



A Walk through the Mass

Over the course of this year, the Office for Worship Newsletter will focus on the various elements of the Eucharistic liturgy as a means of providing an opportunity for you to stop and reflect on why we do what we do at Mass. This month's newsletter picks up where we left off in June with a closer look at the eight essential parts of the Eucharistic Prayer.

This newsletter is designed to be a resource for parish music ministers, liturgists, liturgy committees, as well as priests and deacons, and anyone who wants to know more about the Order of Mass and why we do what we do! Please feel free to reproduce and share these materials with your parish community; just be sure to cite the Office for Worship, Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST – Part Three

The Communion Rite

From the Roman Missal:

124. After the chalice and paten have been set down, the Priest, with hands joined, says:

**At the Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:**

He extends his hands and, together with the people, continues:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
they kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

125. With hands extended, the Priest alone continues, saying:

**Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

He joins his hands.

The people conclude the prayer, acclaiming:

For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer begins the part of the Mass known as the Communion Rite. Immediately following the Doxology and Great Amen, the assembly rises to their feet and the Communion Rite of the Mass begins. As we prepare to share Holy Communion, the Lord's Prayer is the best prayer we know. It is the prayer that Jesus taught to his disciples and probably ended up as a prayer before Holy Communion because of the petition for "our daily bread" and its promotion of mutual forgiveness. As such, it begins the community's preparation for sharing in the Eucharist.

The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer with the words, "**At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say...**" This introduction tells us three things: we are praying this in obedience to Christ; we are using the words Christ taught us; and we are being bold in doing so.

This boldness was emphasized in the Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal's invitation by the words, "we dare to say." In these words, we are presuming to call God our Father, claiming our place as part of God's family, adopted sons and daughters through Christ our Lord, with Whom we are "fellow heirs" (Romans 8:17), and in Whom "we have boldness and confidence of access" to God (Ephesians 3:12). Through our Baptism we receive the grace to call upon God as Father, despite our sinfulness. The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls this "filial boldness." (CCC, 2777)

The Embolism (Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil...)

Following the Lord's Prayer, the priest prays that the community may be delivered "from every evil" as it awaits "the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." This prayer is an interpretation of and expansion upon the last petition of the Our Father ("lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"). Because it is an insertion to the Lord's Prayer, it is

called the *embolism*, a word which comes from the Greek ἐμ μ , meaning “interpolation,” or insertion/interjection. It functions a little like a marginal gloss, amplifying and elaborating on the implications of the last petition.

The embolism closes with a doxology that is well known by Protestant Christians as the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer: “*For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.*” The earliest manuscripts of the Lord’s Prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples in the gospels, did not include this acclamation. In fact, it wasn’t until the end of the first century when it appeared in the *Didache*, the earliest of Church documents, eventually finding its way into Bibles and eventually worship practices.

126. Then the Priest, with hands extended, says aloud:

**Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.**

He joins his hands.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

The people reply:

Amen.

127. The priest, turned towards the people, extending and then joining his hands, adds:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The people reply:

And with your spirit.

128. Then, if appropriate, the Deacon, or the Priest adds:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

And all offer one another a sign, in keeping with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity. The Priest gives the sign of peace to a Deacon or minister.

The Sign of Peace

After the Lord’s Prayer and Embolism, but before the reception of Holy Communion, the priest or deacon invites the people to exchange a sign of peace. It is then customary to turn to those around you and say “Peace” or “Peace be with you,” and to shake the hand of those

standing nearby. In many parishes today, this ancient liturgical gesture has become a moment of sharing hospitality with those around us.

This ancient act, found in Matthew's Gospel, is rich in symbolism and meaning. In Matthew 5:23-24 we read, "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* emphasizes this symbolism in article 82: "There follows the Rite of Peace, by which the Church entreats 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."

We know the early Christians took this biblical instruction seriously and incorporated it into the earliest celebrations of liturgy. The *Apostolic Constitutions*, a 4th century document, reads that, after the Prayer of the Faithful, but preceding the oblation, "let the bishop salute the church, and say, 'The peace of God be with you all.' And let the people answer, 'And with your spirit;' and let the deacon say to all, 'Salute one another with the holy kiss.' And let the clergy salute the bishop, the men of the laity salute the men, the women the women."

Today, we don't hear much of the terminology of the "kiss of peace;" it has become known as "the sign of peace." Yet, it was a custom of the Early Church – and remains a custom in much of the Mediterranean culture today – and is found throughout liturgical history of the Church. In the time of St. Gregory the Great (mid-6th to early 7th centuries) it was even considered a pre-requisite (yes, required!) for the reception of Holy Communion.

The Sign of Peace took on various forms throughout the history of the Church in both eastern and western rites – even being dropped altogether among the faithful and only exchanged among those in the sanctuary. After the Second Vatican Council, the ancient custom was restored among the people and each conference of bishops was entrusted with determining a sign that is culturally most appropriate for this point in the liturgy.

Today the sign of peace is a symbolic act pointing us towards the disposition of heart we must have before receiving the Eucharist. It also reminds us that in order to be in full communion with Christ, we must first love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and we must *also* love our neighbors as ourselves.

129. Then he takes the host, breaks it over the paten, and places a small piece in the chalice, saying quietly:

**May this mingling of the Body and Blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
bring eternal life to us who receive it.**

130. Meanwhile the following is sung or said:

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

The invocation may even be repeated several times if the fraction is prolonged. Only the final time, however, is grant us peace said.

The Fraction

...The Priest breaks the Bread and puts a piece of the host into the chalice to signify the unity of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the work of salvation, namely, of the Body of Jesus Christ, living and glorious... - GIRM, 83

As the sign of peace concludes, the priest takes the host and breaks it over the paten, placing a small piece of it in the chalice while offering a prayer that this mingling will “bring eternal life to us who receive it.” It is important that there be a clear distinction between the sign of peace and the breaking of the bread because the actions and texts uniquely distinguish the sign of peace from the breaking of the bread.

This action originated out of an early church practice when priests were obliged on Sundays to celebrate Mass for their communities in their own churches (the “titular” or the “title” churches) and therefore could not take part in the solemn papal Mass. In order to establish a sense of unity and Eucharistic community of the titular churches to the cathedral church, a piece of consecrated host was carried by acolytes from the papal Mass to the priest of a titular church and placed into his own chalice at the same point in the Mass.

A 5th century letter from Pope Innocent I to Bishop Decentius of Gubbio describes this action with interesting detail:

With regard to the *fermentum* [literally: leaven] which we sent on Sundays to the various “titles”:...The priests of those churches cannot join us in celebrating on that day because they must take care of their own people; therefore, acolytes bring them the *fermentum* which we have consecrated, so that on that day, of all days, they may not feel separated from communion with us.

- Innocent I, *Ep. 25 ad Decentium*, ed. R. Cabié, *Lettre d’Innocent I á Decentius de Gubbio*, 416 C.E.

As the Church grew, it naturally became impossible to maintain such a practice; however, a remnant of it remained. The priest – even the Bishop of Rome – broke a small piece of the consecrated bread and placed it into his own chalice. Eventually the practice took on an additional meaning – that the uniting of the Body and Blood of Christ in the cup served as a sign of the Resurrection. This explanation is supported by Semitic thought, in that, the separate giving of the body and blood by Christ at the Supper signified his death, since his life (his blood) was no longer in his body. In order, therefore, to signify that the Savior is now alive, it was quite natural to mix the bread and wine. This is the point which 5th century Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia seems to make in a catechetical homily in regards to this rite: “The entire human body is one with its blood; the blood mingles with every part...that is how it was with the Lord’s body before his passion.”

Lamb of God

As the priest breaks the bread, everyone sings or says the Lamb of God. The final invocation returns to the theme of peace that weaves together the rituals leading up to Holy

Communion. The singing of the Lamb of God is symbolic of the slain Lamb of the new Passover.

When the first Christians gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, they called this entire action “the breaking of the bread” (cf. Acts 2:42), an action so significant that it gives its name to the entire Eucharistic worship. Further, the breaking of bread recalls the suffering of Jesus and sharing it recalls the Last Supper, and so this action, once a very practical action of letting many eat of one loaf, became saturated with a much deeper meaning. The fraction is accompanied by the Lamb of God, a title John the Baptist uses for Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 and Revelation 5:12 and 13:8, Christ is also called a lamb.

The rubric in the Roman Missal says that the invocation may be “repeated several times if the fraction is prolonged,” with the final invocation ending with “grant us peace.” In 1982, the United States Catholic Conference wrote, “One should not hesitate to add tropes (Bread of Life, Cup of Hope, etc.) to the litany so that the prayerfulness of the rite may be enriched” (Liturgical Music Today, 20). In 1996, the USCCB’s committee on the liturgy reaffirmed this position; *however*, in 2011, the revised English translation of the Roman Missal no longer permits the additional or alternative texts besides “Lamb of God.”

New Office for Worship Resource Instructions to Help Prepare a Liturgy Planning Guide

The Office for Worship has a new resource available called [Preparing Liturgies for Confirmation](#). This document gives you step-by-step instructions on how to prepare a confirmation liturgy in light of the directions given by the Ordo. This makes the completion of a [confirmation liturgy planning guide](#) more understandable. Please share the document with anyone who could benefit from it. You can always contact Kim Mandelkow, Director of the Office for Worship, if you need more information at either 414-769-3349 or oremus@archmil.org.

Upcoming Liturgy Notes

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, falls on a Sunday this year, which also happens to be the Second Sunday of Advent. The liturgy of the solemnity transfers to Monday, December 9; however, the obligation to attend Mass is lifted this year as the obligation does not transfer with the date. Because the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is the Patronal Feast of the United States of America, *only* when the solemnity falls on a Sunday is the obligation to attend Mass lifted.

Evening Masses (those scheduled after 4:00 p.m.) on Sunday, December 8, will also use the liturgy for the Second Sunday of Advent. There is no December 8th Mass of Anticipation for the Solemnity. Likewise, Evening Prayer II (Vespers) on December 8 is for the Second Sunday

of Advent. The optional December 9th Memorial of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin is omitted this year.

The Easter Vigil 2020

Many parishes work on their liturgical calendar and scheduling during these autumn months, and consequently, we have begun to receive questions about the time for the Easter Vigil. This year's date of the Easter Vigil is Saturday, April 11, 2020. It has been determined that, here in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Easter Vigil can begin no earlier than **8:00 p.m.** Please note this start time in your 2020 liturgical and parish calendars. Those responsible for planning and implementing parish liturgies, i.e. liturgists, musicians, liturgy committees, etc., should also be informed of the 8:00 p.m. start time.

The Easter Vigil, by its very nature, must take place at night – after sunset. It is not to begin before nightfall and should end before daybreak on Easter Sunday. In other words, it should begin and end in *darkness*. It is a *nocturnal vigil*, retaining its ancient character of vigilance and expectation, as the Christian people await the Resurrection of the Lord during the night. Fire is blessed and the paschal candle is lighted to illumine the night so that all may hear the Easter proclamation and listen to the Word of God proclaimed in Scriptures. Since sunset varies at different locations throughout the country, keeping in mind that *civil twilight* concludes (i.e. nightfall occurs) approximately 25 minutes after sunset, **this year the Office for Worship has determined 8:00 p.m. as the appropriate start time for the Easter Vigil.**