

Dear Friends,

As a courtesy to our parishioners we have included an electronic copy of the hand-outs that were distributed weekly to our parishioners during our Mass Sermon Series during the months of Sept and Oct, 2012.

Much of this material can be found from the book The Biblical Walk Through the Mass: Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy by Dr. Edward Sri. This book can be purchased at our Catholic Book store on-site or ordered on-line.

Our Adult Education Dept welcomes you to download these handouts and further reflect upon the beauty of our Liturgy as well as the upcoming translation changes to the Mass scheduled to being the First Sunday of Advent 2011.

Thank you for your continual support of our programming.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

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A Biblical Walk Through the Mass...

Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy – Week I

From the time of the apostles, the Mass has been the central act of Christian worship. For the Mass is nothing less than the celebration of the Eucharist that Jesus instituted at the Last Supper, when he commanded his apostles, (Sri 2011) “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19)

I. Key aspect of The Mass

a. Mass as sacrifice and memorial

- Catholics do not come to Mass to sacrifice animals as our Jewish ancestors did. The sacrifice taking place in the Mass is clearly not one of cattle, sheep or goats. It does, however, involve a real sacrifice – the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in His death on the cross offered his life as a total gift to the Father and redeemed the world. According to Catholic teaching, the Mass does not merely recall or symbolize Jesus’ death on the cross. It sacramentally makes present Christ’s redeeming sacrifice on Calvary, so that its saving power may be more fully applied to our lives.
- In scripture, Jesus says his body would be offered up and his blood poured out. This language would have recalled the Jewish sacrificial rites in which an animal’s body was offered up and its blood poured out in sacrifice. Thus Jesus, at the Last Supper was already anticipating his sacrifice on the cross when he referred to his body and blood being offered like a Passover lamb being sacrificed.

b. Mass as Real Presence (John 6)

- In Scriptures, memorial does not merely recall a past event. It makes that event present. Therefore, when Jesus said, “Do this in memory of me.”, he was commanding the apostles to make present as a biblical memorial the sacrificial offering of his body and blood at the Last Supper.

c. Mass as Holy Communion (Matt 18:15-20)

- In Jewish tradition a communion meal followed the sacrifice, and it was the shared meal that expressed the sealing of the covenant and forged communion between the participants and God.

During the next 9 weeks during the Sat/Sunday Masses, the homilies will systematically reflect upon the liturgy of the Mass providing the parishioners insights into the scriptural history and development of the liturgy that we have today, as well as focusing on the revisions to the missal that are scheduled to be in Advent 2011. It is our hope that through this comprehensive effort by clergy,

Additional thoughts... In regards to the translation changes, it is important to remember two key issues:

1. The language is more sacral and as a result the translations communicate more precisely why we pray, why we have hope, and how we present ourselves before God. Translation is more in line with the Latin translation of the word.
2. The new translation helps us see more clearly the connection between Scripture and the Mass prayers.



Notes to Parents... Younger children are very sensitive to attitudes and the environment. Your confidence and enthusiasm for presenting and practicing the changes in the language of the Mass will be very important. Young children have a natural sense of awe and wonder so they will not be daunted by formal language. The following are some tips for parents when working with their children:

- Familiarize yourself with the word changes in the Mass. Find more information at www.romanmissalchanges.com and www.usccb.org/romanmissal.
- As a family, slowly pray aloud parts of the revised Gloria, or “Holy, Holy, Holy,” as a morning or evening prayer or at mealtime.

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass...
Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy – Week II

- I. The Sign of the Cross (Ezekiel 8, 9:4)
 - a. Words – invoking God’s presence and power
 - b. Ritual – signifying fidelity, asking for protection

- II. Opening Greeting – “The Lord be with you...”
 - a. God’s response to Moses “I will be with you,” (Ex 3:12)
 - b. New response “And with your spirit”... the people are acknowledging the Holy Spirit’s unique activity through the priest during the sacred liturgy by virtue of the priest’s ordination.

- III. The Confiteor – “I confess...”
 - a. Prayer challenges us to consider the (4) main ways we sin:
 - i. Thoughts
 - ii. Words
 - iii. What we have done
 - iv. What we have failed to do

 - b. Changes “*through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault*”...additional words show our true contrition (our sincerest apology)



- IV. The Kyrie (Lord have Mercy)
 - a. God’s response to us, is His mercy

During the next 8 weeks during the Sunday Masses, the homilies will systematically reflect upon the liturgy of the Mass providing the parishioners insights into the scriptural history and development of the liturgy that we have today, as well as focusing on the revisions to the missal that are scheduled to be in Advent 2011.

The Confiteor

I confess to almighty God
And to you, my brothers and sisters,
That I have greatly sinned,
In my thoughts and in my words,
In what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
(we strike our breast during the next 2 lines)
Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
Therefore I asked blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
All the Angels and Saints,
And you, my brothers and sisters,
To pray for me to the Lord our God.

Thoughts to Ponder...

One main focus in the Introductory Rites is on purifying our souls before encountering God in the readings from Scripture and in the Eucharist. We do this by confessing our sins and asking for God’s mercy.

To help you prepare for this rite at your next Mass, take some time to examine your life. Consider the following questions:

- What areas of my life need to change?
- Do I live more for success, praise, pleasure or money than for God?
- Is there someone from whom I need to ask for forgiveness?
- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Do I worry too much about what others think of me?

After examining your conscience, prayerfully reflect upon the humble and honest attitude of David in Psalm 51 asking God for his love and mercy.

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass...

Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy – Week III

One liturgical theologian from the mid-twentieth century, Pius Parsch, called the Gloria “the joyful response to the pleading of the Kyrie”. In the Kyrie, we express our need for salvation and God’s mercy. In the Gloria, we joyfully express our gratitude for having received salvation from Christ.

Thus the tone of the liturgy now shifts from sorrowful repentance to joyful praise as we arrive at a prayer known as the **Gloria**. This prayer is typically sung, but it comes from no ordinary hymn book. The opening line of the Gloria is taken from the words sung by the angels over the fields of Bethlehem, announcing to the shepherds the good news of Christ’s birth:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased” (Luke 2:14)

It is fitting that we sing these words at the beginning of the Sunday liturgy (except in Advent and Lent) for there is a sense in which every Mass makes present the mystery of Christmas once again. As God was made manifest to the world in the baby Jesus some 2,000 years ago, so He is made present Sacramentally upon our Altars at the Consecration in every Mass. We thus prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus by repeating the same words of praise that the angels used to herald Christ’s coming in Bethlehem.

The Gloria prayer follows a Trinitarian pattern, beginning with praise of the Father who is addressed as “God, almighty Father” and “heavenly King” two common biblical titles for God.

The catechism further explains God’s omnipotence in the context of his Fatherhood – which is exactly what we say in the Gloria. We address God, as “Lord God, heavenly King, O God, Almighty Father”. We do not stop with a mere mention of God’s power and kingships. We go on to praise Him ultimately as our heavenly Father. If God were merely an all-powerful king, we might get the impression that he could be like a dictator who arbitrarily wields his authority to do whatever he wants. But God has what the catechist

calls “fatherly omnipotence”. Just as a good father wants what is best for his children, God’s power is in perfect harmony with his loving will that always seeks what is good for us and that provides for all our needs. (Sri 44)

The next part of the Gloria, in a sense tells a story – the story of Christ.

- Christ’s coming
- Christ’s redeeming death
- Christ’s triumphant resurrection and ascension into heaven

After the Gloria, the priest invites the people to pray a prayer known as **The Collect**. This prayer gathers together the intentions of the people participating in the Mass and concludes the Introductory Rites.

Thoughts to Ponder...

We come to Mass conscious of two things: that we stand greatly in need of redemption, and that we have actually been saved. When I think of the first, I recognize my own insignificance; when I realize the second truth, I perceive my strength; in the first I see my weakness and utter poverty, in the other I see my power and greatness. Let us put in the prayerful Kyrie our yearning for salvation. In the joyful Gloria let us sing our confidently of our redemption, celebrating thus in every Mass.

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
We bless you,
We adore you,
We glorify you,
We give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week IV

The Church has often used the image of “two tables” to express the continuity between the two main parts of the Mass; the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. God’s people are nourished first from the table of holy Scriptures, which is proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word. Then they are fed with the body of Our Lord at the table of the Eucharist. This next week, our focus will be on the Liturgy of the Word, specifically on the Readings and Homily.

- God’s Word
 - The bible does not simply talk about God, but is God’s own speech. They were inspired by God, written by human authors. Each book of the Bible contains the human author’s writing style, personality, theological outlook and pastoral concerns.
 - Scripture also inspired by God. “Inspiration” comes from the Greek word theopneustos, which means “God breathed”. 2 Tim 3:16.
- Cycle of Readings and Liturgical Year
 - The selections from Scriptures read at our Sunday liturgy are determined by a 3-year cycle of readings from various parts of the Bible; the Old Testament, The Psalms, the New Testament and Gospel.
- The First Reading (usually from the Old Testament except during the Easter Season, when it is from Acts of the Apostles)
- The Responsorial Psalm – after hearing God’s word proclaimed in the first reading, we respond next, not with our meager human words, but with God’s own inspired words of praise and thanksgiving from the Psalms.
- The Second Reading – The second reading comes from the New Testament; one of the epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, or the book of Revelation. Though often selected independently of the first reading and the Gospel, these New Testament writings reflect on the mystery of Jesus Christ and His saving work and the meaning it has for our lives.
- The Gospel – Principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior.

Gospel cont’d

- Mass reflects this preeminence through standing, alleluia, procession and making of the sign of the cross over one-self.
 - As the Church has taught, “when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His own word, proclaims the Gospel” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal 29)
- The Homily – From the earliest days of Christian liturgy, the Word of God was not read on its own. It was accompanied by a homily which explained the meaning of the Scriptural readings and drew out the application for people’s lives. The word homily means “explanation” in Greek.
 - The liturgical practice of explaining Scripture readings did not start with Christianity. It is rooted in ancient Jewish custom. In the book of Ezra, for example, the book of the law was not merely read to the people. The Levites (priests) “helped the people to understand the law” (Neh 8:7). They read from God’s law “and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (Neh 8:8)
 - The homily should be given only by an ordained minister (deacon, priest or bishop) thus “guaranteeing” that the preaching is passing on “the Church’s apostolic faith and not merely the private thoughts and experiences of an individual.

From listening to the word of God, faith is born or strengthened; in the Eucharist the Word made flesh gives himself to us as our spiritual food. Thus, “from the two tables of the word of God and the Body of Christ, the Church received and gives to the faithful the bread of life.”... Consequently it must constantly be kept in mind that the word of God, read and proclaimed by the Church in the liturgy, leads to the Eucharist as to its own connatural end. (Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis)

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week V

- **The Creed** – The CREED is a summary statement of the faith used in the early Church as a rule or standard for Christian belief. The Creed summarizes the story of Scripture (hence why it is in the Liturgy of the Word) moving from creation to Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection to the sending of the Holy Spirit, to the era of the Church and finally to the Second Coming, the Creed carries us through the entire story of salvation history.
 - In this “anything goes” cultural milieu, the Creed grounds us in reality and reminds us that our beliefs and choices do matter.
 - “We believe in one God...” we are expressing **something quite personal**. More than simply affirming that God exists – though we certainly do that, we are also saying **that we entrust our entire lives to the One who makes all the difference for us**. This is one reason why we recite the Creed every Sunday at Mass. Just as a married couple may affirm their trust and commitment to each other and regularly tell each other “I love you,” so do we in the Creed renew our commitment to the Lord each week, lovingly telling him over and over again that we give ourselves to him, that we entrust our entire lives to him – that we “believe” in him.
- Addressing new English translation of the Creed...
 - The new translation unites us more with the rest of the Western world in using the singular “I” for its opening **“I believe in one God”**. This makes it more personal and challenges each individual to interiorize the faith.
 - Instead of saying God is the maker “of all that is seen and unseen” as in the old translation, we now say he is the maker **“of all things visible and invisible”** which more accurately reflects the language of St. Paul who referred to the creation of all things “in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible”. (Col 1:16)
- The previous translation referred to Jesus as “one in being with the Father, but we now speak of Jesus being **“consubstantial with the Father”**. This more closely reflects the theological language of the Council of Nicea (325 AD) which clarified that the Son was “of the same substance” in Greek, homoousios) as the Father and condemned the teaching of a man named Arius.
- Another important theological point is in the older translation referred to the Son in this way; “By the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the virgin Mary and became man”. The new translation more accurately reflects the Latin text of the Mass which includes the theological Latin word *incarnates* (incarnate) which refers to the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it”. We now say **“by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”** Not only is this more precise translation; it also captures more of the theological point expressed in the Creed. The Son of God was not just born of the Virgin Mary. The Eternal Son of God who is of the same substance as the Father actually took on human flesh and a soul.
- **The Prayers of the Faithful** - The Liturgy of the Word culminates in what is known as “The Prayer of the Faithful”. This is one of the most ancient parts of the Mass, already attested to by St. Justin Martyr in AD 155.
 - These general intercessions at Mass represent a significant moment for the faithful. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal notes that in these intercessions, the faithful “exercise the priestly function.” One way our priestly office is exercised in the Mass is in the prayer of the faithful, whereby we participate in Christ's priestly prayer for the entire human family.

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week VI

Preparation of the Gifts

This part of the Mass has also been known as the “Offertory” based on the Latin word *offerre*, which means *to present, to bring or to offer*. Though it is now also called the Preparation of the Gifts, sacrificial themes remain. There is much significance in the offering of these gifts, for they typically came from one’s home or field and were made by one’s hand. As such, they expressed a gift of one’s self. Indeed, to part with the fruit of one’s own hard labor would have had sacrificial overtones. This is why the presentation of the gifts symbolizes the individuals giving of himself to God.

Presentation of Gifts (Bread, Wine and Money)

The offering of bread and wine in the Mass has strong support in Scripture. In addition to being used in the Passover of Jesus’ day and in the Last Supper, bread and wine were offered up regularly in Israel’s sacrificial rites.

- Bread
 - For the ancient Israelites, bread was the most basic type of food, seen as necessary to sustain life.
 - To part with one’s bread would have been a personal sacrifice, expressing the individual’s giving of himself to God.
- Wine
 - It was one of the first fruits presented to the temple as a tithe and it was poured out as a drink offering in Israel’s thanksgiving and expiatory sacrifices.
 - Since there was a close connection between the sacrificial gifts and the individual giver, offering bread and wine symbolized the offering of one’s self.

In the bread and wine, we offer back to God the gifts of creation and the result of our labors – or as the prayer in the Mass calls them, “fruit of the earth and work of human hands.”

- More than money
 - The practice of giving money (which eventually overshadowed the offering of oil, flax and other sundry gifts) can be seen in the same light. Putting money in the basket is not simply a contribution to some good cause; it too expressed the giving of our lives to God.

Mixing Water and Wine, Washing Hands and Prayer over the Offerings

Though it was a common practice in the ancient world to dilute wine with a bit of water, Christians have seen profound theological significance in the mixing of water and wine at this moment in the liturgy. The meaning is expressed in the prayer that accompanies this rite: “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” In a traditional interpretation of this practice, the wine symbolizes Christ’s divinity and water symbolizes our humanity. The mingling of the water and wine points to the Incarnation, which is the mystery of God becoming a man. It also points to our call to share in Christ’s divine life, to become “partakers of the divine nature”. (2 Pt 1:4)

May We Be Accepted by You

The priest’s next prayer makes even clearer the connection between the gifts of bread and wine and the giver who offers them to God. The priest prays, “With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God.” *Notice how the sacrifice envisioned in this prayer is not some thing being offered to God, like bread and wine, but the people assembled: “May we be accepted by you...”*

This theme, as well as the mention of a humble spirit and contrite heart, recalls the petition of the three Hebrew men, thrown in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3.

Entering the Holy of Holies (Priest washes his hands)

Next, the priest washes his hands in a gesture that signals a dramatic event is about to take place. This practice recalls rites for the priests of the Old Testament. At their consecration, the priests and Levites had to undergo ritual washings before they could perform their duties in the sanctuary. As demonstrated in Psalm 24, clean hands are associated with a pure heart. The ritual hand-washing symbolizes the internal cleansing of heart required before a person could draw near to God’s presence in the sanctuary.

In preparation for this most sacred moment, the priest washes his hands like the priests of old as he approaches a new “holy of holies”. And the priest echoes David’s humble prayer of contrition to prepare his soul for this holy task. “Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 51:2)

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week VII

Scholars have noted that the Eucharistic prayer has roots in Jewish table prayers recited at every meal. They included reciting a blessing over bread and wine, retelling the foundational saving event of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the three-fold structure of offering praise to God for the creation, thanksgiving for his saving deeds and supplication.

During the next 2 week we will now consider the following parts of the Eucharistic prayer: 1) The Preface; 2) the Sanctus; 3) the Epiclesis, 4) the Words of Institution/Consecration; 5) the "Mystery of Faith"; and 6) the Anamnesis, Offering, Intercessions and Doxology.

The Preface

The Eucharistic Prayer opens with a three-part dialogue that has been recited in the Church since at least the 3rd century.

Priest: *The Lord be with you.*

People: *And with your spirit.*

Priest: *Lift up your hearts.*

People: *We lift them up to the Lord.*

Priest: *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

People: *It is right and just.*

- The Lord be with you.... And with your spirit.
 - We hear this in the Introductory Rites, it is fitting here to say again since we are embarking on the most sacred part of the Mass.

- Lift up your hearts.. We lift them up to the Lord
 - This prayer brings to mind the similar exhortation in the book of Lamentations: "Let us lift up our hearts and hands in God in heaven" (Lam 3:41) but *what does it mean to "lift up our hearts?"*
 - *In the Bible, the heart is the hidden center of the person from which one's thoughts, emotions and actions originate. All intentions and commitments flow from the human heart. Therefore, when the priest says "Lift up your hearts," he is summoning us to give our fullest attention to what is about to unfold. This is a "wake-up call" to set-aside all other concerns and focus our minds and will and emotions – our hearts on the sublimity of what is happening in the Eucharistic prayer.*

- Let us give thanks to the Lord our God... It is right and just.
 - There is so much to be thankful for at this moment in the liturgy We therefore acknowledge that gratitude is the only fitting response to the mysteries about to unfold before us.

Preface Prayer

After inviting us to give thanks to the Lord, the priest now talks to God in a prayer of thanksgiving. The opening line is addressed to the Father and expresses what we have seen throughout Scripture; the duty of God's people to thank the Lord.

The Sanctus: "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord"

*"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest."

- This prayer helps us to see with the eyes of the angels what is really happening in the Eucharistic liturgy. Right away, the opening words "Holy, holy, holy Lord..." take us to heaven. They come from Isaiah 6:3, a passage in which the prophet receives a vision of the heavenly King in the divine throne room with his majesty magnificently displayed and his angelic court adoring him.
- We are joining our voices with the angels and saints in heaven in their jubilant hymn of praise.
- In the second half of this prayer known as the Sanctus (Latin for "holy") we repeat words which the crowds used to greet Jesus as He processed into Jerusalem: "Hosanna" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."
- It is fitting that we repeat these words at this moment in the Liturgy. Just as the crowds in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus into the holy city with these words from Psalm 118, so do we welcome Jesus into our churches, for he is about to become present in the Eucharist on our altars.

The Epiclesis

In the prayer known as the epiclesis (meaning "invocation upon") the priest prays that the Father send the Holy Spirit so that the gifts of bread and wine be changed into the body and blood of Our Lord. Like the ancient Jews who pleaded with God to send the Messiah, the priest at Mass petitions that the Messiah-King be made present once again, this time under the appearances of bread and wine: "Make holy, therefore, these gifts we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Eucharistic Prayer II)

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass

Understanding What We Say and Do – Week VIII

The Words of Institution and 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 chalice of my blood,
The blood of the new and eternal covenant,
Which will be poured out for you and for many
For the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in memory of me.”*

In order to understand the full meaning of these sacred words, it is important to hear them against the background of the Passover. The gospels that recount the institution narrative tell us that the Last Supper took place in the context of the Passover meal – the annual feast that celebrated the foundational night in Israel’s history when God liberated them from Egypt. Most significantly, the Israelites celebrated the annual Passover as a liturgical “Memorial” (anamnesis in Greek). For the ancient Jews, this involved much more than remembering a past event. *In a biblical memorial the past was not merely recalled, it was re-lived.*

Jesus used sacrificial language when referring to Himself at the Last Supper. There are (4) points to be made here:

- The Passover itself was a sacrifice, bringing to mind the Passover lamb, the blood of which was separated from the body in the ceremonial sacrifice.
- When Jesus says His body “will be given up for you,” the term used in Luke’s gospel for “given up” (didomai in Greek) is significant, for it is employed elsewhere in the New Testament in association with sacrifices.
- When Jesus speaks of his blood “which will be poured out.. for the forgiveness of sins,” he alludes to the atoning sacrifices in the Temple, which involved blood being poured out over the altar for the purpose of bringing forgiveness. (Lv 4:7, 18, 25, 30,34)
- Fourth, and most significant Jesus speaks of “the blood of the new and eternal covenant.” These words echo what Moses said in the sacrificial ceremony at Mount Sinai that sealed God’s covenant union with Israel as his chosen people. In the midst of that sacrificial rite, Moses took the blood of the animals and announced, “Behold the blood of the covenant” (Ex 24:8). Now at the Last Supper, Jesus refers to His blood as “the blood of the new and eternal covenant.”

Jesus identifies himself with the sacrificial lamb normally offered for Passover. As such, Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper mysteriously anticipate His sacrifice on the cross. In the Passover meal of the Last Supper, Jesus willingly offers up His own body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. All that was left for him to do was to carry out that sacrifice in a bloody manner on Good Friday”.

Do this in memory of me.... When Jesus commands the apostles, “Do this in memory of me,” he is not telling them to perform a simple ritual meal that will help people remember him, he is instructing them to celebrate the Last Supper as a liturgical memorial. Remember the memorial (means to re-live). Thus all that was involved with the Last Supper – most

particularly the sacrificial offering of Christ’s body and blood would be made present to worshippers in the celebration of the Eucharist.

2 Brief notes on 2 changes in the translation of Mass

- Previous translation of institution referred to “the cup” of Christ’s blood, the new translation renders it “the chalice.” This is more faithful and formal rendering of the Latin text of the Mass and one that underscores the liturgical nature of this vessel.
- **The previous translation of the Mass referred to Jesus’ blood having redemptive value “for all.” But the new translation replaces the words “for all” with “for many”;**

*“For this is the chalice of my blood,
The blood of the new and eternal covenant,
Which will be poured out for you and for many
For the forgiveness of sins.”*

This change in the translation remains closer to Jesus’ actual words of institution in the gospels (Mt 26:28). It is also more harmonious with the Latin text of the Mass and with the wording that has been used at this point in the liturgy for centuries.

It is feared that the new wording gives the impression that Jesus did not die on the cross for everyone – that he offered his blood on Calvary not “for all” but just for a sect group of people. However, on a basic level, the new translation point to the reality that while Jesus died for all, not everyone chooses to accept this gift. Each individual must choose to welcome the gift of salvation and live according to this grace so that he or she may be among “the many” who are described in this text.

In support of this change, we see in the prophecy of Isaiah where he foretold that God one day would send his servant who would make himself “an offering for sin,” pouring out his soul to death and bearing the sin of “many” and making “many” righteous (IS 53:10-12)

The Mystery of Faith

We have arrived at the supreme moment of the Mass. The priest has spoken the words of consecration over the bread and wine, and they have now become the body and blood of Christ. In reverence, the priest genuflects in silent adoration before Christ’s Blood in the chalice and then rises and solemnly says, “The mystery of Faith”.

These words are not so much a ceremonial instruction for the people to say their part next. Rather they express the priest’s profound wonder and awe over the mystery that is taking place. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose body and blood were offered for our sins on Calvary, is now really present on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine. Joining the priest’s wonder over this mystery, the people proclaim the story of salvation summed up in Jesus’ death and resurrection. Two of the acclamation options draw from St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians: (Cor 11:26)

The Anamnesis, Offering, Intercessions and the Final Doxology

The anamnesis serves as the basis for a second prayer known as “the offering,” which expresses how in the Mass, we have the awesome privilege of offering what Jesus offered on Good Friday. We are invited to unite ourselves with this sacrifice of Christ, which is why the Eucharistic Prayer calls this not only Christ’s sacrifice but also the “oblation of your Church”. (Eucharistic Prayer III)

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week IX

This week we will focus on the Lord’s Prayer, Sign of Peace and the Lamb of God. The following week will finish with the reception of Communion and the Concluding Rites.

The Communion Rite includes the Lord’s Prayer, the Rite of Peace, the Agnus Dei, and other preparatory rites – is meant to lead the people to the sacred point of holy communion and help ensure they are properly disposed to receive the body and blood of Christ.

The Lord’s Prayer

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the Lord’s Prayer is how it leads us to address God as “*Father*”. The ancient Jews certainly viewed God as the father of the people of Israel. But it was not at all common for an individual to address God as “Father”. Nevertheless, this is precisely what Jesus calls us to do. He taught this prayer to his disciples in the gospels (Mt 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4) and if he was speaking his native Aramaic, he probably used the word “Abba” for father. This underscores the intimate relationship we now have with God because of Jesus’ work of salvation. The Our Father has traditionally been divided into seven petitions with the first three focused on God (thy name, thy kingdom, thy will) and the last four focused on our needs (give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us).

At this moment in the Mass, the priest prays that Jesus deliver us from all these anxieties that keep us from experiencing the deep peace he wants to give us. And he points out that we make this prayer as we stand between the experience of our trials of this world and the confident expectation of the Lord’s coming when he will set all things right. To express this hope, the Liturgy borrows language from Paul’s letter to Titus: “as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)

The Rite of Peace

“Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles, Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will....”

After petitioning the Father for the gift of peace, the priest now addresses Jesus recalling His words to the apostles at the Last Supper: “Peace I give with you; my peace I give to you” (John 14:27) In this verse, Jesus goes on to explain that the kind of peace he offers is “not as the world gives.”

The Sign of Peace

The sign of peace reflects ancient Christian practice and the exhortations of Saint Peter and Paul: “Greet one another with a holy kiss” This “holy kiss” expressed

the fellowship in charity that the early Christians shared and fittingly found its way into the liturgy. We exchange some sign that expresses peace, communion and charity.

Agnus Dei: The Fraction, Commingling and the “Lamb of God”

This part of the Mass includes three-rituals we will now consider, the breaking of bread, the commingling of the Body and Blood of Christ and the recitation of the “Lamb of God” prayer.

The Fraction

Here the priest breaks the Eucharistic host in a symbolic action known as the fraction or breaking of bread. For ancient Jews, the expression “the breaking of bread” denoted a ritual at the start of a meal in which the head of the home took bread, recited a blessing, then broke the bread and shared it with those present.

Commingling

After breaking the host, the priest places a small piece into the chalice while quietly saying, “May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.” This ritual known as the commingling, was used at one time to express the unity of the Church. In Rome, the pope had a small particle of the consecrated host called the fermentum (leaven) sent to priests in the city, who placed it in their chalices as a sign of their union with the bishop of Rome.

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

While the priest performs the rite of breaking the host and the commingling, the people sign or say the Lamb of God. This prayer takes us right up to God’s throne. When we recite these words, we join the myriad of angels who worship Jesus as the victorious Lamb in the heavenly liturgy that St. John describes in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation refers to Jesus as the Lamb who was slain (RV 5:6, 12; 13:8), whose blood washes the garments of the saints (RV 7:14) and conquers even Satan (RV 12:11).

The actual words of the Lamb of God prayer, come most directly from John the Baptist. John is the first person to refer to Jesus as “Lamb of god” (Jn 1:29,36). When we first saw Jesus during his baptism ministry at the Jordan, he cries out “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”. (Jon 1:29)

This prayer is typically repeated 3 times. This echoes other prayers repeated three times in the Mass. In the Confiteor and in the Kyrie.

The last time Jesus is addressed as the “Lamb of God” in the prayer, the cry for mercy is changed to petition for peace. This links the Agnus Dei to the sign of peace just given and anticipates the unity that will be forged in receiving the Eucharist.

W A Biblical Walk Through the Mass
Understanding What We Say and Do – Week X

We are now at the point, in which we come forward to receive the Body of Christ.

Mass is a Wedding Feast

- We can understand how the Mass is a wedding feast by considering the words of the priest shortly before we receive communion:
 - o *Behold the Lamb of God behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.* We further read, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (RV 19:9)
 - o This passage tells us something very dramatic, In Revelation 19:6-9, the Lamb is revealed to be a bridegroom, which implies that the Passover supper is a wedding feast, thus the Bridegroom Lamb is Jesus and the Bride represent us the Church, whom Jesus is coming to wed. Indeed this is the wedding feast in which the Lamb unites Himself to his Bride, symbolizing the final consummation of the union between Christ and his Church.
 - o It is this heavenly marriage between Jesus and the Church that we participate through the Eucharistic liturgy here on earth as a foretaste of the communion we hope to have with our divine bridegroom for all eternity. Therefore, when the priest says, “Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb,” he echoes the angel’s invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb in the Apocalypse (Rv 19:9)

Lord, I am not worthy

In response to the invitation to the marriage supper of the Eucharist, we say a prayer that on one hand, acknowledges our complete unworthiness to receive our Lord, and at the same time, expresses confidence that Jesus calls us and can heal us:

“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

These words reflect the humility and trust of the Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant who is at his house, paralyzed and in distress. As a Gentile outside of God’s covenant, and as a Roman officer in charge of one hundred soldiers who were oppressing God’s people, this centurion humbly acknowledges that he is not worthy to have Jesus come to his home. Yet he expresses a great faith that surpasses many others in the gospels and amazes even Jesus: He believes Jesus can heal from afar, simply by speaking his word: “But only say the word, and my servant shall be healed” (Mt 8:8)

The Concluding Rites

The people stand for the closing rites of the Mass, which mirror how the Mass began with the words, “The Lord be with you” and the sign of the cross. This time, the sign of the cross is made while the priest blessed the people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Significant point here is that the whole Liturgy receives its name “The Mass” from the Word Missa (“dismissal”/“sending”), thus the Mass should be seen as a sending forth of the faithful so that they may fulfill God’s will in their daily lives.

Missionary Goal of Mass...

Jesus told the apostles, “As the Father has send me, even so I send you”. The Father sent the Son into the world, to die for our sins and give us a share in his divine life. As we have seen, the entire paschal mystery of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection is made present to us in the Eucharistic liturgy so that we can be more deeply incorporated into Jesus’ life and mission. The more deeply the Eucharist unites us to Jesus, the more deeply we will radiate his life and his love in the world around us. The closing line of the liturgy, therefore, is not an aimless dismissal. It is a dismissal with a mission. It is sending forth a God’s people to bring the mysteries of Christ into the world.

During the last 10 weeks, we have systematically presented to each of you the biblical roots and understanding of the Liturgy. The changes will begin Sunday, Nov 26/27th, First Sunday of Advent the beginning of the new liturgical year. We will have our updated missal with the new translation changes as well as cards available in the pews for you to use.

It is our hope and prayer that during the last 10 weeks, each of you have gained new insights into the ritual of our Mass, and your role as a participant not just a bystander in the worship and praise of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**When you came into Mass today,
you received a short survey to be completed. I ask that you
complete and put in the collection box in the narthex. Thank You**