

Understanding the Mass

The Parts of the Mass

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **Parts of the Mass**.*

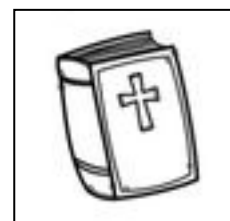
We are about to begin the celebration of the Holy Mass, which is the most important liturgy (which comes from the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning “public service for / on behalf of the people”) of the Church. It is God’s people praying together and offering up to God the Father the final prayer of Jesus – the sacrifice of His death on the Cross.

There are several different **Parts of the Mass**, which are referred to as either a **liturgy** or **rite**. These are:



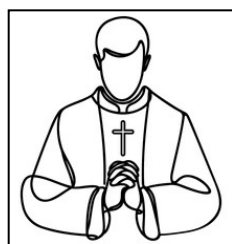
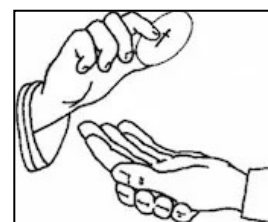
(1) The Opening Rite - also known as the Introductory Rite (which comes from the Latin *ritus*, meaning “religious”) - is the beginning of the Mass. It starts with the entrance of the priest (and any altar servers, acolytes or deacons who are serving at Mass), and concludes with the Opening Prayer.

(2) The Liturgy of the Word - this is the part of the Mass when we listen to God’s teaching through readings from the Holy Bible. It also includes the Homily and the Prayers of the Faithful.



(3) The Liturgy of the Eucharist - this is the part of the Mass when Jesus becomes truly present in Holy Communion. It begins with the offering of gifts (or offertory) and concludes with what is traditionally known as “the great Amen”.

(4) The Communion Rite - beginning with the Our Father (the Lord’s Prayer), this part of the Mass is when we receive receive Holy Communion, or a blessing. It ends with a quiet time of prayer.



(5) The Concluding Rite - this is the final part of the Mass, where we receive a final blessing from the priest, listen to any announcements, and the Mass ends when we are sent out to do good work, praising and blessing God.

In the coming weeks, we are going to explore all of these parts of the Mass in more detail.