

# Generations of Faith

November 13 & 16, 2011

## The Mass as a Prayer:

What's Changing & Why (Part  
II)

### Teaching Resources for the New Roman Missal:

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Website. Visit [www.usccb.org/romanmissal/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal/index.shtml).
2. Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. Visit [www.fdlc.org/roman\\_missal.htm](http://www.fdlc.org/roman_missal.htm).



- Have a family/group discussion about what it was like for you to go to Mass when you were young. What were your feelings about the Mass? What questions did you have about it? Be open with young people about how important going to Mass and participating was/is for you.

Sunday, December 4 – December 10:

- As a family/group familiarize yourselves with the word changes in the Mass. Find more information at [www.romanmissalchanges.com](http://www.romanmissalchanges.com) and [www.usccb.org/romanmissal](http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal)
- Go through the words of the Confiteor with family/group members. Explain that to confess means to admit, and that in the Confiteor we admit to God and one another that we do not always do the right thing. We are sorry in our hearts. We show God we are sorry in our heart by making a holy gesture of making a fist and touching our heart while we say the words, “Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.” Explain that grievous means serious.

Sunday, December 11 – 17:

- As your family/group members become more familiar with the responses and prayers, be more attentive to times for spontaneous use of some of the prayers. For example, as your young person goes off to a sports event or a difficult day at school, or when he or she is in a bad mood, say, “the Lord be with you,” or when you are outside and see some beautiful nature scene say, “Glory to God in the highest,” or “heaven and earth are full of your glory.”

### **POINTS TO PONDER AND DISCUSS WITH FAMILY & GROUPS:**

- If a friend or spouse asked you about the changes to the Mass translation, what could you tell him or her at this point?
- Knowing more about the Gloria now, how does it sensitize you to look more frequently for examples of God’s glory, and praise them more often?
- Remember a recent, special meal (possibilities: a birthday meal, Sunday dinner, Thanksgiving, Christmas, a summer picnic or barbeque.) To prompt your memory, recall: who was there; what the location was; what food you ate; what you drank;

what you talked about; how you felt afterward; what you were celebrating. With that memory in mind, why do you think Jesus chose a meal as the way for his followers to remember him? He could've been remembered in any way he wanted: with a sword, a code of law, a statue, a book. Why do you think he chose something we do every day?

- Knowing the importance of a meal to Jesus, how does it affect your meals at home? Could you eat with your family more often? Or do you already enjoy many meals together?
- What efforts have you made to be a more grateful person? To what extent have these succeeded? (For example, some people make a point of naming the three things they are most thankful for as they fall asleep at night.)
- In reading and studying about the New Roman Missal, did you discover anything about Jesus that you didn't know before?
- How does the Penitential Act resonate with your own experience? For example, have you ever felt badly about hurting a spouse, friend, or family member? If so, how did you apologize? Remembering that experience, do you see any similarities in our apology during this rite, to God, and to each other? Why do we do it so early in the Mass?
- Read Matthew 5:23-24. Think how tense a dinner can be if diners have unresolved issues; relate it to Mass.
- Knowing the great diversity in the world, how do you feel about standing as one in faith with countless people who speak different languages, follow different customs, and eat different foods from those you eat?
- People who leave the Catholic Church say what they miss most is the Eucharist. People who remain Catholic often say the reason is the Eucharist. Why do you think it is so central to Catholic faith life? Is it central to yours?

# KEY ISSUES

## **Three key issues to remember about the translation are:**

1. The new translation strives for unity (on the night before Jesus died, he prayed for his disciples, as well as “those who will believe...through their word, so that they may all be one” John 17:20-21) and continuity (that our sacrifice today may be an extension of the ancient foundations of our faith). Even though we no longer worship in one language like we did before Vatican II, we strive for the language we do use to faithfully echo the prayers our ancestors passed on as the foundation of the Mass.
2. The new translation is more sacral (relating to or used in sacred rites) and as a result the translations communicate more precisely why we pray, why we have hope, and how we present ourselves before God.

3. The new translation helps us see more clearly the connection between Scripture and the Mass prayers.

## **THE FOUR PARTS OF THE MASS INCLUDE:**

1. The Introductory Rites
2. The Liturgy of the Word
3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist
4. The Concluding Rites

In **OCTOBER** we focused on the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word. (Green sheets in the TAKE-HOME KIT) The focus in the month of **NOVEMBER** will be the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rites.

The celebration of the Mass, which is also called the celebration of Eucharist, is very important. Why? Because we come to Mass:

- To praise God and give thanks for all of the blessings we have received.
- To be nourished by God's word and by Eucharist.
- To pray for ourselves and for all the needs of our world.
- To leave Mass with renewed energy to love our brothers and sisters.

At Mass we are all participants: there is no place for spectators! Everyone's participation is important. We all have our specific roles:

- We dialogue with the priest and pray aloud with the whole congregation.
- We participate by listening attentively as the word of God is read aloud and explained.
- We eat and drink of the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.
- We sing psalms and hymns and songs.

- We minister as readers or as singers while others take part in the procession of gifts or help as altar servers. Some may assist the priest and deacon to distribute Holy Communion.

The following handouts come from Gerard Moore's (with additional material by Jean Marie Hiesberger) *We Learn About Mass* (Second Edition) and are for the purpose of helping you understand more about Mass, and how you participate in it. The more any of us know about this sacred tradition of Mass, the deeper we are able to enter into its celebration. Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. It is the sacrament to which we bring our life with its joys and sorrows, failures and accomplishments, and put it all in the hands of the Lord. In return, we receive nourishment and strength and are challenged to go forth to more fully love and serve the Lord.

### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (PART III)

(INCLUDES: The Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts, The Eucharistic Prayer, The Preface Dialogue, The Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, The Doxology (Amen), The Lord's Prayer, Sign of Peace, Lamb of God, Communion , and the Prayer after Communion)

Now begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We use the word *Eucharist* to describe our most important prayer as Catholics – Mass. The word is also used to describe the sacrament that is consecrated and received during Mass: the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek word *eucharistein*, which means “thanksgiving.” (To this day, if you want to say “thank you” in Greek you say *efharisto!*) Mass is a great prayer of thanksgiving, which the Church offers to God the Father. We give thanks to God for all the blessings of our lives, but above all we thank God for the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. Our principal way of worshipping Christ present in Eucharist is to gather with other believers, the Body of Christ, to celebrate Mass and to receive the sacrament of his Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

#### PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

The altar is prepared with the altar cloth and *The Roman Missal* with prayers for the priest. Wine and water are poured into the chalice, and bread in the form of hosts is brought to the table. In preparation for Eucharist, the priest symbolically washes his hands, saying a prayer, asking that he be cleansed from his sins and worthy to lead the community in this great sacrificial prayer. Our gifts are brought forth to be offered as well. In the early Church, people brought food from their homes and their fields to be shared with those who were in need. We still remember this custom on Holy Thursday when food for the hungry is brought forward. Our monetary gifts to be used for the community and the needy are also brought

forward at this time. Eucharist is about sharing spiritual food for our spiritual hungers and needs and sharing physical food for those who do not have enough to eat.

We continue to prepare the gifts to be offered. Before the consecration, the priest and the community ask God to bless the bread and wine. The beautiful prayers over the bread and the wine at this point give credit to God that we even have these gifts. We bless God, reminding ourselves that it is because God has made all of creation that we have these gifts to offer. God's creation has provided the bread and wine, which come from the earth. We remind ourselves that humans have grown the wheat and grapes we now prepare to offer. We listen to the words the priest prays, which acknowledge that, in this Eucharist, they will become not just physical food but the bread of life and our spiritual drink. Then the priest invites us to pray together that this, our sacrifice, will be acceptable to God the Father.

#### **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Although the entire Mass is a prayer of thanksgiving, the Eucharistic Prayer holds a special place. It is the great prayer of thanksgiving that the priest prays in our name. It is important that we pray this prayer by listening carefully to what he prays and by making it our prayer in the silence of our hearts. In addition to Mass we pray at other times, of course. We pray to ask for forgiveness. Some of our prayers are prayers of petition, or asking God for help. Some prayers are prayers of praise in which we give praise and glory to God. Others are prayers of adoration. In these prayers our words show that we adore the God who created us, redeemed us, and loves us forever. Prayers of thanksgiving – even apart from the great prayer of thanksgiving in Mass – help us remember the many reasons we have to be thankful.

#### **THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (THE SANCTUS)**

The Holy, Holy, Holy is a prayer that actually continues the Preface that the priest prays. This part of the prayer is called the Preface Acclamation. It is at this point that the people and the choir join in and sing this ancient prayer/song. The Holy, Holy, Holy is part of the liturgy in both the Eastern and Western Church. It is an ancient prayer that has been prayed at Mass since before the year 400. It is clearly in two parts. Scripture inspires both parts, and each part ends with "Hosanna in the highest." The first section comes from Isaiah 6:33. The second part, from Matthew 21, hearkens to Jesus' arrival, on a donkey, with his disciples into Jerusalem. The people shouted out their praise and hope for salvation with these words. After the Hosanna, the priest prays over the bread and wine and Christ becomes present in both these elements just as he promised at the Last Supper.

#### **MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION**

Now we have our second of the three important acclamations sung during the Eucharistic Prayer. After the words of consecration, we affirm our faith in this mystery by joining in one of the three options for this acclamation. It is important for all of the assembly to sing. The Eucharistic acclamations are our way of affirming what has just taken place on the altar. It is no longer bread and wine, but now Christ is present in both these elements. It is a great mystery of our faith in which we prayerfully acclaim our belief.

#### THE DOXOLOGY (AMEN)

The great prayer that the priest has been praying in the name of the assembly comes to a dramatic conclusion with the words of praise in the Doxology. We are praising God the Father through the Holy Spirit by offering him the great gift of his Son who sacrificed his life for us and is now present in the consecrated bread and wine. The priest and deacon hold these Eucharistic elements up high while they are offered to the Father with all honor and glory. Again, very significantly, the assembly makes the prayer their own with their Great Amen. The word *Amen* is one of a few Hebrew words used in the liturgy. The word means that you agree with what has just been said. This is why it is said or sung enthusiastically as we hear the closing words of the Eucharistic Prayer. Amen is used in the Old and New Testaments as a word of affirmation or confirmation of what was just said. We continue to use it with that meaning in our Eucharist today.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

This prayer is called the Lord's Prayer because it is what Jesus taught when he was asked how to pray. It is a common prayer in the sense that it is universally known and prayed among all Christians. However, it is both a simple and a very challenging prayer. In it we acknowledge that we are citizens of both heaven and earth. We humbly ask for what we need. Our daily bread can be food, spiritual strength, moral courage, or any number of other needs of which we might not even be aware. The very serious challenge to the one who prays it is in the asking for forgiveness. Here we say that God should not forgive us any greater than we are forgiving others. Finally, we acknowledge that evil and temptation are stronger than we are, and it is God's help that will lead us away from it. The Lord's Prayer is in the Gospel according to Luke 11:2-4 as well as Matthew 6:9-13. At Mass it is appropriate that the priest and people pray this aloud together, as we are one community trying to live out this prayer that Jesus gave us.

#### SIGN OF PEACE

At the Last Supper, the night before Jesus died, the very night when Jesus gave the apostles the bread and wine that were his Body and Blood, he said, "I leave you peace; my peace I give you" (John 14:27). The first thing Jesus said to his friends when he appeared to them after his

Resurrection was, "Peace be with you." The Sign of Peace at Mass continues the tradition and the ritual given to us by Christ. The priest greets us with the words of Christ offering us peace. Before we receive the sacred bread and wine, we do as the priest (or deacon) directs us: "Let us offer each other the sign of peace." This ritual of turning to those near us signifies that we are one with each other; we are here together, not alone. In the Our Father we prayed that God would forgive us as we forgive others. Here we offer a sign of that reconciliation to one another. It is also a sign of how we intend to be with others in our life – a person offering peace and reconciliation.

#### **LAMB OF GOD (FRACTION OF THE BREAD)**

Two things happen simultaneously as we come closer to the time of sharing the sacred meal in Holy Communion. The priest is preparing the consecrated bread and wine for the community to receive them. He is at the altar, breaking the bread and saying the words of the Fraction of the Bread. If there is more than one Communion minister, the priest places the hosts within the vessels. He pours the consecrated wine into the vessels for the Communion ministers to serve. While the priest is doing this, the assembly is praying the Lamb of God together. In this way, we too are preparing to come to the table. In this prayer we ask God to take away our sins and to grant us peace. We address Christ in this three-part prayer as the Lamb of God. This title of reverence is filled with meaning. In the Old Testament the Passover lamb was sacrificed as an offering to God. On the cross, Jesus was sacrificed for all of us. He became the Lamb of God who had been prophesied. John the Baptist announced to the crowd: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

#### **COMMUNION**

As the priest holds up the sacred species before us, he reminds us that this is the Lamb of God who takes away all sin. Then he says: "Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." We can only imagine how the apostles felt at the Last Supper. Celebrating the Passover meal with Jesus, the apostles were given the incredible gift of his presence now in the bread and wine he blessed and shared with them. We have the same gift of Christ's presence in Holy Communion. Our experience of coming to the supper table of the altar is just as real as the apostles' experience was with Jesus that holy night. What joy and happiness we can experience when we reflect on the meaning and significance of this gift and embrace it with faith-filled hearts!

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

During Holy Communion we have three kinds of prayers. The first is while everyone is coming in procession to receive Holy Communion. At this time, we all pray in the words of the

Communion Chant. Just as at a meal at home, we eat and drink individually, and yet we are eating together so we pay attention to the others at the table. At Mass, when everyone has “eaten” and “drunk,” we have a time of silence when we bow our heads and pray alone. That is the second kind of prayer during Holy Communion. Thirdly, the priest invites us to stand and once again pray in community. This time, the priest says the prayer aloud for all of us, and again, we make the prayer our own by our Amen.

## CONCLUDING RITES (PART IV)

We begin and end Mass with the Sign of the Cross, our traditional Trinitarian way to begin and end all prayers. In this case, the priest doesn't make the Sign of the Cross on himself but makes it over us in a blessing. We, however, make the Sign of the Cross on ourselves as a response of receiving this blessing and as our closing prayer.

Eucharist, like the Gospel itself is a “two-edged sword.” It both comforts us and challenges us. We come to Eucharist to be fed and fed. We are fed with the word of the Lord in the scriptures and the Body and Blood of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine. Eucharist also challenges us by reminding us that we are to be Christ in our corner of the world today. We are here to care for others. We are not alone in doing Christ's work. Rather, he both told us to care for one another, and he still remains with us every minute of our lives. He is with us as we are like the good Samaritan, caring for someone in need. He is with us as we serve others by living out the Beatitudes. We are fed and strengthened, and we are to do the same for others. This is what is meant by the words “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” As Christ told us, whatever you do to others, you do to me. What a privilege!

*Eucharist* means “thanksgiving” in Greek. *Mass* comes from the Latin verb meaning, “to send forth.” Both of these themes are richly integrated into all that we do and say in the liturgy. We come with much to be thankful for, and we leave with even more reason to go forth and do the will of the Lord. We are part of the larger community of the parish, the global church, and the community of all God's people on earth. As the world grows smaller, today we are even more aware of the suffering of all humanity. We are also more able to connect with people around the world in ways that we can be of service – by what we do, what we give, and always, by our prayers for them.

In the 2007 papal exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the importance of the words in the Final Dismissal. He explains that what is said in the dismissal should link the relationship between the Mass and our mission in the world. When we leave Mass, we are being sent into the world to proclaim the Gospel. In other words, we are being dispatched to our mission of bringing Christ to those we meet in our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, and our workplaces. Wherever we are, we have a chance to

**show others the face of Christ. We do this by the way we treat and speak to those we encounter. Pope Benedict noted that it would be beneficial to provide new texts for the dismissal that would make the connection between Mass and our mission clear. Consider the dismissal “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” How does that speak to you? Does that make you realize that your life should reflect the Good News of Jesus Christ? Consider, too, the dismissal “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” Do you take seriously these words that your life should lend glory to God?**

Excerpts taken from *Teaching Edition We Learn About Mass (Second Edition)* by Gerard Moore with additional material by Jean Marie Hiesberger, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-61671-035-4