

A More In-Depth Guide to the Mass

by R. J. Grigaitis, S.F.O.

www.grigaitis.net



This booklet is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

You are free to use it for non-commercial purposes
providing appropriate credit is given to R. J. Grigaitis.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/ca/>

Excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal*
© 1973, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc.

Conclusion

From this booklet, you should have a basic understanding of the Catholic Mass, which will enrich your participation in the Mass, as well as let non-Catholics observe a Mass inconspicuously.

Contents

Preface.....	3
Initial Concepts	5
Entering a Catholic Church.....	8
The Order of Mass with a Congregation.....	9
Introductory Rites	9
Entrance Song	9
Greeting.....	9
Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water	9
Penitential Rite.....	10
Kyrie	12
Gloria	12
Opening Prayer	13
Liturgy of the Word	13
First Reading.....	13
Responsorial Psalm.....	14
Second Reading	14
Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation.....	14
Gospel	14
Homily	15
Profession of Faith	15
Nicene Creed.....	15
Apostles' Creed.....	16
General Intercessions	17
Liturgy of the Eucharist	17
Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts	17
Prayer Over the Gifts	19
Eucharistic Prayer	19
Preface.....	20
Acclamation	20
Eucharistic Prayer	20
Communion Rite.....	24
Lord's Prayer	24
Doxology.....	24
Sign Of Peace.....	24
Breaking of the Bread	25
Private Preparation of the Priest	26

Communion	26
Communion Song	26
Receiving Communion	26
Period of Silence or Song of Praise	29
Prayer After Communion	29
Concluding Rite	30
Greeting	30
Blessing.....	30
Dismissal.....	30
Conclusion	32

The essentialness of the dismissal is most apparent in this last form. We are sent forth to take Christ into the world.

A dismissal song may be sung as the priest kisses the altar, then comes in front of the altar with the assisting ministers. They all bow to the altar, and then leave in procession.

The Mass has ended, and some will sit and pray, or kneel and pray. Some will go to the tabernacle, where they will genuflect, kneel, and pray. It is strongly recommended that you spend some time after the Mass in Eucharistic adoration. This is easier in older churches that have the tabernacle at the front of the main part of the building on the high altar. You simply remain in you pew after Mass and pray. When the tabernacle is off to the side, or in another room, it is a little more difficult.

Most will also use this time to visit and greet other members of the congregation. Some congregations may also provide refreshments after Mass. The only time it is not appropriate to visit and greet others is after the Good Friday Celebration. The Good Friday Celebration is the anniversary of Christ's death, and as such, all depart in silence. You should act as if you have just laid Jesus in the tomb, and you are now walking home in silent sadness.

Good Friday is not actually a Mass, and is different than what has been presented in this booklet. All other holiday celebrations are Masses that may differ slightly from what has been presented in this booklet, but the order is similar with the addition of other rituals.

As you leave the church, you may again bless yourself with the holy water. You can actually do this every time you pass a container of holy water.

Concluding Rite

Often people will begin to leave the church building before the Concluding Rite is finished. This is extremely inappropriate since the Dismissal is an essential part of the Mass. If someone leaves before the Dismissal, he is considered to have not fully participated in the Mass.

Greeting

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Blessing

Everyone makes the sign of the Cross, as the priest says:

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

There are a number of longer blessings that may also be used. Some of which have a number of stanzas that are answered with “Amen.”

Dismissal

The priest then dismisses the congregation with the one of the following or similar forms:

A:

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

B:

The Mass is ended, go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

C:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Preface

This booklet is the sequel to “Why Do Catholics Bounce On One Knee?” which can be found on the R. J. Grigaitis website (www.grigaitis.net). It is not a sequel in the sense that it should be read second, but in that if you want more information after reading “Why Do Catholics Bounce On One Knee?” you can read this booklet. All the information found in “Why Do Catholics Bounce On One Knee?” is also found in this booklet; therefore, there is no need read “Why Do Catholics Bounce On One Knee?” if you read this booklet first.

The audience of this booklet is anyone that is about to attend a Roman Catholic Mass. This includes people that have attended Mass all of their lives, and those that are about to attend a Roman Catholic Mass for the first time. The Mass is filled with very meaningful rituals, and knowing what these rituals are can make the Mass more powerful to the individual, as well as less confusing. Many times, people that are familiar with the Mass perform various rituals without knowing the “what” or “why” of these rituals. Those completely unfamiliar with the Catholic Mass can find it confusing and uncomfortable, and may never attend again because they feel out of place. This is a shame since the Mass is so rich in meaning and can be a powerful source of encouragement in our pilgrimage on earth.

The Mass this booklet will explain is the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church. There are a number of Rites in the Catholic Church, which have different Masses. The different Masses share the same basic rituals, but each Mass would need its own explanation. The Roman Rite of the Catholic Church is the largest and the most common in the West (it is also called the Rite of the West), so this is most likely the Mass you will attend in the western world.

The idea of this booklet is to explain the Roman Mass in very simple terms, so the explanation will not give the complete history and theology of each ritual, but provide a starting point for understanding them. There are many other books that explain the Mass in varying degrees of depth that can be read once a basic understanding is had.

This booklet contains most of the words that the celebrant (the presiding priest) and ministers say, and all of the words that the congregation say.

Text in this font is what the celebrant or minister says.

Text in this font is what the congregation says.

Some of the celebrant's words are said inaudibly, but this booklet will present them to give a clearer understanding of what is being said and done.

Once everyone has received communion, you may kneel or sit, but the congregation can also remain standing. The directives of the Church say to stand "from the prayer over the gifts to the end of the Mass." (GIRM 21). The only exceptions to this are during the consecration, "and, if this seems helpful, during the period of silence after communion." (GIRM 21).

It may be the custom of some congregations to kneel after receiving Communion and returning to their spots. While this is a custom that should be changed, until it is, you may follow the custom of that congregation.

Period of Silence or Song of Praise

Once everyone has received communion, you may kneel or sit during the silent period of personal thanks giving to God. A psalm or song of praise may also be sung at this time. If you do sit, be aware of whether the person behind you is kneeling, and if he is, leave him some room and do not sit all the way back.

During this time of personal prayer, the eucharistic ministers may cleaning the vessels, although this is usually done after Mass. The prayer they pray while they do this is also appropriate for everyone to silently pray.

Lord, may I receive these gifts in purity of heart.
May they bring me healing and strength,
now and for ever.
Amen.

Prayer After Communion

Everyone stands, and the priest then prays the appropriate Prayer after Communion for that particular day, which ends with the following or similar words:

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

Out of respect for Christ, some will not chew the Body of Christ, but let it slowly dissolve in their mouths. This is a very pious act, but not necessary. The Greek word used in John 6:54, 56, 58 is literally translated as “to chew.”

If you are only coming forward to receive a blessing, receive the blessing from a eucharistic minister distributing the Body of Christ, then return to your spot. Do not go to a eucharistic minister distributing the Blood of Christ.

When receiving the Blood of Christ, look into the eyes of the eucharistic ministers as he says:

The blood of Christ.

While looking into his eyes, reply:

Amen.

Take the chalice and take a small sip of Christ’s Blood. Remember that if there is a small piece of host in the chalice, the priest placed it there. As well, you should be aware that the eucharistic ministers are wiping the chalice every time someone receives from it. They also turn the chalice so you are not receiving from the same place as the last person. The Blood of Christ does contain alcohol, which is an antiseptic, but if you have a flu or cold, you should not receive the Blood of Christ that day.

You may not dip the host you received into the chalice. The host should have been consumed immediately after receiving it. Intinction (dipping the host into the chalice) must be practised correctly (cf. GIRM 246-247), as is done in the Eastern Rites.

If you do receive communion in an Eastern Rite Catholic church, you do not say, “Amen,” but only tilt your head back and open your mouth. The eucharistic minister will drop the Body of Christ, which has been soaked in the Blood of Christ, into your mouth.

Once you have received communion or a blessing, return to your spot, but do not sit or kneel. You should remain standing until everyone has received communion to remain united as a community. Everyone that is waiting to receive, and everyone that has received remains standing. This is done so that communion is received as a community.

Initial Concepts

One basic idea of the Mass is that it is centred on worshipping Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, and as such our modern society is somewhat alien to such worship. Our modern society has lost much of the concepts of honouring monarchs, and so, by putting ourselves in the frame of mind of being ruled by a monarch of centuries past, with absolute and total power in his kingdom, we can celebrate the Mass truly worshipping Jesus Christ as the absolute Monarch of all creation. With this perspective, we can understand many of the rituals of the Mass because they have directly come to us from the rituals of honouring monarchs.

You may also want to take note as to whether the priest is using the first person plural, or the first person singular. When he uses the first person plural, he is speaking on behalf of himself and the entire assembly. When he is speaking aloud in the first person singular, he is speaking on behalf of Christ. The Latin term for this is *in persona Christi*. Recognising that these are not the words of the priest, but the words of Christ can make them even more powerful and profound.

Another basic idea of the Order of Mass with a Congregation is that it is a community event. While everyone is an individual, everyone is worshipping as a community with one voice and mind. There are silent periods in the Mass for personal prayer and worship, but it mostly consists of communally prayer and worship. To pray and worship as a community, everyone should do and say the same thing. When visiting a congregation that does things a little different from what you are accustomed to, you should follow their customs because you are not worshipping alone but with the community you are visiting. If you are attending a Catholic Mass for the first time, you probably want to be as inconspicuous as possible, and by following this booklet, you should be able to attain this goal.

One regulation that you should be aware of before you attend Mass is that you must fast for at least one hour before receiving Communion. Canon 919 of the Code of Canon Law states: “One who is to receive the most holy Eucharist is to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before holy Communion.” The exceptions to this rule are: priests that

celebrate more than one Mass on the same day and need to keep up their strength in between Masses; and the elderly or sick, as well as their caretakers, that have no control over their schedule of meals and receiving the Eucharist. This one-hour fast is a symbolic preparation to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. It creates a physical hunger, which augments the spiritual hunger for the Eucharist. If one hour does not seem sufficient, you may make the fast longer to increase the significance.

The Order of Mass is made up of words and actions for the congregation, and words and actions for the celebrant (the presiding priest) or minister. The words and actions of the celebrant or minister are only for the celebrant or minister to perform, and the congregation should perform their words and actions together and in unison. This includes using the same words.

One set of actions consists of bows, genuflections, and kneeling. There are two kinds of bows: a bow of the head; and a bow of the body, which is referred to as a *profound bow*. A bow of the head is made whenever the three names of the Trinity are said together, and when the name of Jesus, Mary, or the saint in whose honour the Mass is celebrated is said. A profound bow is made at a few specific parts during the Mass, and whenever you pass in front of an altar that does not have a tabernacle on it. We bow to the altar because it is a symbol of God, and the place where the Eucharist is consecrated.

A *tabernacle* is a locked box that contains the Eucharist for adoration, and to take to the sick that cannot attend Mass. An explanation of the Eucharist is beyond the scope of this booklet, but simply put, Catholics believe that when the bread and wine are consecrated in the Mass they physically become the Body and Blood of Christ. Only the Body of Christ is kept in the tabernacle, which can be found by locating a prominent red candle or red light. Older churches have the tabernacle at the front of the main part of the building on the high altar, while newer churches, or ones that have been renovated, have the tabernacle off to the side, or in a separate room.

Since Christ the King is physically present in the tabernacle, one does not merely bow to the tabernacle, but *genuflects* out of reverence. This is one action that many Catholics do without knowing why or what exactly they are doing. When one genuflects, he does so in the

should remain standing for two reasons: first, Christ is physically present, and second, by standing, you remain united as a community.

If you are coming forward to receive a blessing, receive the blessing from a eucharistic minister distributing the Body of Christ, then return to your spot. To signify that you only want to receive a blessing, cross your hands over your heart. If the eucharistic minister offers you the Body of Christ, you may have to verbally tell him that you only want a blessing.

As you approach the eucharistic minister distributing the Body of Christ, you should make a sign of reverence to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The sign of reverence that is strongly recommended is a genuflection or a profound bow. So as not to disrupt the flow of the communion procession, you should make this sign of reverence as the person ahead of you receives the Body of Christ. Again, a genuflection is strongly recommended, but you may do whatever you feel is appropriate.

When receiving the Body of Christ, look into the eyes of the eucharistic ministers as he says:

The body of Christ.

While looking into his eyes, reply:

Amen.

Depending on the local custom, the Body of Christ is given either on the tongue or in the hand. When receiving on the tongue, simply open your mouth with your tongue resting on your bottom lip, and the minister will place the bread on your tongue. When receiving in the hand, cup your right hand under your left, and remember that you are holding the most precious physical object in all creation. Once you have received the Body of Christ, you must consume it immediately. Check your hand for any small crumbs and consume them immediately as well. Do not walk around with the host in your hands, and you may not give it to others. If you are taking the Body of Christ to someone that is sick, it must be transported in a pix. When it is the local custom to receive in the hand, you have the option to receive either in the hand or on the tongue. When it is the local custom to receive on the tongue, you must also receive on the tongue.

Private Preparation of the Priest

The priest then prays for himself inaudibly, using the following or similar words:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

Communion

The priest genuflects, takes the host, raises it slightly over the paten, and says aloud:

This is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world.
Happy are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

The priest then says inaudibly:

May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.

He reverently consumes the Body of Christ. Then he takes the chalice and says inaudibly:

May the blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life.

He then reverently drinks the Blood of Christ.

Communion Song

A song may be sung as the congregation receives communion in an orderly fashion.

Receiving Communion

Only Catholics who have received their First Communion, and have no grave sins that have not been brought to confession may receive communion. Anyone else that wishes may come forward for a blessing. At this point, everyone should be standing, and they should remain standing until they go forward to receive communion. You

direction of the tabernacle, touching his right knee to the floor while bowing his head.

Many times you will see Catholic genuflect whether the tabernacle is present or not. Some even joke about Catholics genuflecting out of habit in movie theatres. When the tabernacle is not physically present in front of you when go to sit down, only bow to the altar since Christ is not physical present. Some will do what they call a *power genuflection* that penetrates the walls between them and the tabernacle. This is a nice idea, but it does cause confusion for people that do not really know why we genuflect. In short, whenever you pass in front of the altar, you make a profound bow to it, and whenever you pass in front of the tabernacle, you genuflect to Christ who is present in it.

In case someone is physically unable to genuflect, he should make a profound bow to the tabernacle.

There is another case that is also important. Sometimes the Eucharist is not only in the tabernacle, but is visible present on an altar. This is done for Eucharistic adoration, or may be the case if you arrive to Mass late and the consecration has already taken place. In this case, you do not merely genuflect by touching only your right knee to the floor, but bring both knees to the floor. In essence, you kneel.

Kneeling is the proper posture when praying in the presence of the Eucharist either before or after Mass, or during Eucharistic adoration. If you are praying in the presence of the Eucharist for long periods of time, kneeling may become uncomfortable, so sitting will become not only appropriate, but necessary. Kneeling is also the correct posture during the consecration unless prevented by physical limitations.

Entering a Catholic Church

Upon enter a Catholic church, the first thing you will notice is a container of water close to the door. As people come in, they will dip a finger in it and touch their forehead, the middle of their body, and their two shoulders. This is holy water that has been blessed by a priest, and the parishioners are blessing themselves with it and the sign of the Cross. The sign of the Cross is a remembrance of Christ's Crucifixion, and is performed with a finger of the right hand going first to the forehead, then to the middle of the body, then to the left shoulder, and then to the right shoulder. While making the sign of the Cross, they are saying to themselves, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen." They usually say "Father" while touching their forehead, "Son" while touching the middle of their body, "Holy" while touching their left shoulder, and "Spirit" while touching their right shoulder. The sign of the Cross is also made at the beginning and end of the Mass, and commonly whenever a Catholic prays. When the sign of the cross is made with holy water one is also commemorate his baptism.

When taking your seat, remember to make a profound bow to the altar, or a genuflection to the tabernacle. Once you have taken you seat before Mass, you can either sit and pray, or kneel and pray. This is a personal time to prepare to celebrate Mass, and you can do whatever is most meaningful to you.

Before we begin the Order of Mass, one more remark should be made about acting as a community. The acts of sitting, standing, and kneeling should all be done as a community. The costumes of the community you are celebrating with should be observed. The only exception to this is people that are physically unable to participate in all of the physical actions of the community. As well, some communities do not follow the proper instructions concerning posture, so, if you feel called to do so, you can give an example to other by following these proper instructions. Again, if you have a physical limitation, do what you can, the most important thing is that you are worshipping God.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Everyone then gives everyone else that is close to them the sign of peace, according to the local custom. Often it is a handshake with the words, "Peace be with you," or something similar. Sometimes it is appropriate to hug each other, and it is even appropriate for married couple to kiss.

Breaking of the Bread

Everyone then returns to their spot, and sings or says:

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.**

While this is sung or said, the priest takes the host and breaks it over the paten. He then places a small piece of the host in the chalice, and says inaudibly:

May this mingling of the body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
bring eternal life to us who receive it.

You should be aware that the priest has placed a small piece of the host in the chalice, so if you receive from this chalice you know where this peace of host came from. If you are not aware of this, you may mistakenly think that this peace of host came out of somebody's mouth while he was receiving. You do not have to worry about this; the priest placed this peace of host in this chalice.

This small piece of host is placed in the chalice to symbolise that in Christ's resurrection, His Body and Blood are reunited.

Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer

If anyone is kneeling, he should now stand as the priest sets down the chalice and paten, and invites the congregation to pray the Lord's Prayer. While praying the Lord's Prayer, it has become popular to hold one's hands towards heaven, or even for everyone to hold hands.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,
and grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy keep us free from sin
and protect us from all anxiety
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior,
Jesus Christ.

Doxology

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours, now and for ever.**

Sign Of Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:
I leave you peace, my peace I give you.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith
of your Church,
and grant us the peace and unity
of your kingdom
where you live for ever and ever.

The Order of Mass with a Congregation

Introductory Rites

Entrance Song

As the priest and assisting ministers go to the altar, the congregation stands and a song is usually sung. When the priest and assisting ministers arrive in front of the altar, they bow to it, as everyone should, and the priest will go to the altar and kiss it. He may also incense the altar. Incensing is an ancient way of purifying an object, and the smoke can be viewed as our prayers ascended to God. The smell of incense can also help to bring one into spirit of prayer.

Greeting

After the entrance song, everyone remains standing, bows their heads, and makes the sign of the Cross, as the priest says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

After which the congregation answers:

Amen.

The priest then greets everyone with one of the number of different greetings, such as:

The Lord be with you.

Which the congregation replies with:

And also with you.

Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water

During a Sunday Mass, the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water may or may not be celebrated. If it is celebrated, everyone remains standing and a container of water is placed before the priest. Facing the congregation, he invites them to pray, using these or similar words:

Dear friends,
this water will be used

to remind us of our baptism.
Let us ask God to bless it
and to keep us faithful
to the Spirit he has given us.

After a brief silence, the priest prays a blessing over the water, ending with:

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

It is customary in some places to mix salt with the holy water, and the priest will pray a blessing over the salt, ending with:

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

After which he pours the salt into the water in silence.

The priest then takes the sprinkler and sprinkles himself, his minister, and then the rest of the congregation. He may even walk throughout the church sprinkling everyone. Once you have been sprinkled, it is customary for you to make the sign of the Cross again. While the sprinkling is going on, another song may be sung.

Once the priest returns to his place and the song is finished, the priest prays:

May almighty God cleanse us of our sins,
and through the eucharist we celebrate
make us worthy to sit at his table
in his heavenly kingdom.

Amen.

Penitential Rite

If the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water is not celebrated, the Penitential Rite is celebrated. The priest invites the congregation to recall their sins and to repent of them in silence, using these or similar words:

Or:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus,
firstborn from the dead!

**Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Or:

We are faithful, to your command:

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

Or:

Christ is Lord of all ages!

**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Savior of the world.**

After the memorial acclamation, the Eucharistic Prayer continues according to the particular form being used, until the common conclusion.

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, some congregation will kneel, while others remain standing. The priest takes the chalice and the paten (plate) with the host, lifts them up, and sings or says:

Through him,
with him,
in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

These are the words of consecration, and the Bread physically becomes the Body of Christ as they are said.

The priest shows the consecrated host (bread) to the congregation, while bells may be rung. The bells come from a time where there were no sound systems and some of the congregation could not hear the words of consecration. Once the bells rung, everyone knew that the consecration had taken place.

While viewing the consecrated host, it is appropriate to silently pray, “My Lord, and my God,” or some other words of adoration. Once you have viewed the consecrated host, you should bow your head, while the priest sets it down, and genuflects in adoration.

Then the priest takes the chalice, raises it a little above the altar, and recalls Christ’s actions before the consecration of the wine. He then bows slightly, and says.

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT:
THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT.
IT WILL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL
SO THAT SINS MAY BE FORGIVEN.
DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

These are the words of consecration, and the wine physically becomes the Blood of Christ as they are said.

The priest shows the chalice with the consecrated wine to the congregation, while bells may be rung again. While viewing the chalice, it is again appropriate to silently pray, “My Lord, and my God,” or some other words of adoration. Once you have viewed the chalice, you should bow your head, while the priest sets it down, and genuflects in adoration.

Usually everyone stands now, although some congregations remain kneeling, as the memorial acclamation is then prayed according to one of the following forms:

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ’s love,
let us acknowledge our failures
and ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

After a silent reflection, one of the following three forms are prayed:

A:

**I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault**
(it is customary to strike your breast with your right hand at this point)
**in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

The reason you strike your breast as you say “through my own fault” is to recognise your sinfulness and publicly declare your sorrow for your sins. In the Latin translation it is repeated three times: “Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea máxima culpa.” Each time the breast is struck.

B:

Lord, we have sinned against you:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your mercy and love.

And grant us your salvation.

C: The priest, or other minister leads the congregation with one of a number of different invocations.

(an invocation)
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

(an invocation)
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

(an invocation)
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Kyrie

If the “Lord, have mercy” was not prayed in the Penitential Rite, it is prayed now:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

The Gloria is said or sung on Sundays, other solemnities, and feasts outside of Advent and Lent.

**Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God, and Father,**

**we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take away the sin of the world:

have mercy on us;

You should never sit during the Eucharistic Prayer unless you are physically unable to kneel or stand. The reason for this is that the bread and wine on the altar become the Body and Blood of Christ during this prayer. This is the same as a monarch coming into a room. Everyone stands or kneels. If someone sits, he shows a lack of respect. Some earthly monarchs have been known to sentence people to death for such a lack of respect. Again, if you have a physical limitation, God understands, and he would want you to sit. However, if you do sit, do not sit all the way back, but leave some space for the person kneeling behind you. As well, if you are physically unable to kneel but can stand, you should. Others will understand if you are the only one standing, but most of all, you are showing respect for Christ. An example of this is someone with a leg in a cast, or a bride with an elaborate wedding gown. You should only sit if you are physically forced to sit.

If you are unaccustomed to Catholic rituals, you may feel *weird* about kneeling, as you may have never worshipped in this way before, but you probably want to remain inconspicuous. Despite how you may feel, the only way you will remain inconspicuous is to kneel. To sit while you have no physical limitation looks like a blatant lack of respect, and therefore, makes you very conspicuous. You would have been standing only a moment ago, and soon you will be standing again, so everyone will know that you can stand, even if you cannot kneel.

There are a number of forms for the Eucharistic Prayer. Eucharistic Prayer I is also called the Roman Canon, and is used on great solemnities, it is also the longest. There are also Eucharistic Prayers II, III, IV, and several others for specific occasions. These prayers vary in their words and order, some contain silent periods for personal prayer and others do not, but all contain the same words of consecration, memorial acclamation, and conclusion.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest calls to mind the Last Supper, takes the bread, raises it a little above the altar, and recalls Christ’s actions before the consecration of the bread. He then bows slightly, and says.

**TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT IT:
THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Preface

The Preface begins with the following words, and then varies according to the season and day.

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere
to give you thanks...

Acclamation

After the Preface, everyone sings or says aloud:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
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.

Eucharistic Prayer

At the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, everyone kneels. There are some congregations that remain standing during the Eucharistic Prayer, but this is contrary to Church teaching. The only time a congregation can remain standing during the consecration is when they cannot kneel because they are “prevented by the lack of space, the number of people present, or some other good reason.” (GIRM 21). When visiting a congregation that stands during the consecration, you must decide whether to remain in union with that congregation or in union with the Church at large. You must also decide whether congregational uniformity is more important than respect and adoration of Christ in the Eucharist.

**you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

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.

Opening Prayer

The priest then says:

Let us Pray.

He then prays the appropriate Opening Prayer for that particular day, which ends with the following or similar words:

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Or:

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

To begin the Liturgy of the Word, everyone sits. The reader goes to the lectern, bows to the altar as he passes in front of it, and reads the appropriate First Reading for that day, after which he says:

The Word of Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The person who read the First Reading or the leader of song will lead the congregation in the appropriate Psalm for that day. This is a reading from the Book of Psalms, in which the congregation repeats one line, and the reader recites the other lines.

Second Reading

On Sundays and other solemnities there is a Second Reading. Usually a second reader goes to the lectern, bows to the altar as he passes in front of it, and reads the appropriate Second Reading for that day, after which he says:

The Word of Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation

Everyone stands for the Gospel.

The Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation is sung. If it cannot be sung, it is omitted.

Alleluia.

During Lent, the Alleluia is replaced with one of the following:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory?

Praise and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

The priest goes to the lectern, bows to the altar as he passes it, and prays inaudibly:

Almighty God, cleanse my heart and my lips that I may worthily proclaim your gospel.

The priest may be accompanied by ministers with candles. He says to the congregation:

The priest may now incense the offerings and the altar, after which a minister may incense the priest.

Next the priest stands at the side of the altar and washes his hands, saying inaudibly:

Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

This is a symbolic washing of the priests hands, which comes from the Jewish roots of Christianity, and only the celebrant (the presiding priest) participates in this ritual. Some eucharistic ministers are accustomed to wash their hand with this same water before they approach the altar, but this is incorrect, and should not be done. Eucharistic ministers should not symbolically wash their hands, but literally wash their hands with soap and warm water before Mass.

Standing at the centre of the altar and facing the congregation, the priest says:

Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.

It should be noted that the sacrifice is Christ.

Prayer Over the Gifts

If the congregation is not already standing from the Procession of the Gifts, they will stand now. Some congregations may be accustomed to remain sitting until the beginning of the Preface; however, the correct time to begin standing is during the Prayer Over the Gifts.

The priest then prays the appropriate Prayer over the Gifts for that particular day, which ends with the following or similar words:

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

If the congregation is not already standing, they should definitely stand now, as the priest says or sings:

Once the gifts have been received and the altar has been prepared, the priest stands at the altar. If an offertory song is being sung, the priest continues inaudibly and the congregation does not respond. If there is no offertory song, the priest continues audibly and the congregation responds.

The priest takes the bread, and holding it slightly raised above the altar, says:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

The priest pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying:

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.

A little water is poured into the wine for a number of reasons. First, it is a Jewish custom to put a drop of water into the wine before drinking it, and Jesus would have followed this custom during the Last Supper. It also commemorates the flow of blood and water from Jesus' side. As well, it symbolises the two natures of Christ: divine, and human. And Lastly, it symbolises the faithful who are incorporated into Christ.

Then the priest takes the chalice, and holding it slightly raised above the altar, says:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become our spiritual drink.

Blessed be God for ever.

The priest then makes a profound bow and says inaudibly:

Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the
sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

A reading from the holy gospel according to (the author of the
gospel read that day).

Everyone then traces a small Cross with their right thumb on their
forehead, on their lips, and on their heart. As they do this, they pray
silently, "May the Gospel be on my mind, on my lips, and in my
heart," and say aloud:

Glory to you, Lord.

The priest may then incense the Bible, and then reads the appropriate
Gospel for that day, after which he says:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The priest kisses the Gospel, and prays inaudibly:

May the words of the gospel wipe away our sins.

After the Gospel reading, everyone sits

Homily

A homily or sermon is then given. On weekdays that are not holy
days of obligation, a homily is recommended, but may be omitted.

Profession of Faith

On Sundays and solemnities, everyone stands and says either the
Nicene or Apostles' Creed.

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down for heaven:**

(all make a profound bow during the next two lines)

**by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped
and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic
and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.**

Amen.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right had of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

General Intercessions

With a brief introduction, the priest invites the congregation to pray for the needs of the community and for the whole Church. Usually someone other than the priest leads the congregation in this prayer. After each intercession, the following is said, although this may vary with the congregation and day of the Mass.

(intercession)

We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

Everyone sits. An offertory song may be sung at this time, while the altar is prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There may also be a Procession of the Gifts (the bread and wine), during which the congregation may continue to sit, or they may stand. The correct posture is to remain sitting, but this is not the custom of every congregation.