm sure all of you have been to Mass. You basically know a little bit about what the Mass is. The Mass is the supreme act of adoration, love, and worship of God we have as Catholics. It's called a "sacrifice" because Christ offers Himself to the Father.

If you look at the history and the nature of sacrifice, we see that sacrifice began at the beginning of Creation. Adam and Eve offered sacrifices to God. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. For example, Abel offered a sheep. Cain offered the fruits of the Earth. The idea of sacrifice is to take something that God has given us, and give it back to God (to offer something back to God). In those days, if they had ten lambs, they would take one of them and sacrifice it. That would be like a gift that they would give to God, in thanksgiving for all the blessings that they had received. The idea was tithing, that you give ten percent to God. It's a very biblical idea. The first humans knew that they owed some debt of gratitude to God, so they would make a sacrifice, offering the fruits of the Earth, and dedicating that to God. Sacrifices began in the earliest days of humanity.

We call the Mass the "New Sacrifice" – it's the sacrifice of Christ. We know from Scripture that Christ only died once, and that was on the Cross. Before He died, He said the Last Supper. It says, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'Take this and eat, this is My Body.' Taking a cup, and giving thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it, and He said to them, 'This is My Blood, of the New Covenant, which is being shed for many.'" Christ, at the Last Supper, offered Himself to the Father, under the appearances of bread and wine. We call the Mass the "Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

It is amazing that when we attend Mass, we're made present at the Last Supper, and Calvary. Time and space are pushed aside, and we're really and truly present at the Last Supper, and at the Cross. It is something for us to think about. Remember, Christ only died once. As the Book of Hebrews says, "That Christ offered one sacrifice only." What is the Mass, then? Is it a different sacrifice? Is Christ dying again, and again, and again? The answer is no. Christ

only died once, but the Mass makes Calvary present here and now. It plants the Cross here in Bristow, or in Manassas, or in Tokyo, or in New York, or in Hong Kong. When the Mass is said, Calvary is made present in that location, and the Last Supper is made present.

I'm sure that all of us, if we had the choice, would say, "I would have loved to have been at the Last Supper, when Christ gathered the Apostles around and offered Himself, to be able to receive the Lord." We do have that privilege. We do have that opportunity. Every time we come to Mass, we're at the Last Supper. Every time we attend Mass, we're at Calvary, standing next to the Blessed Mother, Mary Magdalene, and St. John. We're truly present there. Time and space are pushed aside, and the Mass is the re-presentation of Calvary. The Mass makes Calvary present for us.

We are actually more fortunate than the Apostles, and the early Christians, because they could only attend the Last Supper once. We can attend the Last Supper every Sunday, or even every day if we want to. We're more blessed than John, Mary, and Mary Magdalene, because they could only stand at Calvary one time. We can actually stand at the foot of the Cross, the altar, every single day, if we want to.

At the Mass, the priest (who has been ordained by a Bishop, who has been ordained by previous Bishops, all the way back to those Twelve Apostles), offers the sacrifice. In the Mass, Christ is the priest, and the victim. When the priest takes the bread and wine, he doesn't say, "This is the Body of Jesus," or, "This is the Blood of Jesus," he says, "This is My Body. This is the cup of My Blood." It's first person. Christ is present in the ordained priest. The priest disappears, and Christ speaks through the priest, when he says, "This is My Body. This is the cup of My Blood." Christ is the priest. There's only one priest – it's Jesus Christ, but He gives us a share in His priesthood. When I offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ takes over. He uses my voice, or the voice of the priest as His instrument. He speaks those words, "This is My Body. This is the cup of My Blood."

Not only is Christ the priest, He is also the victim. In the Eucharist, He is offered up. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the priest and the victim are always separate. The Old Testament priest would sacrifice a goat or a lamb, and he was distinct from the sacrifice. Whereas in the Mass, it's the same – Christ is the priest, and Christ is the victim being offered. He is the "Lamb of God," who takes away the sins of the world. That's one of the world's most beautiful titles, the "Lamb of God." He is the unblemished Lamb, who offers Himself up to the Father.

In the analogy that I mentioned last week about the Super Bowl game, if you were actually at the Super Bowl game, you would be there sitting in the stands, and you would be present there. Let's say you couldn't attend the Super Bowl

game, but let's say somebody video taped it, and they showed it every Sunday for the next year. You could sit there in your living room, and in a sense, even though you were not physically at the game, the game would be made present for you. You could see the plays, hear the crowd, and see that.

That's like the Mass. The Mass makes Calvary present. When you watch that video tape on a Sunday, that's not a different sacrifice, that's not a different football game; it's the same game. It's the one and only Super Bowl of that event, but it's made present in your living room. That's what the Mass is. The Mass takes Calvary and the Last Supper, and makes them present every single Sunday, even every single day, because we have Mass here every day.

The more you understand about the Mass, the more interesting and exciting it is. The less you understand about the Mass, the more boring it is. For example, if you knew nothing about football, and you were trying to watch this game, it would be very boring to you. If you knew football, it would be very interesting. If you know something personal about the football players, it makes it more interesting. If you see guys just running around on the field, that might not be of as much interest. It's the same thing with opera. You have to bring something to opera in order to appreciate it. You have to bring something to the football game in order to appreciate it. The more you study the plays in football, the more you know the quarterback, and the running back, and know the strategy of the coaches, the more you can appreciate the football game.

It is the same thing with the Mass. The more you read and study about the Mass, the more you appreciate it. It is the same thing with opera – if you studied opera, and good music, and have gone to many operas, every one is different. It is the same thing with the Mass – even though the structure of the Mass stays the same; every Mass is different. There are different prayers, readings, and homilies. If you want to get more out of the Mass, bring more to it.

The first Mass was said by Christ. We call that the Last Supper. The purpose of the Mass is, first of all, to adore God. Secondly, to thank Him. Third, to ask Him for what we need. Fourth, to offer reparation for the sins of the world. The greatest prayer that we can pray is the prayer of the Mass, because it's the prayer of Christ, the perfect prayer. In the Mass, we give God perfect adoration, perfect thanksgiving, perfect petition, and perfect atonement, to make up for the sins of others.

What are some of the fruits and benefits we have by going to Mass? We get grace, which is God's love and God's life, that fills us when we attend Mass. We get the forgiveness of all our venial sins, the smaller sins that we may have. We help to make up for the sins of the past.

What I want to do is go through the parts of the Mass with you. I think the best way to do that is to go through the Missal. Everyone, please get their Missals out.

First of all, we should explain what the word “Mass” means. The word “Mass” comes from an Old English word, deriving originally from a Latin word. The last verse of the Mass was “Ita missa est” (“The Mass has ended. Go forth in peace.”) The Mass comes from the Latin word meaning “the sending forth.” When you attend Mass, you’re gathered together to pray, and worship God, and thank Him, and praise Him, and ask for what you need. But then, you’re sent out from the Mass, to bring the world to Christ, and to bring Christ to the world.

The Mass is the sending forth of the congregation. You will also see the word “Liturgy.” This comes from the Greek word “liturgia,” which means “worship” (the “Sacred Liturgy.”) The Mass has many titles. Sometimes it’s called the “Lord’s Supper.” Sometimes it’s called the “Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.” Sometimes it’s called the “Holy Meal.”

There are many different dimensions to the Mass. It’s not just a meal. It’s not just a sacrifice. It’s both the sacrifice of Christ offering Himself to the Father, as well as being a Holy Meal. It’s also called the “Divine Liturgy,” or the “Sacred Liturgy,” which means the “Holy Liturgy.” So, liturgy is the “worship of God.”

There are two parts to the Mass, the *Liturgy of the Word* is the first part. The *Liturgy of the Eucharist* is the second half of the Mass. Consider the football analogy for a second. At a football game, how many halves are there? Of course, two. The first half, and the second half. Halftime is the period in-between. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are the two parts of the Mass. Halftime is when people bring up the gifts, when they bring up the water, and the wine, and the hosts. That splits the Liturgy of the Word from the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

If you take a look at the Missal, also called a Missalette, you’ll see on page three what’s called the *Order of the Mass*. Those two parts can be divided up into five or six different parts. The first part is the *Introductory Rites*. The Introductory Rites of the Mass would be the opening psalm. The idea of singing together brings everybody and puts them on the same page. In the old days, when the Vikings would have to row the boats, with 100 men on each side of the boat rowing, they would sing songs to get them in a rhythm. That would get everybody working together. That’s why we have music at the beginning of Mass, to get everybody singing together, and all their minds focused. The idea of music focuses a person. When they’re singing with other people, it brings them all together.

The introductory parts of the Mass would be the *Opening Hymn*. If it’s not an opening hymn, you could do a little *Entrance Antiphon*. Those are found on pages four and five in the Missalette. Then go over to page seven. On page seven, we have the *Greeting*.

The Mass begins and ends with the *Sign of the Cross*. We begin with “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Notice that it’s the Name of the Trinity. We talked about this in the very first class. The Name of God is singular. We don’t say in the “Names” – that would be plural, that would be three Gods. We don’t say that. We say in the “Name,” which is One God, and yet, we say, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” which are three Divine Persons. We begin by making the Sign of the Cross. All of our prayers begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Then there’s a greeting. The priest can choose any one of these three greetings. He could say, “The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” That’s a *Trinitarian* greeting. That’s the one I usually use, because this is Holy Trinity parish – I want to get that theme of the Trinity. Or, he could say, “The grace and peace of God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Or, he could say, “The Lord be with you,” and we pray, “And also with you.” He doesn’t say, “The Lord is with you,” because the Lord might not be with everybody in the congregation, if somebody is in the state of mortal sin, or they have turned against God. The prayer is, “May the Lord be with you.” It’s a prayer, “the Lord be with you.” Then we say, “And also with you.”

Then comes the *Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water*. This is usually only done once or twice a year. Normally, it’s not done on Sundays, but it could be. If that’s the case, then the priest blesses the Holy Water, and walks through and sprinkles everybody with the Holy Water.

That concludes the Introductory Rites.

Second, comes the *Penitential Rites*. The word “penitential” comes from the Latin word which means “to offer reparation,” or “to be sorry.” For example, a prison is called a penitentiary – that’s where they do penance. That’s the original idea of prison, where somebody would go and do penance for their crime, or for their sin, to make up for that. Now, most prisons are more reformatory.

Now we come to the Penitential Rites. A *rite* is a part of the Mass, like the sacred rites, or the sacred duties, or the sacred sacrifices. This is where the priest says, “At this time, let us call to mind our sins.” Before we begin in the worship of God, we first want to tell God we’re sorry for our sins. Now we think about our sins. What Bishop Sheen always did at this point, instead of trying to go through a whole laundry list of all the sins that he could remember, he basically just looked at the Crucifix, and looked at the effects of his sins, what his sins did to Christ. He looked at the five wounds: the Crowning with Thorns, the wounds in the hands, and the side, and the feet. He said, “That’s what my sins did to Christ.” When you come to Mass, there’s always a Crucifix that’s present. Sometimes it’s on the altar. At the high school, it’s up above the tabernacle. When we say, “Let us call to mind our sins,” try to do that. Look at the Crucifix. Think of how much

Jesus suffered, that He took our sins on the Cross, and be sorry for your sins, of what they did to Christ. Think of how much God loves us, by dying for us.

After we contemplate our sins, we then make a public confession: "I confess to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters." We're now doing what the Bible says, "Confess your sins one to another." Then we say, "I have sinned through my own fault." (We strike our breasts.) "In my thoughts, in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do." We beat our breasts one time, which was a sign in the Bible of being sorry. That's what they did in the Old Testament to tell God they were sorry. They put on sack cloth, and ashes on their head, and they beat their breast.

This is how we offend God: in our thoughts, in our words, in what we've done, and what we've failed to do. We can sin through our thoughts by wishing evil upon somebody. We can sin through our words by using God's name in vain, or by lying. We can sin through what we've done, through an action (stealing, for example). Or, we can sin by what we've failed to do. I remember once, there was a child that said to his mom, "Will you punish me for something I didn't do?" She said, "Of course not." The boy says, "I didn't clean my room, and I didn't do my homework." Of course, we can sin by what we've failed to do. For example, by not going to Mass on Sunday. That's something we should do. If we fail to do it, it's wrong. Or, not being generous to the poor, for example.

We tell God we're sorry for all of our sins. We ask Mary, the Angels and the saints, and each other, to pray for us, to the Lord our God. You want to take this very seriously. At every Mass, you're asking somebody to pray for you; you're promising to pray for them. Don't just go home, and come back the next Sunday, and not fulfill this. Make sure you're praying for everybody who attended that Mass. You're asking people, "I have the responsibility to pray for you, and you have the responsibility to pray for me." And it says, we're asking each other to pray for one another to the Lord our God.

Then, the priest says, "May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life." That's a prayer of forgiveness. This prayer actually does take away sins, what we call venial sin. Does everybody remember what a venial sin is? It is the smaller sins. It doesn't take away mortal sin – those have to be confessed in Confession. Mortal sins are serious violations against the Ten Commandments. Venial sins are smaller sins – tiny white lies, getting angry with somebody - they're minor sins. At this time of the Mass, our smaller sins are forgiven.

The other ways that you can have your venial sins forgiven are that when you come into Mass, dip your fingers in the Holy Water, and bless yourself. When you do that, and you are sorry for your sins, then Jesus forgives your venial sins.

This prayer, “I confess to Almighty God, to you, my brothers and sisters...” forgives venial sins, as well as when you bless yourself with Holy Water.

Then, we have this passage, where we say, “Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.” This is a Trinitarian theme. The “Lord have mercy” is the Father; “Christ have mercy” is the Son; and “Lord have mercy” is the Holy Spirit. This is called the *Kyrie*, which is the Greek word for “Lord.”

After this, we come to the *Gloria*. “Gloria” is the Latin word for “glory,” as in “Glory to God in the Highest.” This prayer is said every Sunday except during Advent and Lent, which are penitential seasons. The Gloria is said in celebration. This is a prayer of praise. It’s a very ancient prayer. We praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This prayer is a combination of different passages from the Bible. Remember when, after Christ was born, the Angels came, and they began to appear to the shepherds? They said, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, peace to men of good will.” That’s where the first part of this prayer comes from. You might remember that from the Charlie Brown Christmas episode - the idea that the Angels were the ones who said this prayer originally. Next, we praise the Heavenly Father. We worship Him; we give Him thanks. We praise Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, who is seated at the right hand of the Father. Then, we praise the Holy Spirit.

Next comes the *Opening Prayer*, found on pages 12 through 19. This will help you when you’re at Mass. Make sure you have one of the Missalettes. For example, this coming Sunday is January 16th, so take a look at page 16. You’ll see that there’s this prayer, from which the priest has two choices. He can choose the top prayer or the bottom prayer – it’s entirely up to him. It’s for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. Last Sunday was the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and so I chose that first prayer.

Now we move into what’s called the *Liturgy of the Word*. Take a look on page 20. The Liturgy of the Word has to do with the Word of God, which is Sacred Scripture. Let’s move up to page 55. These will be the readings that you’ll find this coming Sunday. What you’ll find is that the First Reading is always taken from the Old Testament. In this case, it’ll be taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. One thing you should remember is that, whenever you attend Mass, the Readings at Sunday Mass are in the three-year cycle, years A, B, and C. So, if you go to Sunday Mass faithfully for three years, you’ll hear almost the entire Bible being read to you. Let’s say you’re 30 years old. That means that you’ve heard the Bible read to you 10 times. Isn’t that amazing? Why is it that some Catholics don’t know the Bible? Maybe it’s because they weren’t listening, or, they really didn’t study the Bible. If you go to daily Mass, those are on the two-year cycle. If you go to daily Mass Monday through Friday, you’ll hear the whole Bible being read to you every two years.

The *Readings* are done usually by lay people, a lay man or a lay woman. They come up to the pulpit, and they read the Readings from the lectern, the ambo, or the pulpit (three different names for the same thing). Anybody can read the Readings.

Then we have the *Responsorial Psalm*. It's called this because we're supposed to respond at different times. In this case this Sunday, we'll say, "Here I am Lord, I come to do Your will." You repeat that – it's called a *response*. You respond to that. The reader or the cantor will sing or say the Psalm, and then you respond with the same *antiphon*.

Look on page 56 for the *Second Reading*. Usually the Second Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, the Book of Revelation, or one of the Letters, like one of the Letters from St. Paul. In this case, it's from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. One thing you'll find when you read the Readings, is that the First Reading and the Gospel always have the same theme. The Second Reading doesn't always have the same theme.

After the Second Reading comes the *Gospel Acclamation*, which is the Alleluia verse, which is not said during Lent. We say the *Alleluia*, which is a Hebrew word which means "praise," as in "Praise the Lord."

Next comes the *Gospel*. To read the Gospel, a person has to be a deacon or a priest. Only a priest or deacon can read the Gospel at Mass. The priest says, "The Lord be with you." You respond, "And also with you." "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John."

Who remembers what you do then? You take your thumb, and you make the Sign of the Cross three times: on the forehead, the lips, and over the heart. The reason why we do that is very Trinitarian, because there are three crosses, and three Persons in the Blessed Trinity. What we're really saying is, "Lord, enlighten my mind with your Holy Word, that I may understand with my mind. May I profess it with my lips, and may I accept and believe it in my heart." See, many Catholics, I'm sure, come to Mass every Sunday for many (10, 15, or 50) years, and they've done this, and they've never realized why they've made the three crosses.

At the end of the Gospel reading, we say, "The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ."

After that comes the *Homily*. The homily is usually a 10 to 15 minute sermon. Let's move on to page 90. It says, "The homilist describes how the Good News (the Gospel of Christ's saving message) applies to this specific community on this particular day." The priest should give his homily based upon the Readings, or based upon one of the teachings of Christ and the Church. It says we sit for the homily.

Let's go back for one second to talk about the different postures that we have at Mass, because some people wonder, "Why is it that we stand, sit, kneel, stand, sit, and kneel?" Some people call them "Catholic Aerobics," or "Catholic Gymnastics." When it comes down to it, every one of the postures at Mass has a specific reason. At the beginning of the Mass, we all stand, because we're all singing the Opening Hymn. We're gathered together. The priest is coming in, so out of respect for the priest, who is the presence of Christ at that liturgical function, we all stand. We stand for the Opening Prayers and the Greetings. Then it says we sit for the Readings. Standing is done out of respect, and to prepare ourselves for the beginning of Mass.

We then sit. Sitting is a posture of receptivity. We sit, and we listen to the Word of God. We soak in the Word of God when we sit for the Readings.

But then, we stand for the Gospel. The Gospel is the most important part of the Bible. All of the Bible is important, of course, because it's all the inspired Word of God. The Gospel is the holiest part of the Readings, because it's about the Life of Christ. All the Old Testament passages lead up to the Life of Christ; but the Gospel is the Life of Christ, so we stand out of respect for the Gospel.

We sit again for the Homily, for receptivity. Sitting there, we soak up the Word of God.

I've often thought, "How can we improve on the Mass?" Would it be better to stand the whole time? I don't think so. Would it be better to, from the beginning of Mass, stand for an hour? That would be pretty tough on people. Or, let's all decide to sit for the hour. That wouldn't be very respectful, right? During the Eucharist, or the times we're supposed to kneel. Sitting would put people to sleep. Let's say we kneel for the whole time. Let's kneel for an hour. That's pretty hard to do. The Church, in its wisdom, has a great rhythm of prayer – standing, sitting, kneeling, standing, sitting, and kneeling. That's very wise. The Church is 2,000 years old, so it really knows how to do things.

Then we get to the part of the Mass where we stand for the *Prayers of the Faithful*. We then sit for the *Presentation of the Gifts*. But then, we kneel. Kneeling is a sign of humility and adoration. Those are the different postures – standing for respect, sitting for receptivity, and kneeling for worship, adoration, and humility.

Next, we come to the *Profession of Faith*, found on page 90. This is called the *Nicene Creed*. The Nicene Creed comes from the Council of Nicea, which is in modern-day Turkey. In the year 325, this Council met. The Nicene Creed is the teachings of the Faith, that are put down in systematic form.

Take a look at the Nicene Creed. It starts out, "We believe in one God." Then we explain what we believe about the Father, that He is the maker of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.

Then we profess what we believe about Christ. We certainly know a lot more about Christ than we do about the Father or the Holy Spirit, because look how much space is taken up with the Life of Christ. God the Father only got this much space. The Holy Spirit gets a couple of lines. The whole Life of Christ is then listed:

- Christ is the Son of God
- Eternally begotten of the Father
- God from God
- Light from Light
- True God from true God
- Begotten, not made
- One in being with the Father
- Through Him, all things were made
- He came down from Heaven
- Born of the Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Crucified and suffered under Pontius Pilate
- Suffered, died, and was buried
- Rose from the Dead
- Ascended to Heaven
- Sits at the right hand of the Father
- Is going to come again to judge the Living and the Dead

That's the whole life of Christ in a few verses. Then we say, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken to the prophets." That's what we believe about the Holy Spirit. Then, "We believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. One Baptism, for the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come." There's our entire Faith, boiled down into 20 or 25 lines.

There's also another Creed, called the *Apostles' Creed*. The *Apostles' Creed* just has 12 articles. It's shorter. The *Apostles' Creed* is usually used with Masses for children, but either one is fine. The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the *General Intercessions* on page 91, also called the *Prayer of the Faithful*. You are what's called the *Lay Faithful*. That's the name the Church has for lay people. This is when we pray for the Pope, our President, world leaders, peace, victims of natural disasters, the sick, the suffering, those who have died, and our own special intentions.

If you take a look at what we've just covered, we've covered the:

- Introductory Rites

- Penitential Rite
- Liturgy of the Word

(A question). At the verse where it says, “By the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man,” everybody in the Church should bow, like this – a bow of the head, or bow at the waist. Except on Christmas, we actually genuflect – that’s when you go down on one knee. Some of these things that Catholics should do, we do have to remind them. For example, before we receive Communion, we’re supposed to bow, and then receive Communion. We’ll get into that more when we talk about how to receive Communion. But at that verse, when you attend Mass, you should bow your head, because that’s in honor of the Incarnation, the fact that God became man.

In the spiritual life, there are three phases – to grow in union with God, to become one with God. These are from the writings of the saints, like St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. They’re called the three ages, or the three stages of the spiritual life.

The first one is the *Purgative* stage. The second is the *Illuminative* stage. The third is the *Unitive* stage. What’s beautiful about the Mass is that at every Mass, we go through the Purgative, the Illuminative, and into the Unitive stage, or the Way.

The Purgative is the Penitential Rite, when you tell God you’re sorry for your sins, and ask His forgiveness. We pass through a time of purgation (cleansing). When you bless yourself with Holy Water, tell God you’re sorry for your sins, strike your chest; that’s the Purgative way. That’s the Introductory Rite, or Penitential Rite.

The Illuminative, which means the “enlightening of the mind,” is done through the readings – Old Testament readings, New Testament readings, the Gospel, the Homily, the Prayers of the Faithful, and the Creed. That’s the Illuminative. That’s supposed to enlighten your mind, to know God.

Then we come to the Unitive, which means “to be one with God.” This occurs in *Holy Communion*. When we receive Communion, we become one with Christ. Isn’t it beautiful, how every single Mass takes us through the three stages of the spiritual life. In Heaven, we have union with God. To be able to get to Heaven, we have to pass through these stages (the Purgative way, the Illuminative way, and into the Unitive way. In the spiritual life, if we don’t achieve these two in this world, we have to go to Purgatory. So, we either do the Purgative way on Earth, or we have to be cleansed in Purgatory.

You can’t get into Heaven, even if you have the smallest stain of sin on your soul. The only people that get to Heaven are perfect. They’re absolutely perfected, and they die in absolute perfection, like a martyr who gave his life for Christ.

Therefore, most people will probably have to go through Purgatory, at least for a split second, or an instant, or a longer duration of time. So, either a person goes through their Purgatory on Earth, and makes up for all of the sins that they've committed, and receives enlightenment of the mind through reading the Bible, and reading the teachings of Christ and the Church. Either we do that in this world, or we do that in Purgatory. Heaven is when we have perfect union with God.

Thank God for Purgatory, because if it wasn't for Purgatory, if we died with any small sin on our soul, we couldn't enter Heaven, because the Bible says that, "Nothing defiled can enter the vision of God." Nothing defiled can enter Heaven. A person has to be perfectly pure of heart in order to see God. That's what the Bible says, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God." Purgatory is for those who die in God's grace, and God's friendship, and who might still need polishing up, or giving their soul a shower, or a cleansing, to be united to God.

The Mass can help us, if we faithfully attend Mass. In one of our topics coming up, we'll be talking about Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, and we'll get more into Purgatory, and what Purgatory is like. It's like giving our soul a shower, a cleansing, so we can be with God. In order to be able to see God, we have to be perfected, and absolutely holy, in order to be able to live in the atmosphere of Heaven. The Mass takes us through these stages, so just keep that in mind. I think it's also very important to remember.

Now we come to the point of the Mass, after the people bring up the gifts of bread and wine (the hosts, and the water, and the wine). There's great symbolism there, the fact that the lay people bring up their gifts, and they offer themselves upon the paten, and in the chalice. That's what you should do as well; you should offer up all your prayers, works, joys, and sufferings. You should place your entire self in the chalice and on the paten, and then ask God to transform you into Christ. That's what happens to the bread and wine, when they become the Body and the Blood of Christ, so you offer up your sacrifices, and your prayers.

Whenever you attend Mass, you should offer that Mass for somebody or something. Maybe for your grandmother or

(Note: at this point, the first side of the tape ended. The other side resumes below).

that you can get from the Mass, and that you'll get for other people, when you come to Mass as well. So, you offer that Mass for a specific intention. When the gifts are being brought up, you should place yourself in those gifts. Then, you'll be offered to the Father, along with Christ, during the Mass - all your intentions, and your prayers, and your petitions.

After that part of the Mass, did you ever notice that the priest washes his hands? This originated in the early Church, because in the early days of the Church, they wouldn't just bring up the gifts of bread and wine, they would also bring up vegetables, and food, chickens, and all sorts of things for the poor. This was an offering time to the poor – now, we just pass the basket, because it's much easier, since everything's in money value. It's much easier than bringing two dozen hams to Church every Sunday to give to the poor. You can just put something in the collection basket. The priest washes his hands, because in the old days, he would have to collect the groceries, and all the food, and the old clothing for the poor. He would wash his hands before he could continue with the Sacrifice of the Mass. Now it's done symbolically during that part of the Mass.

We then come to page 92, the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*. We have here the preparation of the altar, and the gifts. In this prayer, that the priest says, is an ancient Jewish prayer: "Blessed are You, Lord God of all Creation. Through Your goodness, we have this bread to offer, which Earth has given, and human hands have made. It will become for us the Bread of Life" (and the same thing with the wine. God is the Author of all Creation. He gives us the wheat, and we then turn it into bread. This is offered back to God as a sacrifice. We give to God the bread and wine, and He gives us back His Son – He gives us Christ.

The priest says, "Pray that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father." You pray, "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hand, for the praise and glory of His name, for our good, and the good of all His Church."

Then comes the *Prayer over the Gifts*. For example, on page 95, this Sunday, the priest will recite that prayer, for January 16th. Keep the Missalette with you, especially when you are brand new to the Faith. It will help you to follow along.

Next come the *Eucharistic Prayers*. There are four different Eucharistic Prayers, found on pages 98 and following. Right before the Eucharistic Prayer comes the *Preface*. The priest says, "The Lord be with you." You say, "And also with you." He says, "Lift up your hearts." You say, "We have lifted them up to the Lord." He says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." You say, "It is right to give Him thanks and praise." That's an ancient Hebrew prayer.

Right before the Eucharistic Prayer, when we kneel, we recite the *Holy, Holy, Holy*. It's found on page 98 in the Missalette. In Latin, it's called the "Sanctus," which means "holy." The Holy, Holy, Holy is recited three times (very Trinitarian). The Holy, Holy, Holy is a prayer that's found in the Old Testament, as well as the Book of Revelation. It says that the Angels in Heaven are constantly saying to God, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, God of power and might."

Then we kneel. The priest can choose Eucharistic Prayer number one, found on page 98, or page 101. He could choose Eucharistic Prayer number two. Page 102 is the third Eucharistic Prayer, and page 103 is the fourth Eucharistic Prayer.

The common elements in these Eucharistic Prayers are praise and thanksgiving to God. Let's take a look at page 101, the second Eucharistic Prayer. These are very ancient. This one goes back to about the Second Century. It begins with praising God, thanking Him for His blessings, and then asking the Holy Spirit to come upon the gifts of bread and wine to make them holy, so that they'll become the Body and Blood of Christ.

There's always a section from the Last Supper, where it says, "Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and said, 'This is My Body, and this is the cup of My Blood.'" It is at that moment that Christ becomes present on the altar, under the appearances of bread and wine. We spent a whole hour and a half last week talking about the Eucharist, and how that change takes place, through the miracle of Transubstantiation. Make sure that you get a copy of that tape and listen to it – it's very important that you listen to that. It's what distinguishes us from other religions.

After that, we say, "Let us proclaim the Mystery of Faith." The priest will choose either A, B, C, or D: "Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again." That's the Mystery of Faith. The Eucharistic Prayer continues, where we pray for the needs of the Church and the world. We pray for the Pope. We pray for those who have died, our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest. We pray for all the intentions. We pray for the world, and the Church; and then we pray that one day we'll get to Heaven, to be with the Lord, the Blessed Mother, the Apostles, and the saints.

Take a look on page 105. There are four main Eucharistic Prayers. There are also a number of Eucharistic Prayers for reconciliation. That's found on page 105, 106. Those are options. The priest could choose one of those as well.

After the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we come to the *Communion Rite*, on page 108. We've gone through the Introductory Rite, the Penitential Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and now we come to the Communion Rite. This begins when everybody stands, and we pray the Our Father together. There's a prayer after the Our Father, a prayer that the Lord will deliver us from evil, grant us peace, protect us from sin and anxiety, as we wait for the coming of Christ. Then this prayer, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now, and forever." This was added after Vatican II. It's an ancient prayer. It's at the end of the Protestant Our Father, "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen." It's just a different translation of that prayer.

Sometimes, people say, "Why is it that Catholics don't say that part?" We do. We say it at every Mass. We say it every day at Mass. We say it every Sunday. We don't usually say it in the regular Our Father, because it wasn't said by Christ. The last verse was added by some of the early Christians, but it wasn't the prayer that Jesus taught us, so it didn't come from the words of Christ. That's

why we don't say it when we normally say the Our Father, but at Mass, we do add it.

Then we have the *Sign of Peace*. The priest says, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." Everyone says, "And also with you." The priest says, "Let us offer each other the Sign of Peace." This is optional. The priest can skip it if he wants. Usually he says, "Let us offer each other the Sign of Peace." Then, husbands and wives can give each other a little kiss, or shake hands. Parents and kids can give each other a little hug, or shake hands (some sign of peace).

In some cultures, people have their hands folded, and they just bow, in Korea and places like that. In other places, like the Caribbean and South America, everybody embraces. That Sign of Peace takes half an hour, because everybody has to go around to everybody else in the Church. Ours doesn't take a half an hour; it's a little bit more conservative, shaking hands, or giving your spouse a hug or a kiss.

After that comes the *Breaking of the Bread*. We have Christ, the Lamb of God, and we pray, "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." We pray that three times. The last time, we say, "Grant us peace."

The priest holds up the Body of Christ, and says, "This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to His Supper." Your line is, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed." It is a very beautiful prayer. It comes from the Bible, when the centurion said to Christ, "I'm not worthy to have You enter under my roof. Say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

The priest receives Communion, and then, you receive Communion, and you answer by saying, "Amen," which is a Hebrew word that means, "I believe," or, "So be it." The priest says, "The Body of Christ." You say, "Amen."

Usually, there's a song during Communion. After Communion, on page 113, we have the closing prayer, the *Prayer After Communion*. This Sunday, it will be taken from page 114, the Second Sunday in Ordinary time.

Then we come to the *Concluding Rites*. If there are any announcements, they are made after the *Closing Prayer*, and before the *Final Blessing*. The Concluding Rite is, "The Lord be with you." We say, "And also with you." The priest says, "May Almighty God bless you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Lastly, there is the *Dismissal*, at the bottom of page 116. The word "dismissal" contains the word "missal," or "Mass," from that idea of being sent forth. The priest (or a deacon) can say one of three things:

- "Go in the peace of Christ." We say, "Thanks be to God."

- “The Mass has ended. Go in peace.” We say, “Thanks be to God.”
- “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” We say, “Thanks be to God.”

You are not saying, “Thank God that Mass is over.” It is the idea of giving thanks to God for all the blessings we’ve received. I always like to say, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,” because I want our people to love and serve the Lord.

That covers the Mass from start to finish. The Mass begins, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” and the Mass ends with the blessing of the priest, and everybody making the Sign of the Cross. Then come the words, “Thanks be to God.” The closing hymn is sung.

Make sure you stay in your pews or your seats until the priest leaves. It is best to stay until the end of the song. It doesn’t take that long. You certainly don’t want to leave Mass early. Sometimes, when it is an emergency, you have to leave Mass early - that’s OK. Normally, you should wait until the priest leaves first, and then the congregation finishes singing the end of the song.

What I recommend, instead of rushing out, is to sit down for a moment, or kneel down, and make a thanksgiving after Communion. Remember, Christ is present within you for 15 to 20 minutes after Communion. Let other people get out first. Try to sit quietly for 5, 10, 15 minutes of prayer. That’s the greatest time of the day for prayer, after you’ve received Communion.

It’s almost like you’re digging for gold at that time. Imagine if you found a gold mine, and they said, “I’ll let you dig in the gold mine for 20 minutes. You can take as much gold as you can dig for 20 minutes.” That’s how it is when you receive Communion. You have a chance to accumulate a lot of grace by spending that time in prayer.

It’s almost like a 15 or 20-minute shopping spree. Imagine you went into Nordstrom’s or Hecht’s, or your favorite store, and they said, “I give you 20 minutes. You can gather up as much stuff as you can.” You go running through there, getting jewelry, clothes, and all that. That’s how it is right after you receive Communion – you have a 20-minute shopping spree to spend with Christ. You can get as many graces as you want after you receive Him.

It’s important not just rush out and leave Mass right away. Use that time for thanksgiving, then walk out, and have a nice Krispy Kreme donut after Mass. Don’t forget to greet the priest, and say goodbye to the priest.

You certainly don’t want to get into the habit of leaving Mass early. They say the only one that left the Last Supper early was Judas. Things didn’t wind up too well with Judas. Don’t leave Mass early unless, of course, it’s an emergency.

(A question). The bells are optional. You'll see some Catholic parishes where they use bells; some where they don't. Before Vatican II it was mandatory. After Vatican II, it's optional. I choose to use them, because I think it does draw our attention to a very sacred moment. The bells are rung during a couple parts of the Mass, when the priest says, "Let Your spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy," that's when he invokes the Holy Spirit over the gifts of bread and wine. That's called, in Greek, the *Epiklesis*. This is the Greek word meaning "the invoking of the Holy Spirit over the bread and wine," which will become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The bells are rung by the altar boys first at the *Epiklesis*. Then, they're rung during the elevation of the Host and the Chalice. After the priest says, "This is My Body, which will be given up for you," the priest holds up Christ, the Blessed Sacrament, and the bells ring three times (for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). What you should be saying is, "My Lord and my God." That's what you should say in your heart when the priest holds up the Eucharist. The bells are rung again after he says, "This is the Cup of My Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of Me." He holds up the chalice, and the bells ring again three times. You should also say, "My God, I love thee," or, "My Lord and my God."

The last time that the bells are rung is at the moment that the priest drinks from the chalice. The priest receives the Body of Christ in Communion. Then he drinks from the chalice, and the bell rings again for the last time to show that the sacrifice is complete. Now that the priest has received Christ, the sacrifice of the Mass is complete. Jesus is offering Himself, and then the priest consuming the Body and Blood of Christ, the Priest who offered the Victim – Christ has now completed that sacrifice.

One thing that you ought to remember is that the Mass shows forth the death of Christ. The way it does that is by the separate Consecration of the Host and the wine. The priest doesn't get up and say, "This is My Body and Blood." He doesn't do that. It's separate. He says first, "This is My Body, which will be given up for you." Then, he says, "This is the cup of My Blood." It's two different Consecrations, one of the Host, and the other of the wine. He consecrates the Host separately, and the wine separately. The separation of the Body and Blood of Christ represents the death of Christ. That's how Christ died, when His Blood flowed out of Him at His Crucifixion. Once His Blood left His Body, He died, the separation of His Body from His Blood. This is shown in an unbloody way at the Sacrifice of the Mass, by a separate Consecration. First the bread, and then the wine, separately. That shows the death of Christ.

After, the priest says, "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." He says that three times. Notice he breaks the Host in two. Then he takes a little piece of the Host, and places it in the chalice. That represents the Resurrection, because you have the death shown by the separate Consecration.

But then, the Host being broken off, placed in the chalice, the Body and Blood of Christ are now reunited in a mystical way at the Mass. The Mass shows forth the death and the Resurrection of Christ. All of those parts of the Mass are very significant. The more you study, and read about the Mass, the more you'll appreciate what's taking place there.

The other thing that's also very interesting about the Mass is that, before the priest offers the bread and the wine, he takes the wine, and he pours in a little bit of water. He says, "May we come to share in the Divinity of Christ, who humbled Himself to share in our humanity." You have the chalice of wine, and then usually he pours in one or two drops of water. He says, "May the mingling of the water and the wine..." There are a couple of different ways to explain it. One is that the wine represents the Divinity of Christ, and the water is His humanity. When the water is placed in the wine, it shows that Christ is one, that His humanity and His Divinity are one Person of Christ. The water also represents our humanity, that we want to be joined to Christ. There's a lot of rich mystical symbolism in the Mass.

It's also interesting to note, that when the water is placed in the wine, we can no longer separate it. It's now become part of the wine. We become one with the Lord when we receive Him in Holy Communion.

(A question). As far as Eucharistic Prayers for funerals, I like to use number three, on page 102. I like that one, because on page 103 is a very nice prayer that we say for those who have died. We say, "Remember <deceased person's name> in Baptism. He died with Christ. May he now share His Resurrection, when Christ will raise our mortal bodies, and make them like His own in glory. Welcome into Your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. There we hope to share in your glory, when every tear will be wiped away. On that day, we shall see You, our God, as You are. We shall become like You, and praise You forever, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

For Easter and Christmas, I like to use number one, which is the longer one. For daily Mass, I usually use number two. If I have all three Masses on Sunday, I use number two, because it's a long day, and with three Masses back to back, I pick the shortest one. Plus, I do that since we're in the High School, and we're kneeling on those little green kneeling pads on a slope, with wooden chairs sticking in our back. I'm conscious of the pain and suffering that the people are going through. I don't usually use Eucharistic Prayer number one at Mass, because it is longer, and it's harder for people to kneel. If I have only two Masses, I'll use number three, which is about a medium length. Number one and number four are the longest ones. Number two is the shortest. Number three is medium length. Also, if the air conditioning is not working, I'll use number two. If it's comfortable in there, I might use number one or number three.

(A question). If you go to anywhere in the world, the Mass is the same. The language will be different. If you go to South America, the Mass will be in Spanish or Portuguese. In any of the countries, they'll use their own language, but it will follow the same order of the Mass. Before Vatican II, what you had was probably even more universal, because everything was in Latin. You could go to Mass anywhere in the world, and even know the prayers. You can still follow the Mass in other countries, but it is in their own language.

(A question). Homilies are usually different in all the parishes. Sometimes, maybe they use some homily service off of the Internet. That's true. Some priests might get their homilies from some place like that. My experience has been that every homily will be different. If they are going to be based on the readings, there will be a lot of common things. If a priest uses a homily service they might be the same. Most priests, I don't think, do that. Most of them don't read their homily from another source. They usually pray, and think about it, and then they speak from their heart. I usually try to read six or seven different books, or different commentaries on that Gospel, and then try to synthesize and pick out what I want to talk about. Usually, the first and third readings have a common theme, which could be prayer, or thanksgiving, or humility. If that's the case, usually the priest will talk about that theme. He might use different anecdotes and different stories to do that.

Don't forget to take the handouts home. This one is particularly interesting – it shows you where the Masses are being said throughout the world at this time. For example, at nine o'clock at night, Masses are being said right now in Jerusalem. The idea is that Masses are said in the morning, between six and nine. As the planet goes around the sun, then it becomes daylight in different times of day. For example, in New York at five o'clock, Masses are said at different times of the day, in places like Colorado, California, Hawaii, and Samoa. Right now, it's five or six in the morning in Jerusalem. The idea is that you can see where the Masses are being said. There are 300,000 Masses being offered everyday, because there are about 300,000 priests in the world. Every second, there are four chalices being elevated. You can say this prayer, and be united to the Mass taking place right at that moment.

Take home these articles too, about the importance of getting to Mass on Sundays.