

A walk through the Mass
Parts 3: Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Offertory

Usually a song is sung during the offertory so we are praying while the collection is taken up and the altar is prepared.

Altar: This is the table used for the sacrifice of the Mass. Most Altars have an **Altar stone** in it with a relic in it. On the altar is placed the **corporal**, a placemat used so that if any part of the Eucharist should break off it is not dumped or tossed onto the floor. **Chalices**, these are cups used for the Blood of Christ. They are usually made of a precious material that is a solid and nonabsorbent material. The **purificators**, one for each Chalice, these are napkins used to keep the Chalices clean; and the **Sacramentary**. The Sacramentary has all the prayers in it that the Priest needs to celebrate Mass.

We have an offertory procession in which we bring up **Bread, Water, Wine and the Collection**. The procession, comes from within the congregations and from members of the congregations; and it expresses personal participation in the sacrifice of the Mass. You are presenting yourselves and your lives to God to be transformed into His Body and Blood. By 155 AD, the Offertory part of the Mass was already common.

We offer **unleavened bread** because at the Last Supper when Jesus celebrated the first Mass, He used unleavened bread made from wheat. In Biblical times, bread was not just a side dish as it is frequently used today. Bread was considered the most basic of foods, a staple (Sir 29:21) which supported human life (Lv 26:26, Ez 4:16; Ps 105:16). Offering bread becomes a sacrifice of ourselves to God. As the prayer that the priest says indicates; the bread comes from the earth so it represents creation, it was made by human hands so it represents all of us and our labor.

We bring up the **water** because we are mostly water so it is one of the best symbols for us since without it we die. Then, a little water is mixed with the wine since it was a custom in Palestine at the time of Christ to dilute the wine with water as a common part of a meal. It was consumed when bread was served (Jgs 19:19, 1 Sam 16:20).

We offer **Wine**, The wine must be a grape wine because Jesus used a grape wine at the Last Supper. As with the bread, the prayer of offering says that the wine comes from the earth so it represents creation, it was made by human hands so it represents all of us and our labor

The wine represents the divinity of Christ and water represents our humanity. The two joined together in Jesus point to the Incarnation when God became human. Now, by His goodness and grace they are also joined in us as we are transformed into the Body of Christ in the World (2 Pt 1:4). Water and blood flowed from the Heart of Jesus when the soldier pierced the side of Jesus on the Cross. Now water and wine are united and will become His blood.

The monetary **collection** again represents us, our labor, and our sacrifice to God. By contributing, we fulfill one of the precepts of the Church: that of contributing to the support of the church. These gifts represent our giving ourselves to God.

When the priest offers the gifts to the Father, he says several prayers. Since there is usually a hymn being sung, he says these prayers quietly; However, if there is no music he can say them loudly enough for the assembly to hear and respond.

Action	Prayer
As the bread is offered the priest prays:	Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands , it will become for us the bread of life. All respond with, "Blessed be God forever."
As water is poured into the wine, the priest prays	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.
As the wine is offered the priest prays:	Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands , it will become our spiritual drink. All respond with, "Blessed be God forever."

The two prayers of offering for bread and wine are about identical in Latin. They emphasize that the bread and wine are gifts from God to us and are our gifts to God. The two prayers are modeled after the Jewish blessings used at meal time during the time of Jesus. The prayers indicate that the bread comes from the earth so it represents creation; it was made by human hands so it represents all of us and our labor. The wine also comes from the earth so it represents creation and being made by human hands, it therefore represents all of us and our labor.

The priest bows to the altar and the gifts and then washes his hands and says a prayer. This act of washing comes from the custom in the early and mid age church. To make sure the priest had clean hands before he touched the Body and Blood of Jesus. The prayer that goes with it is one of asking for forgiveness and cleansing of sin for the priest and the congregations before we celebrate the Eucharistic Prayer.

Action	Prayer
Prayed while the priest bows to the altar and the gifts	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
Prayed as the priest washes his fingers.	Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin

With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you: This prayer stresses that this is a sacrifice not just of bread and wine, but of all the people assembled for the Mass. It recalls the petitions of the men thrown into the fiery furnace (Dn 3). They offered their lives in sacrifice to God, as we offer our lives in sacrifice to God in the Mass.

Wash me, O lord, from my iniquity: The priest washes his hands as he says this prayer that is based on King David's prayer (Ps 51:2). It recalls the rites in the Old Testament which a priest would perform before entering the sanctuary (Rv 29:4; Nm 8:7) or entering the tabernacle and going to the altar of incense (Ex 30:17-21). It symbolizes the internal cleansing of the heart before drawing near to God. Jesus is coming to us and we will receive Him in Holy Communion. Jesus will accomplish this through the priest's hand.

Then I ask that we all pray to God to accept our offerings and everyone responses with a prayer asking for this acceptance by God.

Prayer
Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters) that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father. All: 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 holy Church.

Pray, brethren..... This is an invitation for everyone to pray.

that my sacrifice and yours: This expresses that more than one sacrifice is offered. The Mass is a single sacrifice offered by all present; however, each of us also offers our own sacrifice as a member of the priesthood of the Baptized (1 Pt 2:5). The priest has the option to change these words somewhat.

Holy: This helps with the sense of dialogue and matches the description of the Church in the Creed.

Prayer over the Offerings:

As with the Opening Prayers, each Sunday has its own prayer. They praise God and offer Him the Sacrifice of Christ and ourselves. The assembly responds Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer:

We now move into the Eucharistic Prayer. The General Instruction in the Missal # 55 says that “the meaning of this prayer is that the whole congregation of the faithful is entering into union with Christ in the confession of the great acts of God and in the offering of the sacrifice.” This begins with the Preface and concludes with the Doxology.

The Preface.

In the Preface we give praise and thanksgiving to God. It can be sung or said. There are 90 some different Prefaces. In the Preface we give praise and thanksgiving to God. It can be sung or said. There are approximately a hundred different Prefaces, I am not going to address each of them.

Explanation	Prayer
This is a time-honored greeting among Christians from the beginning of the Church.	P: The Lord be with you. All: And with your spirit.
This comes from Lamentation 3, 41 and expresses our determination to pay attention to the things of God. The heart is the center and source of a person's thoughts, emotions and actions. It is a heavenly command to give all that we are to God.	P: Lift up your hearts. All: We lift them up to the Lord.
This is taken from the Jewish invitations to the prayer of blessing over the cup. It is one thing we can give to God that He does not have – our thanks. Scripture calls us to give thanks to God (Ps 136:1-3; Col 2:7; Eph 5:19-20; Ps 95:2). The second part is from a Greek acceptance of agreement. It is a statement of duty. The thanksgiving we offer is a complete and perfect worship of God. This opening dialogue is practically the same as used in Rome in the year 200 in the writings of Hippolytus.	P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. All: It is right and just.

The Preface continues with a general praise to God and thanksgiving for the mystery being celebrated. It states specifically why we give God thanks and expresses the fact that we are one assembly with all those in heaven and we worship Divine Majesty with awe and splendor. It

is offered on behalf of those who just expressed their desire to join with the priest in thanking God.

The Preface ends with the Holy, Holy, Holy. This has been part of every Mass since before the 4th century and is usually sung.

Prayer
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of host . 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.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of host: This is from the book of Isaiah, when the angels praise God (Is 6:3). We join the angels in praising God. The words are capitalized because they refer to God. Repeating the word, “Holy” three times is the strongest form of emphasis in the Hebrew language.

Host, the Latin is “*Sabaoth*”, refers to God’s command over the angelic host. The use of this word emphasizes God’s power over all the forces of nature. Isaiah refers to God as the Lord of host (Is 6:5). This is in preparation for asking the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

The rest of the hymn is unchanged and comes from the praise of Jesus when He enters Jerusalem (Mt 21:9) and Psalm 118:26.

Hosanna: means “Save us” in English and is an expression of praise in liturgical worship.

The entire Preface affirms the divinity of Christ, the power of God. We join with the angels and all creation raising our voices in praise of God as we welcome Jesus into our church by His being present in the Eucharist on the Altar, and into ourselves as we receive Him in Communion.

The Body of the Eucharistic Prayer:

There are 4 regular Eucharistic Prayers and 2 Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation and 4 Various Needs and Occasions..

Prayer 1: goes back to the 5th century. From the 12th century on it was the only Eucharistic Prayer allowed until 1969. I use it occasionally on Sundays.

Prayer 2: Is the oldest going back to 215 and Hippolytus. It is also the shortest. Because of its shortness it is used on Weekdays and when Mass is going long.

Prayer 3: is the one normally used on Sundays and was composed following Vatican II.

Prayer 4: is longer than Prayer Two or Three and is based on a fourth century prayer from the Eastern Tradition.

The Eucharistic Prayers are based on the ancient Jewish table blessings and all have the same parts and I want to touch on them a little using the Third Eucharistic Prayer. As with the Creed, I am not going into great detail about the theology of the entire prayer as that would take many, many more pages! All the Eucharistic Prayers have some of the **same parts**: Epiclesis, Consecration, Memorial Acclamations, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, Intercessions, and Doxology.

Explanation	Prayer
Holy : is capitalized because it refers to God. Lord : from the Latin <i>Domine</i> . you have created; give life; make them holy; never cease : These phrases all underscore the activity of God. They are general, so the prayer is not connected to any one season like Lent or Christmas.	You are indeed Holy, O Lord , and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit you give life to all things and make them holy , and you

rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice: This is from the book of Malachi and Isaiah (Mal 1:11; Is 45:6). It means that we have heard what God wants and we are doing it! We are praising God for all that He does for us throughout the day by giving our sacrifices and our praise God in all that we do.	never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.
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The **Epiclesis** (below) is the calling down of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. (The priest brings his hands down over the bread and wine. This is the ancient symbol of invoking God to bless something or someone.)

Explanation	Prayer
same Spirit: This is the second reference to the Holy Spirit in the prayer. we have brought: This looks back to the presentation of the gifts at the Offertory. we celebrate these mysteries: This looks ahead to the Consecration, our receiving the Eucharist and our salvation. <i>Mystery</i> in Catholic Theology is not a hidden truth or knowledge that only a few people are given. Rather, for us, <i>Mystery</i> is an action or nature of God that the human mind can not totally comprehend. We can't totally understand the Eucharist or the love of God that saves and forgives us without totally understanding the nature and completeness of God; and only God can understand Himself. But we can believe and celebrate it.	Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

The Consecration, Institutions Narrative (below) is the pivotal point or heart of the Eucharistic Prayer and Mass. It is the Words of Christ as He celebrated the Last Supper (Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:14-23). This is when Jesus makes His sacrifice present for us and the sacrifice of the Church is taken up into the sacrifice of Christ. We firmly believe that the bread and wine actually become the Risen Body and Blood of Christ.

The custom of the Acolyte rings the bells when the priest elevates the Body of Jesus and again when the Chalice with the Blood of Christ is elevated, originated in the 13th century. Many people did not receive the Eucharistic during that time and reception of communion was replaced for the most part by seeing and adoring the Eucharist.

Explanation	Prayer
For on the night he was betrayed he himself: This places the event in time and connects the offering of the bread to the Sacrifice of the Cross. Giving: The verb tense is to stress that Jesus is giving thanks now, not just 2000 years ago. Of: This word emphasizes that we all share the same bread so we become one body in Christ. For: Focuses on why we do this and how we become one body- because the Body and Blood of Christ was given up <u>for</u> us. GIVEN UP: This	For on the night he was betrayed he himself took bread, and giving you thanks he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples saying: TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

phrase is used many times in the New Testament to refer to sacrifice. It stresses that Jesus is sacrificing for us (Jn 6:51).	
Chalice: A Chalice is a ceremonial vessel shared by people. It differs from a cup which is used by only one person. Chalice is the traditional name for this Eucharistic Cup which the Lord consecrated at the Last Supper (1 Cor 11:25). MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT: Almost the same words that Moses used for the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 24:8), but Jesus says it is His Blood that is poured out to form the New Covenant. Jesus is indeed sacrificing for us. ETERNAL: “Eternal” means outside of time, beyond any measuring, whereas “Everlasting” is time without end - like long lasting. Eternal means that the duration of God’s covenant cannot be measured. POURED OUT: This phrase has more of a sense of Jesus’ mission. It is a more active word than “shed” and implies that a larger quantity of blood was lost. Christ’s wounds did not just seep blood: the blood poured out of Jesus. It draws from the Sacrifice of Atonement in the Jewish Temple where the blood of animals is poured out over the altar for forgiveness (Lv 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34). The use of the word MANY vs all has caused a great deal of problems and discussion. We believe that Jesus died for all (2 Cor 5:14-15; Jn 1:29; Jn 12:32; 1 Jn 2:2; 1 Tim 2:6) but unfortunately, not everyone will accept the salvation He offers. Isaiah writes that the Righteous One shall make many righteous and bear the sins of many (Is 53:11-12). At the Last Supper Jesus says, “poured out for many” (Mt 26:27-28; Mk 14:23-24). This is why we will be using “Many”. FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS: This is a more direct translation of the Latin and is a stronger statement of the reconciling ministry of Christ.	In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice and giving you thanks he said the blessing, and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying: 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.

The mystery of faith

This is not an instruction for the assembly to say their part, but is an expression of the wonder and awe because of the mystery that has taken place. The Body and Blood of the Jesus which was offered on the Cross is now present on the Altar (1 Tm 3:9). It is a faith-filled statement similar to “The Word of the Lord” or “The Body of Christ”. The Assembly responds with an Acclamation proclaiming the real presence of Christ’s sacrifice in His death and resurrection. This is to be sung if possible.

Explanation	Prayer
This is loosely based on 1 Cor 11:26. We proclaim Jesus’ death and resurrection by receiving the Eucharist.	All: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.
This is loosely based on 1 Cor 11:26. We proclaim Jesus’ death and resurrection by receiving the	When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O

Eucharist. <u>Cup</u> ”: This word was retained instead of changing it to Chalice in order to better match the verse in 1 st Corinthians. O Lord : We use Lord instead of the name Jesus directly to match the Latin.	Lord , until you come again .
This is from the prayer Jesus said in John 4:42.	C: Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

Anamnesis: or Memorial prayer:

The whole Eucharistic prayer is an “Anamnesis”. Anamnesis is a Greek word meaning *memorial* but is much stronger than just recalling an event. It is remembering so strongly that the event is present again. It is not a celebration of something that happened in the past, but is living in the event now! In the Eucharistic Prayer, we are living not just remembering, the Last Supper and Passion of Jesus. The Eucharistic Prayer makes the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross present for us today.

In the Anamnesis or Memorial Prayer, we recall Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross and His continuing work of Salvation in the Resurrection and Ascension. It makes explicit some aspects of what just happened and allows us to ponder them. We unite ourselves with His Sacrifice and His works of Salvation. The priest is repeating what the Assembly just proclaimed in the Memorial Acclamation. He is telling the Father that we have joyfully and faithfully done what Jesus commanded us to do at the Last Supper, “DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME”.

Prayer
Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Epiclesis

There is a second Epiclesis, praying that the celebration will be fruitful in our lives: that we will live what we celebrate. In the Mass, we have the privilege of offering God the perfect self-offering of Jesus – the Body and Blood of Christ.

<u>Explanation</u>	Prayer
Oblation : We are joining our sacrifices with the Sacrifice of Christ and offering them all to the Father. of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit : We do not have to ask for the Holy Spirit because when we receive Communion we will be filled with the Holy Spirit. become one body, one spirit in Christ : This is a prayer that the Holy Spirit will draw us all into greater communion with one another (1 Cor 10:17).	Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

Intercessions:

These are prayers commemorating and being united with various people living and dead; the Pope, the Bishop and the Saints in Heaven and the faithfully departed.

Explanation	Prayer
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1st intercession: May he make us an eternal offering to you ...: Prays that through our participation in Christ's sacrifice, we will be an eternal offering (Rom 12:1) and thereby be united with all the Saints in Heaven. most Blessed; blesses; glorious: These adjectives were added in Latin around 611 and are now added to the English translation.	May he make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs (with Saint of the day) and with all the Saints on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unfailing help.
2nd May this Sacrifice of .. Listen graciously to the..: Is for the Church universal naming the Pope, our Bishop, the clergy and the laity wherever they may be. reconciliation we pray: This specifies what the Sacrifice we have offered is for: reconciliation. Charity: This word replaces "love". Love has many different meanings and types, therefore in Church writings; we use the word "charity" to mean unconditional love. you have gained: Since the prayer is addressed to the Father, this phrase shows it is the Father who is the agent, not Jesus.	May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant Francis our Pope and Michael our Bishop, The Order of Bishops, all the clergy and the entire people you have gained for your own.
3rd intercession: Like the 2nd, this is for the universal Church gather to yourself all your children scattered: "Gather" and "scattered" are common images used in the Bible.	Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world.
4th intercession To our departed brothers and sisters..: Is a prayer for the Faithful Departed. you bestow on the world: Shows that it is the Father's action through Christ that gives us all good things.	To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom. There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory through Christ our Lord, through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.

Doxology:

The Doxology is an expression of praise and has been used since the second century.

Explanation	Prayer
It comes from St. Paul (Rom 11:36) and also from the praise of the Angels (Rv 7:12). This prayer expresses the Trinitarian nature of our worship. We, in the Church here on Earth and in Heaven, join with the Holy Spirit and united in the Holy Spirit with Jesus through His sacrifice. We offer glory and praise to God the Father. When the Priest lifts up the gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ, it is a solemn manifestation of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. Bearing these gifts, we come with confidence before the throne of Glory (Heb 4:15).	Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours for ever and ever.

<u>Great Amen</u>: This is usually sung. All of us are adding our ratification to the Eucharistic prayer just prayed. It is a proclamation of our belief that Jesus is truly present in His Body and Blood. It is an affirmation, “Yes, It is, I believe” (1 Chr 16:36; Rom 1:25; Eph 3:21). The angels say “Amen” in praise of God (Rv 7:12; 5:14; 19:4). St Jerome describes it as sounding like a clap of thunder through the great basilica. It needs to be proclaimed with great power, devotion and strength.	All: Amen.