

What to Expect During Mass

What Can I Expect During Mass? “The Liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1074).

If you have never been to Mass before, or if you haven’t gone in a long time, we are excited to have you join us as we celebrate and worship together.

We understand that it may feel foreign at first, and that some parts might seem confusing. The last thing we would want is for you to feel unwelcome during the service, so we have created a little guide for you to help you understand the liturgy a little better.

First, Holy Mass is divided into two main parts:

The **Liturgy of the Word** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.

Mass begins as the priest and those involved in serving during the liturgy enter into the sanctuary. The Penitential Rite, followed by the Kyrie, acknowledges our brokenness and invites the mercy of God. The first part of the Mass is called the **Liturgy of the Word**, when we sit and hear readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the New Testament and the Gospel. The readings are usually followed by the homily which is a time for the congregation to hear a short sermon from the priest. After the homily, we stand and profess the faith that we believe in by reciting the Apostles’ or the Nicene Creed together. We also spend time in intercessory prayer, as we pray together with the saints in heaven and on earth.

The latter half of the service is called the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. During this time, we come to the altar and offer bread and wine. The priest consecrates the elements (from the Latin consecratio meaning “hallowing” or “sanctification”), transforming bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of Jesus, which are then distributed to the faithful during Holy Communion. Because we believe in transubstantiation, the true transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus, we kneel during this time to venerate His presence. All Catholics who are prepared to receive Jesus are invited to partake in the Eucharist (Holy Communion). Being “properly disposed” to receive Jesus means being at peace with one’s current relationship with God and with others. If a person is Catholic and is in a state of mortal sin, then he or she is invited to reconcile with the Father through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) before receiving the Eucharist. If you are not Catholic, or if you are not yet prepared to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, then you are invited (but not obligated) to come up to the altar and receive a blessing, indicated by placing a hand across your opposite shoulder. After some time for prayer and silent meditation, the priest ends in thanksgiving and gives a blessing to the congregation, sending us all with joy and love to proclaim the Good News of Jesus.