

WORSHIP



In Preparation for the Teaching Masses On October 16-17th The Sacrifice of the Mass – Part 2



“What is the Mass and How Do We Participate”

A life of faithfulness to the Lord, of constant loving of God, and neighbor and self, calls out for ritual expression. In liturgy we become what we need to be.

The Mass – our Eucharistic celebration – remains the center of the life of the church. It is the remembrance of Christ’s life, death, and Resurrection, given to us by Christ himself with the command “Do this in memory of me.” Participation in this celebration is the right and duty of all baptized people.

In the breaking of the bread, we share the Bread of Life which is Christ’s own Body and Precious Blood. We who are many enter into that mystery and become one Body in Christ. We may have arrived as individuals, but during the sacred liturgy we are one people – the chosen, priestly people – offering the celebration along with the priest as brothers and sisters.

What does this say about our personal preparation for Mass?

Certainly we would choose to be in the state of grace, to ask God’s forgiveness and seek his mercy. We choose to come to the table leaving our worldly concerns behind to enter into the mystery of the Pascal Feast. Then we can offer this sacrifice with a pure heart, ready to receive the Divine Love of the Father.

What does this say about the whole assembly of baptized people?

From the time we become “the assembly” at the beginning of the Mass, we must reflect this unity- this oneness in Christ. We sing, listen and respond as one voice. Even our posture and gestures reflect this unity.

We stand together as a sign of respect, honor and full stature before God: - as the presider enters, as the Gospel is proclaimed, and for the reception of Communion.

We are seated as a sign of listening and meditation: - for the readings proclaimed by the lector, for the homily, and for the period of meditation following Communion.

We kneel as a sign of penance and adoration: - for the period of prayer before Mass, and for the entire Eucharistic Prayer during Mass.

Are we fully conscious of what is happening?

We are fully conscious when we voice our responses with the confidence that Christ is truly present at our gathering. The introductory rites affirm this.

We accompany the entrance procession with singing, and return the greeting of our presider. We then acknowledge our sinfulness and ask for God’s mercy. We sing the Gloria - an ancient hymn of praise, and lastly, we bow our heads as the presider calls us to prayer.

All these actions serve to “gather us in” and ready us to hear the stories of Scripture in the Liturgy of the Word.