



The Roman Missal

Bulletin Inserts



Bulletin Insert 1

Preparing for Mass by Praying at Home

The joy of being Catholic is in the Eucharist. The Most Holy Eucharist, also called Holy Mass, is the wellspring of Catholic life and its summit. The Catholic is, at every moment, caught up in one of three movements. Either one is *on the way* to church, giving witness to the Kingdom by preparing for the Sacred Banquet; or one is *in church*, participating fully, consciously, and actually in the Sacred Liturgy; or one is *sent forth* out of church into the world to bear witness to “that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1 John 1:1). The Church lives from Eucharist to Eucharist, amazed by the wonder of so great a gift, and awaiting her “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13), the return of Christ in glory.

The Eucharistic life begins *on the way* to church. Go to church with a heart made ready for the Mystery. Begin at home by reading the texts appointed for the day’s Mass: first reading, responsorial psalm, second reading, and Gospel. The references for these texts are readily available in your parish bulletin, on your church calendar, or in your missal. Let the Word of God resonate in your heart; read the texts aloud, slowly, and with attention. Repeat the phrases that strike you. Let the Word itself become your prayer; send back to God the Word he has addressed to you. Then, for a few moments, remain in silence. Adore the God who has spoken to you. Ask Him to give you hunger for the “daily bread” (Luke 11:4) you will receive at Mass. Go to church with hunger and desire; you will not be sent away empty (cf. Luke 1:53). Faithful to his promise, God will fill you with good things (cf. Luke 1:53).

Bulletin Insert 2

Silence! God is here!

Give yourself enough time to get to church without becoming stressed. “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord’” (Ps 121:1). In our culture it has become increasingly difficult to recollect oneself, to pass from the noisy rush of life into the “adoring silence” that a worthy celebration of Mass requires. Adé Béthune, a lover of the Sacred Liturgy and noted designer of churches, recommended the creation of spaces of transition. One should not have to pass abruptly from the parking lot into the church. Some parishes may want to create a “garden of silence” between the parking lot and the door of the church. Others will make the most of the narthex, porch, or vestibule of the church: the space between the church’s inner and outer doors. When you arrive at the door of your church, stop to take Holy Water with your right hand. Make the sign of the cross. Cross the threshold of the House of God deliberately and reverently.

If the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the sanctuary of the church, genuflect, bringing your right knee to the ground in an act of adoration. If the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved where you can see it, bow profoundly before the altar. Use the moments that remain to ready your heart for Holy Mass. Greet the Mother of God, the angels, and the saints represented in your church's holy images.

In a Roman basilica visited by hundreds of pilgrims each day is a sign that says, "Silence! God is here." The recovery of silence in church is the first step in fostering the "Eucharistic amazement" to which the Servant of God Pope John Paul II called the Church of the New Millennium.

Bulletin Insert 3

Sunday, the Day of the Lord

Sunday is the original festival, the weekly celebration of Christ's holy resurrection. Sunday is the day of the Eucharist, the day of the Church's joy, the day of beginning again in the grace of Him who says, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev 21:5). The festivity of Sunday worship overflows into all of life. There is delight in the details: freshly polished shoes, "Sunday best" clothes, flowers and wine for the Sunday dinner table.

Allowing Sunday Mass to become one thing among others on a weekend checklist leads to a loss of "Eucharistic amazement." Holy Mass is Sunday's central event. All other things are arranged around it. The absolute priority given to Sunday Mass is an irreplaceable witness to the Kingdom God.

The beauty of Sunday Mass is an offering to God and a healing for the soul. The singing of priest, deacon, cantor, and people, the use of incense and lights, the sacred movement of bodies in worship, vesture in the appointed liturgical colors, the clear sound of the bell, the flowers that delight the eye and perfume the air — all these good things proclaim the splendor of the Mystery of Faith, each in its own way.

In addition to Sunday Mass, following an impetus given by the Second Vatican Council, there are cathedrals and parish churches around the world where the faithful return for Vespers, the Church's solemn evening liturgy. The celebration of Vespers is often followed by a time of Eucharistic adoration. Having entered into Christ's sacrifice in the morning, the Church returns at sunset to contemplate the glory of his Face, praying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent" (Lk 24:29).

Bulletin Insert 4

Festivals and Seasons

The Church's liturgical year is an unbroken circle of fasts and festivals. Thus is the psalmist's prophecy fulfilled for us again and again: "You crown the year with your goodness" (Ps 64:11). At the beginning of the year, Christmas and Epiphany celebrate Christ's coming in the flesh. "Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary," Jesus Christ enters fully into the weakness and poverty of our human condition. The Church, gathered from every nation on earth, rejoices in the radiance of his light.

Lent is a forty-day period of intense listening to the Word of God and of penance. Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer prepare us to enter through the Cross of Christ into the

joy of his resurrection. The heart of the liturgical year pulsates in the Three Days that commemorate Christ's death, burial, and resurrection: Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The Paschal Vigil in the night of Holy Saturday draws us together in the light of the Risen Christ to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the communication of his life in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Easter, traditionally called *Pascha* in both East and West, is prolonged for fifty days; Pentecost marks the last day of Paschaltide and recalls the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a mighty wind and tongues of fire (cf. Ac 2:2). The Easter cycle is followed by a series of summer festivals: solemnities of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. With the end of summer the Church turns her prayer to the great harvest of the Kingdom where already the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven and all the saints intercede for us, pilgrims on earth. Throughout the year, feasts of the Virgin Mary and of the saints refract the light of Christ and reflect his beauty. Finally, every December the Church returns to the Advent season, putting all her hope in the word of Christ who says, "Surely I am coming soon" (Rev 22:20).

Bulletin Insert 5

Sacred Vestments

The praying Church makes use of sacred vestments: festive clothes different from those worn in everyday life. Liturgical vesture imparts a certain grace to the movements of the priest, deacon, and other ministers; more deeply, it is a call to adoration "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23). Both for those who wear them and those who see them worn, the liturgical vestments are a compelling invitation to "worship the Lord in holy array" (Ps 96:9).

The *alb* is a long white robe common to priests, deacons, and to those entrusted with a special liturgical service. An *amice*, or white neck scarf, is worn under the alb to cover the ordinary clothing at the neck. The alb is tied at the waist with a *cincture*.

The vestment proper to the priest celebrant at Mass is the *chasuble*, an ample tent-like garment. The chasuble is worn over the alb and stole, a long narrow band made of the same fabric and color as the chasuble. The priest wears the stole around his neck, allowing it to hang down in front. The deacon wears the stole over his shoulder and drawn across the chest to the right side where it is fastened; over the alb and stole the deacon wears the *dalmatic*, a kind of tunic with wide sleeves.

In the United States of America, acolytes, altar servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other suitable and dignified clothing. Sacred vesture remains for all Catholics a reminder that going to church calls for modest and appropriate attire. Clothes do not make the Christian, but can express reverence for the presence of God and respect for the brothers and sisters with whom we worship. "Above all these," says Saint Paul, "put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).

Bulletin Insert 6

The Many Colors of Grace

The liturgy of the Church makes a rich and varied use of color. The color of the stole, chasuble and dalmatic changes according to the feast and season. The tent-like veil covering the tabernacle may also change, following the same rules. The variety of liturgical colors signifies the different ways in which we are touched by the grace of Christ in the liturgy.

Violet or purple, signifying longing and penance, are used in Advent and Lent. Rose-colored vestments, a sign of anticipated joy, may be used on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent. White, the color of purity and of glory, is used during Christmastide and Paschaltide, as well as on certain feasts of the Lord and on feasts of the Virgin Mary and many saints. Vestments of gold or silver cloth may be used on great solemnities. Green, symbolizing growth, fruitfulness, and hope, is worn on Sundays and weekdays during the Time Throughout the Year. Red, recalling the blood of Christ and of the martyrs, as well as the fire of the Holy Spirit, is worn on Passion Sunday, on Pentecost, for Masses of the Holy Spirit, on the feasts of the Holy Cross and of Apostles and martyrs. For Masses of the Dead and funerals, black, violet, or white vestments may be worn.

The association of colors with the various feasts, seasons, and mysteries of the Lord is part of our Catholic liturgical heritage. The Church, “in many-colored robes is led to the King” (cf. Psalm 44:12).

Bulletin Insert 7

The Priest

Nowhere does a parish community show forth the mystery of the Church more clearly than in the celebration of Holy Mass. The Mass requires the presence and ministry of a priest. Like John the Baptist, the priest is the “friend of the Bridegroom” (John 3:29), rejoicing in the union of Christ with his Bride, the Church. The priest effectively fosters that union by standing at the head of the assembly, by presiding over its prayer, by preaching the Word of God, and by offering the Sacrifice of Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father. “When he celebrates the Eucharist, therefore, he must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he says the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, art. 93).

The priest must be ablaze with what John Paul II calls “Eucharistic amazement” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, art. 6). When the priest speaks the words of consecration first uttered by Christ in the Upper Room, he places his voice and his whole being at the disposal of the Lord. Then, awed by what happens on the altar before which he stands, he proclaims the presence of the Mystery of Faith in the midst of the Church. Everything in the life of the priest flows into this moment, and flows out of it.

Bulletin Insert 8

Reverence

“Eucharistic amazement” is expressed in reverence and in the dignity and care brought to every celebration of Mass. These are attitudes that befit not only the priest and other sacred ministers, but all the baptized. Through Baptism and Confirmation, God

has prepared his children to stand in his presence and offer him worship. “Christian,” says Saint Leo the Great, “know your dignity” (*Sermon I on the Birth of the Lord*).

The first school of reverence is the home. Children can learn from their earliest years to make the sign of the cross slowly and deliberately, to kneel in adoration, to listen quietly, to stand in attention, and to treat holy things with respect. Adults can show by their example that the church is the house of God and the Mass the holiest of mysteries. In true reverence there is nothing constrained or artificial. Reverence is a joyful and gracious thing, akin to the wonder of one who finds himself face to face with a great beauty, or heart with a great love. To every word and gesture of the Mass give the imprint of reverence. “I bow down before your holy temple,” says the psalmist, “filled with awe” (Psalm 5:8).

Bulletin Insert 9

Chant and Sacred Music

“Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16). The Church sings because she loves. All the liturgical traditions of the Church have developed forms of chant for the praise of God, the proclamation of the Word, and prayer. Chant is language clothed in the vesture of melody. Chant is born of the word; it elevates the spoken discourse and adapts it to the sacredness of the liturgy.

In any Mass, the first things to be sung are the acclamations and simple dialogues. Priests and deacons are responsible for knowing how to sing the parts of the Mass that belong to them. To the people belong, first of all, the unchanging parts easily learned by heart and sung from memory. The Roman Liturgy gives pride of place to Gregorian Chant; other forms of song also have their place, provided that they “express in melody the truth of the Mystery that is celebrated in the Liturgy” (John Paul II, November 22, 2003). “Some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, set to the simpler melodies” (GIRM, art. 41) should be familiar to all Catholics.

Apart from the chants of the Mass itself, there is room for polyphony and other types of sacred music. The pipe organ, an instrument capable of expressing everything from majestic jubilation to humble recollection, holds an esteemed place in our heritage.

Bulletin Insert 10

A Place Where Beauty is at Home

In celebrating the Eucharist through the ages, the Church has felt the need to be “a place where beauty is at home.” The architecture of basilicas, cathedrals, and churches attests to something more than a concrete need for space and shelter. The altar is more than a table, the ambo more than a bookstand, and the tabernacle more than a cupboard. Our churches and their furnishings bear witness to the Mystery of Faith and to the “eucharistic amazement” that rises in the adoring heart.

The beauty that is the work of human artisans raises the mind and heart to the Author of all beauty and, in some way, says, “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and just.” The humblest chapel and the poorest church becomes the theatre of a lavish love when Christians, seized by the gift of the Eucharist, seek to respond to it with

the work of their hands. The cleanliness of the church, altar, sacred vessels, linens, and other appointments is a first and indispensable expression of grateful love for Christ.

Architecture, sculpture, and painting not only express the Mystery; they impress it on our senses, and through the senses, on our souls. Candles and incense, flowers and fabrics are the outward signs of an inward awareness of what Christ the Bridegroom ceaselessly offers to his Bride the Church in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Bulletin Insert 11

Light from the East

From the earliest times, Christians at prayer have turned towards the East. Christ is the Dayspring, the rising sun who dawns upon us from high “to give light to those in darkness and in the shadow of death” (Luke 1:9). The eastward orientation of churches and altars is a way of expressing the great cry of every Eucharist: “Let our hearts be lifted high. We hold them *towards the Lord.*” When, in the celebration of the liturgy, the priest faces east, he is “guiding the people in pilgrimage towards the Kingdom” and with them, keeping watch for the return of the Lord. “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

The Eastern churches follow to this day the apostolic tradition of celebrating the Eucharist towards the East in anticipation of the return of the Lord in glory. A powerful witness is given in the prayer of a priest and people who stand together facing eastward and giving voice to the same hope. “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come’” (Revelation 22:17).

Bulletin Insert 12

I will go to the Altar of God

The altar, a sign of Christ himself, occupies the holiest place in the church.

Here is the true high place

where the sacrifice of Christ is continually offered in mystery;

here perfect praise is given to you;

here our redemption is set forth.

Here is made ready the table of the Lord

where your children are refreshed by the Body of Christ

and gathered into the Church one and holy.

Here your faithful drink deeply of the Spirit

from the streams of water flowing from Christ the spiritual rock;

through Him they themselves become a holy oblation, a living altar

(Preface of the Mass for the Dedication of an Altar)..

Gestures of reverence express this significance of the altar and impress it upon us; the profound bow, the kiss, and incensation.

The altar is, in the deepest sense, the heart of the Church. The Christian life is articulated around the altar in three movements: *to the altar*, the movement of the world into the Kingdom; *at the altar*, the communion of heaven and earth; *and from the altar*, the movement of the Kingdom into the world. “I will come to the altar of God, the God of my joy” (Ps 42:4).

Bulletin Insert 13

The Tabernacle of His Presence

Tabernacle derives from the Latin word for *tent*. At the time of the exodus God chose to dwell in the midst of his pilgrim people in a tent. “The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34). Saint John describes the incarnation of the Word as the pitching of his tent among us (cf. John 1:14). With time, the word tabernacle came to designate the locked cupboard or receptacle wherein the Blessed Sacrament is reserved for the communion of the dying, the sick, and those unable to be present at Mass.

The saints through the ages have experienced the presence of Christ in the tabernacle as “a kind of magnetic pole” (John Paul II, *Mane nobiscum, Domine*, art. 18). Moved by the Holy Spirit, Catholics are drawn to the tabernacle as Moses was drawn to the “tent of meeting” (cf. Exodus 33:7-10). There the Lord spoke to him “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11).

The tabernacle may be located either in the sanctuary or in another part of the church that is “truly noble, prominent, readily visible, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer” (GIRM, art. 314). A special lamp, burning oil or wax, remains lighted at all times to signify Christ’s Eucharistic presence.

Bulletin Insert 14

The Ambo

“Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit which they had made for the purpose. . . and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people” (Nehemiah 8:4-5). The ambo is the stationary reading desk used for the proclamation of the Word of God. Somewhat elevated, it is designed with care and nobly crafted. The ambo should reflect the dignity and sacredness of the Word proclaimed from it. In some places the ambo is covered with a veil of the appropriate liturgical color. On occasions of festive solemnity, it is fitting to decorate the ambo with a simplicity that respects its purpose.

The ambo is reserved for the readings, the responsorial psalm, the Gospel, and the *Exultet* or Easter Proclamation. It may also be used for the homily and the Prayer of the Faithful. Commentaries and announcements are made from another suitable place. The cantor uses the ambo only for the responsorial psalm.

During the Liturgy of the Word, look toward the ambo. For one who listens to it with reverent attention the Word becomes prayer burning in the heart and desire for the Eucharist. The Word announced from the ambo is fulfilled and given in the Eucharist.

Bulletin Insert 15

Candles

“God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). The radiance of candlelight brings joy to those who see it, disposing the mind and to heart to seek the light of Christ. “Look to him, and be radiant” (Psalm 33:5)

Originally, candles were used as a practical means of lighting in homes as well as in churches. In the sacred liturgy candles take on a symbolic value. The Easter Vigil begins with the blessing and lighting of the Paschal Candle, the sign of the risen Christ illuminating the Church. Three times the deacon raises it aloft, intoning “Light of Christ!” As the procession makes its way through the darkness, the flame of the Paschal Candle is divided again and again, losing nothing of its brightness. At Baptism a lighted candle is given to the new Christian. The priest entrusts it to the parents and godparents, saying, “This light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly.” At Mass candles are placed on or around the altar: “at least two in any celebration, or even four or six, especially for a Sunday Mass or a holy day of obligation. If the diocesan bishop celebrates, then seven candles should be used” (GIRM, art. 117).

Bulletin Insert 16

Incense

“And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God” (Revelation 8:3-4). The offering of incense is a lavish and beautiful rite. Grains of aromatic resin are placed upon glowing coals; the censer is swung in a graceful rhythm, giving forth clouds of fragrant smoke. The liturgical use of incense serves no practical purpose. It is a holy extravagance, expressing wonder, adoration, and supplication in the presence of God.

Incense may be used in any celebration of Mass; it is also used to solemnize the Liturgy of the Hours and at adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Incense is offered to God and to the things and persons set apart for God: the cross, the altar, the Book of the Gospels, the priest himself and the faithful. Even the mortal remains of a Christian are revered with incense. “Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice” (Psalm 140:2).

Bulletin Insert 17

Flowers

Christ Jesus himself was not indifferent to “the splendor “of the lilies of the field” (Matthew 6:28). The Church fears no extravagance in the worship of God, devoting the best of her resources to expressing wonder and adoration in his presence. Humble and fragile though they are, the flowers and greens of the earth can be counted among these resources of the praying Church. The person who prepares flowers for the sanctuary and church participates in that careful preparation of “the large upper room” (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12) commanded by Jesus before the Last Supper.

Outside of Lent, flowers may be placed at the altar, ambo, crucifix, and tabernacle. During Advent the floral decoration of the altar should be marked by sobriety and restraint; it is not yet time to express the joy that comes with Christmas. During Paschaltide it is fitting to flower the Paschal Candle and baptismal font. Flowers set before images of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, or of the saints are an expression of loving

devotion. The arrangement of flowers for the sacred liturgy requires skill and a joyful willingness to enter into the rhythms of the Church's calendar. "Bless the Lord, all things that grow on the earth" (Daniel 3:76).

Bulletin Insert 18

Introductory Rites

"Those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and will humble themselves before him" (Sirach 2:17). The Introductory Rites of the Mass prepare us to listen to the Word of God and to enter into the Holy Sacrifice. The Entrance, Greeting, Act of Penitence, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and Collect are the means by which we cross the threshold, acknowledge the presence of Christ, seek his mercy, praise the glory of the Father, and pray together in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Only in a context of adoration, humility, supplication, and praise can we hear the Word of God rightly. The Introductory Rites of the Mass provide this context and foster the attention of the listening heart. On certain occasions such as the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd and Palm Sunday, the Introductory Rites are modified or performed in a particular way. The same is true when Mass is preceded by any part of the Liturgy of the Hours.

The Introductory Rites of the Mass are most effective when silence precedes them. "Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner" (GIRM, art. 45).

Bulletin Insert 27

The Word of the Lord

"The word of God is living and active" (Hebrews 4:12). On Sundays and great feasts the Mass has two readings before the proclamation of the Gospel. The first is taken from the Old Testament or, in Paschaltide, from the Acts of the Apostles. The second is taken from the Letters of Saint Paul, from the writings of another Apostle, or from the Book of Revelation. The two readings that precede the Gospel and lead up to it either point to the dawning light of Christ or bathe in the splendor of his resurrection.

Persons chosen to serve as lectors must be "truly suited to perform the function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture" (GIRM, art. 101). The readings are proclaimed from the ambo and introduced by means of the prescribed formula: "A reading from the book of . . .," or "A reading from the Letter of" At the end of the reading the lector sings or says, "The Word of the Lord." In response the assembly sings or says, "Thanks be to God."

Bulletin Insert 19

The Entrance

“To you, O God, I lift up my soul” (Psalm 24:1; *Entrance Chant of the First Sunday of Advent*). The Entrance Chant is like a door opening onto the Mystery. It begins as the priest and other ministers enter the church. The Entrance Chant sets the celebration of Mass in motion; it fosters unity; it expresses something of the feast or season being celebrated. The Entrance Chant accompanies the procession of the priest and ministers into the sanctuary and ends when the priest arrives at the chair.

The choice of the Entrance Chant is determined by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. It may be the antiphon and psalm given in one of three official liturgical books: the *Roman Gradual*, the *Roman Missal*, or the *Simple Gradual*. The Entrance Chant may also be an antiphon and psalm from another source, or even a suitable liturgical song, provided that these have been approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan bishop (GIRM, art. 48).

Apart from a very few exceptions, the Entrance Chants of the Mass are drawn from the Bible, usually from the Book of Psalms. It is significant that Mass opens with God’s word addressed to us. Already in the Entrance Chant it is God who comes out to meet us

Bulletin Insert 20

The Sign of the Cross and Greeting

“I through the greatness of your love have access to your house. I bow down before your holy temple, filled with awe” (Psalm 5:8). After having entered the sanctuary, the priest and ministers reverence the altar with a profound bow. The priest and deacon then kiss the altar and, on solemn occasions, incense it together with the cross.

Then, standing at the chair, the priest, together with the people, makes the Sign of the Cross. The priest alone chants or says, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The assembly answers with the first “Amen” of the Mass: a seal of assent, a confession of faith, an expression of joy.

The Greeting of the priest follows. In greeting the assembly the priest acknowledges the presence of Christ in the midst of the Church. At the same time, the Greeting of the priest is a communication of the grace of Christ, the love of the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. In responding to his Greeting, the people acknowledge the presence of Christ in the person of the priest who stands before them. “The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.”

Bulletin Insert 21

The Act of Penitence

The Act of Penitence follows the Greeting. The priest invites those present to acknowledge their sins and seek the mercy of God. The Act of Penitence can be expressed in one of three ways. The first is by reciting the *Confiteor*, “I confess to almighty God.” The second is by praying the verses: “V. Have mercy on us, Lord. R. For we have sinned against you. V. Show us, Lord, your mercy. R. And grant us your salvation.” The third is by singing or reciting the “Lord, have mercy” or *Kyrie Eleison* enriched with invocations addressed to Christ. The Act of Penitence concludes with the

priests's absolution: "May almighty God have mercy on us and, with our sins forgiven, lead us to eternal life." The people express their humble acceptance of God's mercy by saying, "Amen."

On Sundays, instead of the usual Act of Penitence, the blessing and sprinkling of water may take place, accompanied by singing from David's psalm of spiritual resurrection: "Sprinkle me, Lord . . . wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 50:9). The Act of Penitence softens the heart to receive the Word, and purifies it for the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

Bulletin Insert 22

The Kyrie Eleison

"God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). The *Kyrie Eleison* (Lord have mercy) is a litany addressed to the risen and ascended Jesus. Acclaiming him as both Lord and Christ, we implore his mercy. Though often prayed in English, the *Kyrie Eleison* may also be sung or recited in the original Greek, the only bit of Greek to have survived in our Mass of the Roman Rite. The *Kyrie Eleison* is a cherished reminder of the prayer of the Eastern Churches who in their liturgies ceaselessly call down the mercy of Christ.

The *Kyrie Eleison* may be sung by the people responding to a cantor, or by the people responding to a choir. Over the centuries it has been clothed in every variety of musical vesture. Some of these melodies emerge from the depths of a great sorrow; others express a quiet repentance and hope; still others soar ecstatically in praise of Christ's triumph over sin and death. "Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy." A prayer for all times and places. Even the simplest chant can serve to fix it in the heart.

Bulletin Insert 23

The Gloria

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people of good will" (Luke 2:15). The Gloria is sung on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent, solemnities, and feasts. Often referred to as "the Angelic Hymn," the *Gloria* was first intoned by angels from heaven for the birth of Christ on earth. The *Gloria* is a true hymn. Its opening burst of praise overflows into a series of joyful cries addressed to the Father: "We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we give you thanks for your great glory."

The hymn goes on to implore the mercy of the Son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. In singing the *Gloria* the Church relives the experience of Saint Stephen who, "full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). Gazing on Christ, the Church praises him: "You alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High." The final lines of the *Gloria* soar into the blinding mystery of the Trinity: "Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father." The hymn ends where it began: in the heavens.

Bulletin Insert 24

The Collect

“In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). What is the Collect? The origin of the term refers to the prayer made by the people “collected together in one place” and to the “collecting up” of the petitions of the many into one single prayer. The Collect concludes the Introductory Rites of the Mass.

The Collect is made up of four elements. (1) The priest, by saying, “Let us pray,” invites the faithful to make their petitions to God in a silent supplication. (2) The faithful respond by praying in silence. (3) The priest collects the prayers of the many into a single solemn prayer and presents it to God through Christ. (4) The faithful respond “Amen,” placing the seal of their assent on the prayer offered by the priest.

Read the Collect of today’s Mass and take it to heart. It will teach you how to call upon God, remind you of what his power has done in the past, teach you to ask wisely for his grace in the present, and invest your prayer with the joyous assurance that comes from going to God “through Christ our Lord.”

Bulletin Insert 25

The Liturgy of the Word

“Attend to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching” (1 Timothy 4:13). The Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the responsorial Psalm and other chants that come between them. The homily, Profession of Faith, and Prayer of the Faithful develop the message of the Scriptures apply it to life, turn it into prayer, and conclude this part of the Mass.

In the readings and in the responsorial Psalm God speaks to his people. When God speaks he communicates himself; the Word of God is an outpouring of his light, his life, and his love. The Liturgy of the Word invites to the deepest kind of listening: a listening with the ear of the heart and a humble readiness to be changed by what is heard. “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

The Word of God proclaimed in the liturgy recalls God’s wondrous deeds in the past. It reveals his will for us in the present. It holds out the hope of “what no eyes has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Bulletin Insert 26

A Listening Silence

“The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided” (GIRM, art. 56). Liturgy and leisure are related. In a world stressed by noise and haste, the liturgy is a space of silence wherein each thing can be done calmly, deliberately, and with grace.

Brief periods of silence mark the Liturgy of the Word. These periods of silence are to be adapted to the needs and readiness of the assembly. The first of these may

occur after the Collect, just before the Liturgy of the Word begins. After the first reading a moment of silence prepares the responsorial Psalm. After the second reading the Alleluia rises out of silence on the wings of song. Lastly, silence follows the homily, allowing the word proclaimed to become a word held in the heart.

In some communities, the introduction of silences will involve unlearning old patterns and entering into a new way of proclaiming, hearing, and praying the Word. The rewards of such an effort will be great. “Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13:16-17).

Bulletin Insert 28

The Responsorial Psalm

“The unfolding of your words gives light” (Psalm 118:130). The Book of Psalms, also called the Psalter, is a collection of 150 poem-songs inspired by the Holy Spirit and entrusted to Israel in view of the day when Jesus, the Son of God, would use them to express his own prayer to the Father. The Church sings the psalms and, like Christ her Head, finds in them the expression of her own prayer. Psalm singing marks or accompanies various moments of the Mass. The responsorial Psalm chanted after the first reading is one such moment.

The text of the responsorial Psalm is given in the Lectionary. Psalms are best chanted to a simple melody that allows the sacred text to speak for itself. The Psalmist or Cantor sing the verses of the responsorial Psalm from the ambo, signifying that the Psalm, like the reading that preceded it, is the Word of God addressed to his people as well as their prayer to him. During the responsorial psalm the congregation remains seated, listening with reverent attention and singing the response after each strophe. The responsorial Psalm is a meditation: a prayerful repetition of the Word of God. The responsorial Psalm is the Word of God “taken to heart.”

Bulletin Insert 29

Alleluia

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, ‘Alleluia’” (Revelation 19:6). Alleluia means “praise the Lord.” It is a cry of jubilation, the sound of pure, undiluted joy. We sing Alleluia to welcome and greet Christ, the Bridegroom-King, present in the proclamation of the holy Gospel. Alleluia says, “We recognize you, O Christ, and welcome you with inexpressible gladness.” The last syllable of Alleluia — ia — is derived from the Hebrew *Yahweh*. In the Church’s ancient tradition of liturgical chant, this last syllable becomes a river of ecstatic sound, a prolonged cry that climbs above the zone of words.

The Alleluia is sung in every season other than Lent. The return of the Alleluia at the Easter Vigil is a solemn and glorious moment. Three times it is intoned by the priest and repeated by the people. At other times the Alleluia is intoned by the cantor and repeated by the whole congregation. The cantor sings a short verse that sums up the Gospel of the day. Then, as the Book of the Gospel arrives at the ambo, the people acclaim Christ with a final Alleluia and stand ready to hear his voice.

Bulletin Insert 30
The Holy Gospel

The Holy Gospel is not the mere reading of a text; it is the presence of the risen Jesus in the midst of the Church. No sooner is the Gospel announced than the people address Christ directly, saying, “Glory to you, Lord.” Similarly, after the Gospel, the people address their Lord, saying, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”

Lighted candles and burning incense, marks of reverence and joy, may accompany the procession with the Book of the Gospels and surround the ambo while it is chanted or read. We listen to the Gospel standing, like a people thrilled to see and hear their King. Before the Gospel, we make a sign of the cross three times: on the forehead, the lips, and the heart, praying that the Word of Christ fill our thoughts, bring praise to our lips, and inflame us with love.

The Sunday Gospels roll on a three year cycle: Saint Matthew (Year A), Saint Mark (Year B), and Saint Luke (Year C). Part of the Gospel of Saint John, Jesus’ discourse on the Bread of Life, is fitted into Year B; the greater part of it is read during Paschaltide. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Bulletin Insert 31
The Homily

“Preach the word in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2). The homily is an integral part of the Mass, reserved to priest celebrant himself, or entrusted by him “to a concelebrating priest or occasionally, according to circumstances to a deacon, but never to a lay person” (GIRM, art. 65). The homily may be an explanation of the Gospel, of the other Mass readings, or of the responsorial Psalm. It may call attention to other texts of the Mass or develop the feast or mystery being celebrated on a given day. The homily is “the Word in other words.”

The best preaching is prepared in silence. Before preaching the Word, the priest listens to it, repeats it, and allows it to germinate in his heart. The homily is a bridge in two ways. It connects the first part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, to the second part, the Liturgy of the Eucharist; and it connects the Mass to the rest of life. The homily sends God’s people, full of thanksgiving, into the Sacrifice of Christ renewed on the altar, and prepares them to go forth into a world hungry for goodness, beauty, and truth.

Bulletin Insert 32
The Profession of Faith

“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion” (1 Timothy 3:16). In the Profession of Faith or Creed we respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings and explained in the homily. The Creed is a synthesis of what the Church believes and teaches, a glorious summary of the deeds and promises of God. When, on Sundays and solemnities, we sing or recite the Creed, we praise “the depth of the riches

and wisdom and knowledge of God” (Romans 11:33) and, at the same time declare our resolve to “guard what has been entrusted to us” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:20).

We stand during the Creed: the uprightness of our bodies depicts the uprightness of the faith. At the words, “by the Holy Spirit became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man,” all bow low in adoration of so awesome a mystery. At the same words on Christmas and on March 25th, solemnity of the Annunciation, we kneel in humility and wonder, acknowledging the love by which Christ Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

Bulletin Insert 33

The Prayer of the Faithful

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectable in every way” (1 Timothy 2:1-2). The Prayer of the Faithful, also called the General Intercessions, is a litany of supplication for the Church, for civil authorities, for those afflicted by suffering, and for the local community. It concludes the Liturgy of the Word. In the Prayer of the Faithful the Word heard in the readings, explained in the homily, and meditated in silence becomes the Word prayed. “So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty” (Isaiah 55:11).

The priest directs the Prayer of the Faithful from the chair; taking care to relate it to the Word that has been proclaimed and preached, he begins it with a brief invitation and concludes it with a prayer. A deacon, cantor, or lector announces the intentions. “The intentions announced should be sober, be composed freely but prudently, and be succinct” (GIRM, art. 71). The people make supplication after each intention by singing or reciting an invocation or by praying in silence.

Bulletin Insert 34

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

“I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me’” (1 Corinthians 12:23-25).

The Mass is the Sacrifice of Christ and the Banquet of his Body and Blood. It is the mystery of Christ’s Cross and Resurrection made present in our “here and now,” the foretaste on earth of “what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9) at the heavenly “Supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9).

The Liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds in three movements: the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the breaking of the Eucharistic Bread to be given in Holy Communion. The Mass thus corresponds precisely to the words and actions of Christ: “When he was at table with them, he *took* the bread and *blessed*, and *broke* it, and *gave* it to them” (Luke 24:30).

Bulletin Insert 35

The Preparation of the Gifts

The altar is prepared at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The *corporal*, a white linen cloth, is unfolded over the altar cloth already in place. When all is in readiness, the faithful bring forward the offerings of bread and wine. Money and gifts for the poor may also be collected and brought forward; these are put in a suitable place away from the altar.

The procession is accompanied by the Offertory chant, usually an antiphon and psalm. Even when there is no procession, singing may accompany the rites of preparation. The priest places the bread and wine on the altar, praying silently as indicated in the Missal. He may also, if there is no singing, say aloud the formulas prescribed. He then bows low, praying silently, “with humble spirit and contrite heart” (cf. Daniel 3:39-40).

The priest may then incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar itself. The clouds of incense rising in the presence of God are a sign of the Church’s prayer. The priest also may be incensed, in recognition of his sacred ministry, and the people too, by reason of their baptismal dignity. The priest then washes his hands, praying silently, “Wash me of my iniquity, Lord, and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 50:2).

Bulletin Insert 36

The Prayer Over the Offerings

“I appeal to you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). To conclude the Preparation of the Gifts, the priest appeals to the assembly: “Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” Called to pray, the people stand and make their response, holding themselves in readiness for the Mystery about to unfold. The Mass engages not the priest alone, nor the people apart from the priest, but the people offering with the priest and through his ministry. “The celebration of the Eucharist is an action of the whole Church, and in it each one should carry out solely but completely that which pertains to him or her, in virtue of the rank of each within the People of God” (GIRM, art. 5).

The Prayer Over the Offerings follows. It asks God to receive the offerings set before him and to give us, in exchange, the surpassing gift of himself. The faithful, uniting themselves to this prayer, make it their own by sealing it with the acclamation, *Amen*.

Bulletin Insert 37

The Eucharistic Prayer

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you’” (John 17:1). Thanksgiving was the heart of the prayer of Christ to the Father. It was in giving thanks that he instituted the memorial of his Passion, blessing his Father in advance for the glory of the Cross and for the joy it would bring into the world. Lifted up on the Cross and

raised to the Father in glory, Christ became our everlasting Thanksgiving. “It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).

The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and summit of the Mass. The Roman Missal contains four principal Eucharistic Prayers. The first of these, the venerable Roman Canon was for centuries, and until quite recently, the only Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Church. The Second, Third, and Fourth Eucharistic Prayers were introduced in the Roman Missal of 1970. In addition to these, the Roman Missal contains six other Eucharistic Prayers; three of these are for Masses with children.

Bulletin Insert 38

Let our hearts be lifted high!

The Eucharistic Prayer opens in a lyrical dialogue between the priest and people. “The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.” Here, the familiar greeting becomes more solemn. Poised on the threshold of the Mysteries, priest and people together recognize that they are about to be enveloped in Christ’s own prayer to the Father. “Let our hearts be lifted high. We hold them before the Lord.” Every heart is held aloft; nothing is held back. “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and just.” In ancient times, this response had the quality of a thunderous affirmation, solemn and spontaneous all at once.

The Preface follows: a song of immense jubilation, a poem of thanksgiving to the glory of the Father. The Roman Missal contains a variety of Prefaces. Each one begins by acknowledging that the Father is always and everywhere worthy of thanksgiving. The middle part, drawing upon the wonders of creation and redemption, presents a specific reason for giving thanks. The final part soars heavenward, asking that our voices may be joined to those of the angelic choirs. The Preface, by its very nature, cries out to be sung. The world’s greatest musicians have recognized in the traditional melody of the Preface, a composition of unequalled simplicity and majesty.

Bulletin Insert 39

Holy, Holy, Holy!

“Holy. Holy Holy Lord, God of mighty hosts!” One can almost hear the rush of angels’ wings in the *Sanctus*, a hymn of adoration belonging to the Eucharistic Prayer itself. The biblical sources of the *Sanctus* are in the book of the Prophet Isaiah and the Gospel of Saint Matthew; thus does it bring together the Old and New Testaments in a single song. “I saw the Lord,” says Isaiah, “sitting upon a throne high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1). Surrounding the Lord, the prophet saw Seraphim, angels of fire calling out, “Holy, Holy, Holy!” The second part of the *Sanctus* echoes the cry of the children of Jerusalem waving palm branches before Christ the true King: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mt 21:9).

The *Sanctus* expresses what lies at the heart of the Christian experience of God. The thrice-holy God adored by the angels is, at the same time, the humble self-emptying God who, in the Eucharist, gives us his Body and Blood. Like the Preface that leads into

it, the *Sanctus* cries out to be sung. The Roman Missal provides a simple melody, easily learned, and suited to its place within the Eucharistic Prayer.

Bulletin Insert 40

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:25). Ceaselessly the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance the life-giving words of Jesus: “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 22:19).

In the Eucharistic Prayer, while giving thanks to the Father, the Church “implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ’s Body and Blood” (GIRM, art. 79). The Church also prays that, by the action of the Holy Spirit, “the spotless Victim to be received in Communion be for the salvation of those who will partake of it” (GIRM, art. 79).

At the Annunciation (cf. Luke 1:35) the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary, forming the Body of Christ in her womb. At Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:4) the Holy Spirit was present in a mighty wind and tongues of fire to form the Body of Christ, the Church. In every Mass the Holy Spirit makes fruitful the Church’s obedience to the command of Christ: “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19).

Bulletin Insert 41

Consecration

“Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body which will be given up for you. Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the cup of my Blood of the new and eternal covenant; it will be poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of Me” (Eucharistic Prayer).

At the heart of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says and does what Christ said and did at the Last Supper. The power of Christ’s words and actions, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make present the sacrifice of the Cross. The bread appears unchanged, but it is no longer bread: it is the Body of Christ. The wine appears unchanged, but it is no longer wine; it is the Blood of Christ.

The priest shows the consecrated Host to the faithful, and after that the chalice containing the Blood of Christ. A bell may be rung; incense may be offered. The Church is, for a moment, full of adoring silence. Then, out of this silence, the priest raises his voice in a cry of Eucharistic amazement: “The mystery of faith.”

Bulletin Insert 42

Remembering

“Therefore, Lord, remembering the saving passion of your Son, his wondrous resurrection and ascension into heaven, and looking forward to his second coming, we offer you with thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice” (Eucharistic Prayer III).

The Church retraces the whole passage of Christ through suffering and death into the glory of the resurrection and ascension. She remembers too his promise to come again. In the mysteries of Christ she sees the unfolding of the Father’s plan, the “secret

and hidden wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 2:7). Offering the sacrifice of Christ, she gives thanks.

Having “passed through the heavens” (Hebrews 4:14), the ascended Christ, presents himself to the Father in an act of everlasting remembrance and thanksgiving. As the Church remembers and gives thanks, she too, in hope, “reaches that inner sanctuary beyond the veil” (Hebrews 6:19).

Each of the Eucharistic Prayers contains this prayer of remembrance and thanksgiving. The mysteries we recall — Christ’s passion, death, resurrection, and return in glory — are not, like other events, locked in an irretrievable past or inaccessible future. In the Mass they are all present to us, and to the Father. The “here and now” of the Mass is God’s eternity.

Bulletin Insert 43

Offering

“We, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from your own gifts and bounty the pure victim, the holy victim, the spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Cup of everlasting salvation” (Eucharistic Prayer I). In each of the Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Missal, *offering* follows *remembrance*. “From the rising of the sun to its setting” (Malachi 1:11), Christ, the Lamb of the eternal sacrifice is present and offered to the Father under the form of bread and wine. In communion with the Church in every place, the priest and faithful offer to the Father the sacrifice that “brings salvation to the whole world” (Eucharistic Prayer IV).

The offering of Christ, Head of the Mystical Body, cannot be separated from the offering of his members. In offering Christ, we learn to offer ourselves at Mass and in all the circumstances of life. There is room on the altar of Christ’s sacrifice for every joy, suffering, prayer and work of ours. “I appeal to you by God’s mercies,” says Saint Paul, “to offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God and worthy of his acceptance” (Romans 12:1). The unity of the Church is forged in her one offering.

Bulletin Insert 44

Intercession

“Therefore, Lord, remember at this time all for whom we make this offering to you” (Eucharistic Prayer III). No one is forgotten in the Mass: not the saints in heaven, nor our fellow pilgrims on earth, nor those who have gone before us in death. In the Eucharistic Prayer we pray for our Pope and Bishop by name. We pray too for “the clergy, those who make the offering, those gathered here, your entire people, and all who seek you with a sincere heart” (Eucharistic Prayer IV). We pray for “those who have died in the peace of your Christ and all the dead whose faith only you have known” (Eucharistic Prayer IV). In every Mass we rejoice to name “Mary, the most blessed Virgin Mother of God.” We remember the Apostles, the Martyrs, and all the saints. Our Eucharistic intercession is immense and all-embracing. Like Jacob’s ladder it stretches from earth to heaven. “And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it” (Genesis 28:12).

Catholics request the celebration of Masses for the departed, for the needs of the living, and for special intentions. There is no greater comfort in times of sorrow, no surer help in time of need, no higher joy in times of blessing than the Mass.

Bulletin Insert 45

Through him, and with him, and in him

“Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty God and Father, forever and ever. Amen.” The climax of the Eucharistic Prayer is a *doxology*, a word of glory. Praise blossoms on the lips of the priest and is sealed by the “Amen” of the people. The entire Eucharistic Prayer flows into this one moment, like a river into the sea. We acknowledge that every good thing descends to us from the Father through Christ and, through Christ, “in the unity of the Holy Spirit,” we return to the Father “all glory and honor.”

The priest alone, or in a concelebrated Mass the principal celebrant together with the concelebrating priests, sings or says the final doxology, lifting high the paten with the host and the chalice. The people’s solemn acclamation, “Amen,” signifies their complete adhesion to everything said by the priest. This is the true elevation fulfilling the psalmist’s mysterious words: “What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord . . . in the presence of all his people” (Psalm 115:12-13).

Bulletin Insert 46

Our Father

“And I when I am lifted up will draw all men to myself” (John 12:32). Drawn to Christ, we dare to pray as he taught us, calling God “our Father” (Matthew 6:9). The Lord’s Prayer opens the Communion Rite. “Pray then like this,” said Jesus (Matthew 6:9). By means of his prayer, “the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Romans 8:26).

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). In the petition for daily food we express, above all, our hunger for the “Bread of Life” (John 6:48). We ask too for purification from sin — “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matthew 6:12) — so as to approach in holiness the holy mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood.

The priest introduces the Lord’s Prayer; all sing or say it together with him. After the last petition, “but deliver us from evil,” the priest alone continues in a prayer for deliverance “from every evil” and for peace. The people conclude with a doxology. The Roman Missal provides a simple chant for the invitation, the Lord’s Prayer itself, the prayer that prolongs it, and the doxology.

Bulletin Insert 47

The Rite of Peace

“Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27). Peace descends from above; it is the gift by which Christ himself prepares us to become one in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. By coming together for the Eucharist, we demonstrate our readiness to forgive each other, to accept the peace of Christ into our hearts and to exchange it with one another.

The exchange of “the peace” is not the expression of mere good wishes. It is the outward sign of a gift inwardly received and as such is marked by reverence and dignity. “The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration” (GIRM, art. 154). At the same time, “it is appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner” (GIRM, art. 82). “While the sign of peace is being given, one may say, *The peace of the Lord be with you always*, to which the response is *Amen*” (GIRM, art. 154).

Bulletin Insert 48

The Breaking of the Bread

“Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17). There was something unforgettable in the way Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper and again for the disciples encountered on the road to Emmaus. “He was known to them in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 14:35). The Bread of Life is broken to be given to the many, bringing into the unity of a single body all who receive it.

The priest breaks a piece from the host and puts it into the chalice to signify that in Holy Communion we receive Christ’s living and glorious Body. He begins the breaking of the Bread after the sign of peace and carries it out with reverence. “This rite is reserved to the priest and the deacon” (GIRM, art. 83). Even after the breaking, each fragment of the Eucharistic Bread is the whole Christ.

During the breaking of the Bread, the choir or cantor sing the supplication to the Lamb of God, the *Agnus Dei*, to which the people respond. The invocation may be repeated until the rite is completed. At the last repetition the people respond, “grant us peace.”

Bulletin Insert 49

Holy Communion, Part I

“May receiving your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment or condemnation, but through your loving mercy let it be my protection in mind and body, and a healing remedy.” Saying quietly this prayer or another one found in the Roman Missal the priest prepares to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. At the same time the faithful prepare for Holy Communion in the silence of their hearts.

Lifting the Eucharistic Bread above the chalice, the priest invites the faithful to look upon the Lamb of God and to receive in Holy Communion a foretaste of the “Supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9) made ready for the blessed in heaven. “It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s

Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the circumstances when it is permitted, they partake of the chalice” (GIRM, art. 85).

The Communion chant begins while the priest is receiving the Sacrament. Like the Entrance and Offertory chants, it is, according to tradition, an antiphon — often drawn from the gospel of the day — and a psalm chosen to resonate with it.

Bulletin Insert 50

Holy Communion, Part 2

“O taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 33:9). We approach the Body and Blood of Christ in “Eucharistic amazement” and joy. The Church carefully regulates the manner of receiving Holy Communion. “The faithful are not permitted to take the consecrated bread or the sacred chalice by themselves and still less, to hand them from one to another” (GIRM, art. 160). Holy Communion is never “taken”; it is a Gift received with adoration.

“When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant. . . . As soon as the communicant receives the host, he or she consumes it entirely. . . . When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood” (GIRM, art. 160 and 161).

After the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest and people spend some time praying in silence. If desired, a psalm or hymn of praise may be sung before the priest says the Prayer After Communion.

Bulletin Insert 51

The Prayer After Communion

“And their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (Luke 24:31). The Church celebrates the Eucharist with eyes opened wide in recognition of Christ her Lord and Bridegroom. The priest introduces the Prayer After Communion as he did the Collect at the beginning of Mass, saying, “Let us pray.” The assembly responds in a brief but intense silent prayer. The priest then prays in the name of all for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated: healing of mind and body, the forgiveness of sins, the protection of God, and strength to go forward in holiness. The people seal the prayer with their *Amen*. Brief announcements may follow, prepared in advance and made in such a way as to foster the climate of reverence and joy that should characterize the Mass from beginning to end.

In a final greeting, “The Lord be with you,” the priest wishes the people the abiding presence of Christ. The people in turn acknowledge the gift of grace that is his for the service of the Church: “And with your spirit.” The blessing follows. During Lent a Prayer Over the People may precede it; on festive occasions a more solemn formula may be used.

Bulletin Insert 52

Go, the Mass is ended!

“And the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and said. ‘Arise and eat, else the journey will be too great for you.’ And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God” (1 Kings 19:7-8). The Eucharist is this mysterious food and drink prefigured in the experience of the prophet Elijah.

The dismissal of the people by the deacon or priest is a mandate for mission. Many who “sit in darkness and in the shadow of death” (Luke 1:79) wait for the light and warmth that only one nourished by the Eucharist can bring. Paradoxically the end of the Mass is the beginning of our mission. We are bound to leave, and leaving, to labor in love, so as to return “full of song, carrying our sheaves” (cf. Psalm 125:6).

The Mass ends, mysteriously, with a kiss. The priest and deacon kiss the altar. It is the kiss of promise and anticipation, something that the heart understands. The Church thus lives from Eucharist to Eucharist, “proclaiming the death of the Lord until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).