

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Commentator's Copy - Week Four: New Translation of the Roman Missal

The commentator will read the Introduction right before Mass begins, before the opening hymn is announced and sung.

Introduction: The Council of Trent (1562 AD) encouraged the use of frequent instruction at Mass:

“Lest Christ’s flock go hungry...the Holy Synod commands pastors and all others having the care of souls to give frequent instructions during the celebration of Mass...among other things, they should include some explanation of the mystery of this most holy Sacrifice (11).”

We will now fulfill this command as we introduce the New Translation of the Roman Missal. This weekend we will focus on the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal; “At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory. For Christ took the bread and the chalice and gave thanks; he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, and drink: this is my Body; this is the cup of my Blood. Do this in memory of me.’ Accordingly, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ.”

The commentator will read #1 after the Prayers of the Faithful (General Intercessions) while the ushers begin the collection, but before the Offertory Hymn is announced and sung.

1. The Preparation of the Gifts

The altar, the centerpiece of the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*, is prepared by placing a linen, called a *corporal*, upon the altar so as to collect any of the Eucharistic fragments. Also placed on the altar is the chalice, the Roman Missal, the vessel holding the bread to be consecrated (called a *ciborium*), and other related objects. Once the altar is prepared, it is desirable for the faithful to bring forth bread and wine, along with money collected for the work of the Church. The presentation of the gifts is representative of the faithful’s “first fruits,” a practice laid upon the Israelites in the Old Covenant by God in which they were to give their very best to Him first. The words of this rite express this. As an act of both interior and exterior purification, the priest washes his hands.

The commentator will read #2 after the priest washes his hands, when the Offertory Hymn is finished, before the Prayer over the Gifts.

2. The Prayer over the Offerings

Once the gifts have been prepared and blessed by the priest, a formal prayer is made over the bread and wine. The words of this prayer continue the theme for the liturgy that day. The people make the prayer their own by stating, “*Amen.*”

The commentator will read #3 after the Prayer over the Offerings before the Eucharistic Prayer begins.

3. The Eucharistic Prayer

The *Eucharistic Prayer* is the heart and summit of the entire Mass. In it the people give formal blessing to God and in turn are blessed by Him through the consecration and reception of the Eucharistic feast. This prayer consists of several parts: the first is called the *preface*, in which the priest invites the people to lift up their hearts to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving; the preface is concluded by the *Holy, Holy, Holy...*; thereon, the priest chooses from a variety of Eucharistic prayers. Each prayer consists of the *epiclesis* (the praying for the Holy Spirit), the *institution narrative*, the *anamnesis* (recalling the Paschal Mystery and the offering of the Son to the Father), and the *intercessions*. Each *Eucharistic Prayer* remembers the great salvific deeds God has accomplished for us and invites us to unite ourselves with Christ as a sacrificial offering.

The commentator will read #4 after the Great Amen before praying the Lord’s Prayer.

4. The Lord’s Prayer

After now having recalled what Jesus has done to reunite us to the Father, we turn to Him in prayer asking, among other things, for the coming of His Kingdom, our daily bread and forgiveness of sins.

The commentator will read #5 after the Lord’s Prayer before the Sign of Peace.

5. The Rite of Peace

The *Rite of Peace* follows, by which the Church asks for peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament. It is, however, appropriate that each person offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner. The priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration.

The commentator will read #6 after the Sign of Peace before we begin singing the Lamb of God.

6. The Fraction

Christ's gesture of breaking bread at the Last Supper . . . signifies that the many faithful are made one body by receiving Communion from the one *Bread of Life* which is Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of the world.

The commentator will read #7 after the Lamb of God.

7. The Communion Rite

After the priest says "Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb," all respond "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." This translation is closer to Sacred Scripture and no longer puts into doubt the reality that God has created us worthy, in fact, wonderfully made, but our Spiritual housekeeping still needs some work before we are ready for the Lord to come.

Reception of the Body and Blood of Christ signifies unity of discipleship towards Christ and belief in Jesus' teaching, which has been handed on to us through the Church. Hence, anyone who is in a state of mortal sin, or who is in firm disagreement with Church teaching and belief, should not receive, for the outward act of reception betrays the inward state of their soul and belief.

As the communicant approaches to receive both the Body and Blood, a bow from the head as a sign of reverence is desired. At the discretion of each communicant, the consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand. Other acts of devotion and reverence towards the Eucharist, such as genuflecting, are acceptable, provided they are respectful of the other communicants around them. Overall, the reception of communion should be reverent, dignified and not rushed.

The period immediately following the reception of the Eucharist should consist of prayerful meditation and unity with Christ, who is truly present within the communicant.

The commentator will read #8 after Communion is finished and the priest has returned to his chair and is seated.

8. Prayer after Communion

To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the *Prayer after Communion*, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. . . . The people make the prayer their own by the acclamation, “*Amen.*”