

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white, oval-shaped host. The background is blurred, showing other people in a church setting.

The Mass Explained FOR KIDS

SECOND EDITION



Nihil Obstat: Reverend Thomas W. Buckley, S.T.D., S.S.L.

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The Mass Explained for Kids

Second Edition

Commentary by
Maria Grace Dateno, FSP
and Jaymie Stuart Wolfe



The Mystery of the Mass

Catholics all over the world gather for Mass on Sundays—the Lord’s Day, the day Jesus rose from the dead. In this booklet we will begin to uncover the mystery of what happens at Mass and why we say and do the things we say and do!

What is the Mass?

The Mass is the best way we have to worship God. God created us and everything else in the world! He loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus, to save us. In the Mass, we join in Jesus’ sacrifice of himself to the Father. We offer ourselves, our needs, and the needs of the world to God with Jesus. We give thanks and praise to God for who he is and what he has done. And we receive the grace we need to follow Jesus in our daily life.

Where does the Mass come from?

Jesus celebrated the first Mass the night before he died. We call this the “Last Supper.” Jesus knew that he would be giving his life out of love for us. He wanted to stay with us always, so he took bread and wine and gave them to his friends. He said, “This is my Body, which will be given up for you.” Then he said, “This is my Blood, which will be shed for you.” Because Jesus also told them, “Do this in memory of me,” the Mass has continued to be

celebrated throughout the centuries. In fact, each time we are at Mass we are also actually present at the Last Supper.

What do we do at the Mass?

Most people know that we sit, kneel, or stand at different parts of the Mass. But did you know that God has a special message for us at every Mass? So, we do our best to pay attention to what is happening. We sing the songs and we listen to the prayers, the readings, and the homily. In the Mass we bring our prayers and ourselves to Jesus so that he can bring us and our prayers to God the Father.

Why go to Mass?

Some people start going to Mass out of obedience—either their parents bring them or they go because the Church tells them that Sunday Mass is an obligation. But when we attend Mass faithfully, something amazing happens. Little by little, our hearts change and we *want* to go to Mass to praise and thank God for his generosity. In his goodness God comes to us in his word and in the Eucharist, and we are transformed.

Jesus is always happy to see us at Mass. By participating in Mass we are united to him in a special way, and God helps us become the saints we are meant to be.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Stand

*At the beginning of Mass, altar servers, other ministers, and a priest walk behind the cross in **procession**.*

*As the priest reaches the sanctuary, he invites us to make the **Sign of the Cross**.*

PRIEST: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: **And with your spirit.**

PENITENTIAL ACT

Stand

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have **greatly sinned**,

in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,

*We **strike our chests over our hearts three times**.*

through my fault,
through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,

Our prayer starts before Mass even begins. As we enter the doors of the church, we dip our fingers into a holy water font and make the Sign of the Cross. This reminds us that we became part of God's family through the sacrament of Baptism. As we find a place to sit, we also **genuflect**, that is, bend our right knee to the floor. We do this to recognize and respect the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

The **procession** reminds us of our call to follow Jesus with every step we take.

God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is alive in our hearts through Baptism.

Catholics around the world use this response. It comes from the earliest prayers of the Church. The priest prays for us, reminding us that we belong to the Lord through the grace of our Baptism. We pray for the priest, remembering that he has received the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Holy Orders. Jesus himself is offering the Mass through the priest.

Some sins are more serious than others, but all sin separates us from God and each other.

Striking our chests over our hearts is a very ancient gesture of sorrow and humility.

We take responsibility for the wrong we have chosen to do. Then we tell God that we know those sins are our fault—not someone else's. When we hurt someone we love, we usually say "I'm sorry" more than once.

all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to **pray for me** to the Lord our God.

OR:

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

PEOPLE: For we have sinned against you.

PRIEST: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

PEOPLE: And grant us your salvation.

Then:

PRIEST: Lord, have mercy. PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Christ, have mercy. PEOPLE: Christ, have mercy.

PRIEST: Lord, have mercy. PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

OR:

PRIEST: Kyrie, eleison. PEOPLE: Kyrie, eleison.

PRIEST: Christe, eleison. PEOPLE: Christe, eleison.

PRIEST: Kyrie, eleison. PEOPLE: Kyrie, eleison.

GLORIA

Stand

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,

We ask all who love God to pray for us. We also pray for others.

When we ask God for mercy, we are asking him to be graciously kind to us and to give us more than we deserve.

The **Kyrie** is the only part of the Mass that has remained in its original Greek!

Unless it is Advent or Lent, we always sing or say the **Gloria** at Sunday Mass. We make the words of the Christmas angels our own by joyfully saying, "Glory to God in the highest!" Like the angels, the saints, and all who share our faith in Jesus, we praise the Most Holy Trinity. We tell God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—just how wonderful he is and how much he means to us. This is what happens in heaven! We join the angels and saints in worshipping God not only because he has done wonderful things, but because of who God is.