

# Living in the Kingdom

## Lesson 17: The Mass

*Source and Summit of the Christian Life*



CCC 1345-46

1. Review lessons 12 (In His Presence) and 16 (the Eucharist): at Mass, our central act of worship, we relive the worship of the Israelites in the Tabernacle and “enter the sanctuary” and the Holy of Holies. In the Mass, Jesus’ Paschal mystery is again made present, and we offer ourselves with him as a gift of love to the Father. At Mass we also take part in the worship in the Heavenly Jerusalem.
2. Early Christian witness: St. Justin Martyr describes the order of the Eucharistic celebration around the year 155 (1st Apol. 65-67), which has the same fundamental structure as today’s Mass:

- a. The gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily, and general intercessions;
- b. The liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

CCC 1347  
Lk 24:13-35

3. Jesus followed the same pattern with the disciples on the road to Emmaus:
  - a. Walking with them he explained the Scriptures;
  - b. Sitting with them at the table, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

### **The Structure of the Mass**

[Parts in brackets are said on Sundays and feast days only]

#### **A. Introductory Rites**

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- The **Sign of the Cross**: we gather with the sign of our faith, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- The **penitential rite** (“Lord, have mercy!”) and priest’s absolution: we implore the Lord’s mercy and confess that we have sinned before coming before him.
- [The **Gloria**: The Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and praises God the Father and the Lamb.] [Not sung during Advent and Lent]

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**B. The Liturgy of the Word**: we listen to the Word of God from the Bible and respond to it with acclamations and a psalm. Hearing God’s Word increases our faith and understanding of the mystery of salvation before we take a direct part in it through the Eucharist. Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word.

- The **opening prayer** expresses the character of the celebration.
- The **first reading** is usually from the Old Testament, but sometimes from a book of the New Testament.
- The **responsorial psalm** is read or sung by the congregation to foster meditation on the Word of God.
- [The **second reading** is usually from a book of the New Testament].

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the <b>Alleluia</b>, we welcome the Lord who is about to speak to us in the Gospel. [No Alleluia during Lent]</li> <li>• The <b>Gospel</b>, read by the priest or deacon, is the high point of the liturgy of the word.</li> <li>• The <b>homily</b> is a teaching on the readings given by the priest, an exhortation to believe the Word of God and put it into practice.</li> <li>• [We then recite the <b>creed</b>, the profession of the essential pillars of our faith.]</li> <li>• In the <b>general intercessions</b>, we offer our prayers for the needs of the Church and the salvation of the world.</li> </ul> <p><b>C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist:</b> the elements of bread and wine are brought to the altar, and through the Eucharistic prayer of the priest(s) they become the body and blood of the Lord who wishes to give himself to us.</p>
CCC 1350-51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>presentation of the offerings</b>: the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. [A <b>collection</b> is taken, where we bring our gifts for the poor and for the Church].</li> <li>• The <b>preparation of the gifts</b>: the Jewish blessings are said over the bread and wine.</li> </ul>
CCC 1352	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Eucharistic Prayer</b> is a long prayer of thanksgiving and consecration which is the heart and summit of the celebration. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The <i>preface</i>: the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, sanctification.</li> <li>○ The <i>Sanctus (Kadosh)</i>: we join in the unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and saints, sing to the thrice-holy God.</li> <li>○ The <i>Epiclesis</i>: the priest asks the Father to send his Spirit on the bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood of Jesus.</li> <li>○ The <i>Institution Narrative</i>: the words of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit make present the Lord's body and blood</li> <li>○ The <i>Memorial Acclamation</i>: we proclaim Jesus' death, resurrection and expected second coming.</li> <li>○ The <i>Anamnesis</i>: the Church presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him.</li> <li>○ The <i>Intercessions</i>: the Eucharist is celebrated with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, in communion with the pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and faithful.</li> <li>○ The <i>Doxology and Great Amen</i>: we give glory and honor to God for his gifts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
CCC 1353	
CCC 1354	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Lord's Prayer</b>: we ask God our Father to care of all our needs.</li> <li>• The <b>Sign of Peace</b>: The Church asks for peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family.</li> </ul>
CCC 1355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Lamb of God</b> is sung as the priest breaks the bread, signifying the Lord's broken body for us.</li> <li>• At <b>Communion</b>, we receive the Lord's body and blood which is a source of life, love and holiness.</li> <li>• The <b>concluding rite</b>: the priest dismisses the faithful to go out and spread the good news that we have just received.</li> </ul>