

REDISCOVERING THE MASS: A TASTE OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

PART 3: Continuing our Walk through the Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Offertory Rites through Great Amen

The Cross is the center of the world and all human history. Jesus, our Lord, became man to die: that is the goal of His life. The Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross isn't just something that happened 2000 years ago...it is still happening. The event of Jesus' sacrifice in history is eternal in the heart of Jesus. The Mass is a re-enactment, a re-presentation of the one supreme sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary. The Mass is the application and projection through space and time of the redemptive love of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The supreme act of Catholic worship is the act of sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Mass, the Eucharist, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Pope St. John Paul said the Eucharist is the Church's greatest treasure. The Mass perpetuates Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

The Priest and the Victim are one and the same person, Jesus Christ, on the Cross and in the Mass. Jesus is the One Who was offered and He is the offeror. The priest offers the Mass only as the representative of Jesus Christ, as an instrument of Christ.

Jesus sacrificed His life for us on the Cross and the Mass re-presents that sacrifice to us. "Sacrifice" doesn't mean giving up or throwing away. It means to make holy. Only God can make something holy; we can't. A sacrifice is something we offer to God to be made holy by Him. Sacrifice is a primal form of worship. In Israel, the unblemished, male lamb was identified with worship. Sacrifice is no longer the blood of animals but Christ's Blood. Passover lambs are no longer sacrificed...Jesus is the New Lamb.

Worship is an act of praise, atonement, self-giving, covenant, and thanksgiving all at the same time! We need to worship God because we are His creatures and we need to worship His excellence. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the infinite giving of Jesus to His Father completely and perfectly in Thanksgiving...perfect worship.

At Mass, the primary sacrifice we are intended to offer is the gift of our lives. We are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God as the perfection of our spiritual worship in the Mass. That means we offer the Father our whole lives to be made holy by Him.

On the Cross, Jesus was alone as He offered up His Life. At Mass -- we are with Him, at the foot of the Cross, at the foot of the Altar. At Mass, we offer ourselves in union with Christ by death to sin. In His Divine Love, God makes His Cross the means of our salvation and life.

THE OFFERTORY RITES

1. Giving of the Bread and the Wine

The primary action of the Offertory Rites is the giving of the bread and the wine. In this gift, the community presents to the Lord all that it is and has. The gifts are brought forward as a representation of the whole assembly. They are your gifts being offered to the Lord. The bread and the wine are symbols of our lives and of our hopes, of our sacrifices and sorrows. We give them to the Lord. This bread and wine, symbols of our lives, will become the most sacred Body and Blood of Jesus. When Christ gives us His Sacred Body and Blood at Communion, we too are changed and become the Mystical Body of Christ. We participate in the Offertory as we offer ourselves and all that we have along with the bread and wine. Jesus can only change that which we give to Him and He is inviting us to give

ourselves to the Father so we can unite our lives with the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus Himself and join our sacrifice to His sacrifice.

2. The Collection

The presentation of the gifts of bread and wine is symbolic of our offering everything we have and are to the Lord. Therefore, it is customary to take up a collection at this time. The reason is to concretize what is symbolic. In our donation at the collection we are giving to the Lord the hours of work it took to earn the money we are offering, all the difficulties involved with it, all that we could have bought with it, and all that we still have as stewards of God's gifts. The money makes tangible what is symbolic in the bread and wine.

3. Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

During the Offertory Rite, the priest prays over the gifts of bread and wine: "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life." Our response, "Blessed be God forever" echoes Melchizedek's blessing in Genesis 14:20: "Blessed be God most high."

At the Last Supper, Christ Himself took bread and wine and changed them into His own flesh and blood. Since then, in accord with the divine command, Catholics have been doing what He did...taking bread and wine and transubstantiating them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Fundamentally, we "do this" because Jesus told us to.

The fact that Christ chose both bread and wine has a particular appropriateness to it. In both bread and wine, we see the action of the Divine and the action of the human. God Himself gives us grain and grapes, but then we must act to change them into bread and wine. It is the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands. Christ then receives this and changes them into His Body and

Blood. He then gives them back to us, which in turn changes us into the Mystical Body of Christ. This gift, change, and return continue the Divine interchange begun in the Liturgy of the Word.

4. The Mystery of Water and Wine

If you pay close attention, you might notice the priest (or deacon) will add some water into the wine in the chalice while saying something under his breath. This is actually a very ancient and important practice that encapsulates the significance of the Incarnation. The priest will say: “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.” This is a powerful prayer. The water symbolizes our human nature, and the wine symbolizes the Divine nature. Just as Jesus Christ joined the two in His very person (called the hypostatic union), we too hope that by our sharing in Christ’s human nature we might be brought into union with the Divine. This is our reason for hope: In Christ, the Word of God became human so that we might be united to God.

This mingling of water and wine also symbolizes the blood and water that poured forth from Jesus’ side on the Cross.

5. The Washing of Hands:

In the Offertory Rite, the Priest will wash his hands while praying that he be purified of his sin. While this might have had practical origins going back to when people would offer livestock or produce during the offertory, it also has a great spiritual significance. The Priest, while acting “in Persona Christi,” still has his own personal faults and foibles. Therefore, he cleanses his hands, asking for forgiveness so that he might be prepared for the awesome ministry which Christ is about to complete through his unworthy hands.

While this is done by the priest, it also is a useful moment for us, the laity. We remember our call to be members of the Body of Christ and ask God to cleanse us and sanctify us as well, so that we might worthily participate in the sacred mysteries. By sharing in Christ's offering we find pardon for our sins.

6. "Pray, brothers and sisters..."

The Book of Hebrews defines the primary characteristic of a priest as he who offers sacrifice. The one eternal High Priest is Jesus Himself who offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. Jesus makes us present to that one sacrifice through the priests of the Church acting "in Persona Christi."

Throughout the centuries, however, the Church has also recognized that each believer, because we have entered into the life of Christ in baptism, also participates in the royal priesthood of Christ. In this sense, we act as "priests" in a cooperative manner, as we offer our lives, our families, our joys, and our sorrows to God the Father.

These two priestly offices, the ministerial and the royal, are summarized in this invitation: "Pray brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice (ministerial priesthood) and yours (royal priesthood of all believers) may be acceptable to God the almighty Father." While these two participations in the priesthood of Christ differ in essence, they have the same purpose as the world, offered in and through Jesus, returns to the Father.

7. Prayer over the Gifts

The Prayer over the Gifts is the final act of the Offertory Rites. The Priest prays with words what the rest of the Offertory Rite expressed with action. The prayer will vary from day to day, but normally it will focus on giving to God what He has first given to us. This is sometimes called the "exitus/reditus" or the going

out from God and the return to Him, which is characteristic of God's action in the cosmos.

Symbolically in Genesis, God creates the world in six days and on the seventh day He rests allowing the world to return to Him. Jesus sends out the Apostles and then bids them return to Him to rest. The Father sends Jesus into the world at the Incarnation and Jesus returns to the Father in the Ascension. In the Mass, we too join in this exitus and reditus as we return to the Lord the good things He has given to us.

We answer "Amen"...to give our lives to God, to love God and neighbor without holding back, to being transformed by the Father to become the living presence of the Son. This happens because we make a decision, a petition, to offer our lives to God. The rest of the Mass, especially Communion, will mean very little if we are not active participants in the Offertory. What we hold back from God, we hold back from His transforming grace. If Mass is not changing us every time we attend, then maybe we are holding back what we should be offering to God.

Questions for consideration:

- How do you consecrate your life to the Lord?
- Is there anything you are holding back from Jesus?
- How is your monetary offering an extension of Christian communion?
- How are you cooperating in the plan of God?
- Where do you see God changing things in your own life?
- Have you ever meditated upon Christ's sacred humanity?
- During the offertory, what is the prayer you pray?
- What are the sacrifices you bring to God?

- What do you feel called to dedicate to the Lord this week?
- What is the thing you feel God is calling you to offer to Him?
- What is the gift from God that you appreciate the most? How can you return that back to Him?
- How are you cooperating with the plan of God?
- What does it mean to you to say that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human?

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

In the Eucharist, the intimate union of the mystical Body with its Head reaches its completion. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Sacraments because we receive the very Person of Christ. All Sacraments are geared toward the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the summit of Christian life because Jesus Christ is made present in His saving sacrifice. It is the source of all life because in that past memorial being made present ...Jesus is made present. St. Augustine said: The Eucharist is the “sacrifice of the whole people of God...the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ in His Body and Blood and we are His Mystical Body...we are one with Him as He gives Himself to the Father.”

The reality of Jesus’ sacrifice -- perfect praise and adoration to the Father -
- is made present on the altar when we celebrate the Eucharist. Jesus: Who is risen and glorified; also Who suffered and died; Who offers Himself eternally to the Father for us. Jesus’ presence in the consecrated Bread and Wine is not a symbol that “reminds” us of Jesus. The presence of Jesus Christ in the assembly is intensified by the entrance of the Priest...intensified by reading of the Word...intensified by bread and wine through the Eucharistic Prayer making Jesus present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity on the Altar...The Saving Sacrifice. The

bread and the wine truly, really, substantially become the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ. Those who claim that Jesus' presence is symbolic rather than Real should consider that the first generation of Christians were accused of being cannibals and practicing human sacrifice!

Early Christians met to celebrate the Eucharist on the day Jesus rose from the dead...Sunday.

1. The Divine Liturgy

In the Eucharist, we are made present to the one sacrifice of Christ which takes place fully in Heaven. We thus call the Eucharist a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy and pledge of the life to come. Even now we participate in the offering of Christ to the Father, recognizing that we do not fully enter into it until we get to Heaven. Thus, every Mass, whether it be filled with pomp and circumstance in the Vatican or it be humble and small in a chapel church, is a meeting of Heaven and earth...of God and humanity. In the Eucharist we are made present to the Father through Jesus. This is why the Mass is the most important prayer of the Church. It is not our prayer, but our participation in Christ's prayer, a participation in Heaven while still on earth.

2. Preface

The Priest now prays thanking God for what He has done and is doing: Granting salvation to His People. The Preface is in a sense the gate to the heavenly mysteries because through the Preface we enter the company of the Blessed. The introductory dialogue of the Preface is very ancient, and dates from the 2nd century. It is a set of three short exchanges between the Priest and the people. It indicates a shift to a new level of intensity...as it summarizes our hope in Heaven. For the third time in the Mass, the Priest says, "The Lord be with you" to which we respond, "and with your spirit." Jesus Christ now leads His body before the

Father. The Priest invites us to lift up our hearts: to Heaven, because the Mass is Heaven on earth! In English, when we respond to the Priest's invitation "Lift up your hearts" we say poetically "we lift them up to the Lord." However, the original Latin is much more direct...we don't lift them to the Lord as though it were an action we are doing right now. Rather it says, "habemos ad Dominum"... "we have, to the Lord." It is a subtle point, but an important one: our hearts are already with the Lord, because our whole lives have already been directed to Him in the Offertory. Now we simply approach where our hearts have preceded us.

The prayer of the Preface always has the same structure. First, it continues the theme of right and just thanksgiving to the Father. This Prayer is from the Church to the Father. Second, it develops "through Christ our Lord" into a profound recognition of and gratitude for what God has actually done for us. Of course God already knows...we are the ones who need to remember it. Finally we ask that our voices blend with the voices of angels and saints -- the heavenly court -- in singing God's praises. This is our response to remembering what God has done in Jesus. It leads us into a natural response of...

3. Sanctus...Holy, Holy, Holy

The Sanctus is a profound moment in the Mass, in which we come to recognize that we are *entering into Heaven*. What we are doing at Mass here on earth is a mirror of Heaven. All the angels in Heaven are worshipping the Lamb on the Throne -- Jesus the Divine Victim! He will soon be on our altar and with the angels we are worshipping the Father through Jesus!

As such, we quote two very important passages of the Bible. The first is the acclamation of the angels praising God before the throne of grace. As such, we become cognizant that we are entering into something transcendent, joining our

voices to those of angels. The second is the proclamation of blessing to him “who comes in the name of the Lord,” which was said by the crowds as Jesus entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This is the same crowd who five days later would call out to have Christ crucified. This is something powerful to meditate on: though we sing with the angels, we cannot ignore the ever present temptation to abandon the Lord when the crowds turn against Him.

The triple acclamation of Holy, Holy, Holy means that God is Holiest. In Hebrew, the superlative is the attribute repeated three times: holy, holier, holiest.

4. The Eucharistic Actions

At this point the congregation kneels since we are now in the heavenly court and “one is coming in the name of the Lord”...Christ in the Eucharist. The Priest addresses the Eucharistic Prayer to God the Father. We are thereby actively participating at this moment in what Christ is accomplishing on our behalf.

The Eucharistic Prayer contains two invocations (calling upon God), one before the consecration and one after the Mystery of Faith. In the first invocation the Priest asks that the gifts we offer become the Body and Blood of Christ through the Holy Spirit. The second invocation asks that our sharing in His Body and Blood bears fruit in our lives.

At the Last Supper, Jesus did four things: He took the bread, He blessed it/gave thanks, He broke it, and He gave it to His disciples. The Priest will say these words at every Mass right before the Words of Institution...a reminder that Christ is the One acting. However, while the words are said, these actions are also done. In the offertory the bread is taken by Christ, in the Eucharistic Prayer He blesses it and changes it into His own Body, in the fraction rite He breaks the host in two reminding us of His death, and during the distribution of Communion He

gives His body to us. As such, the entirety of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is a recapitulation of the actions of Christ at the Last Supper.

5. The Eucharistic Presence

When we discuss the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist we usually speak of Him being “really, truly, and substantially” present. Each of these words hammers home the same idea: The Eucharist isn’t a symbol but Jesus Himself. Of course we can encounter Jesus in other ways, whether that be through reading the Bible, or through holy people, or through encounters with beauty, or a host of other things. But in the Eucharist, we encounter Christ Himself...not an icon or a symbol, but Jesus. As such, when we receive the Eucharist, we enter into communion with Jesus in a manner unparalleled by any other prayer, devotion, or experience. We become united in body and spirit and so become what we receive.

6. The Eucharist

The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is one of the most important dogmas of the Church. In the Eucharist we encounter Jesus, not just a symbol but the reality of His very person hidden under what looks like bread and wine. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Savior. The Eucharist is the “source and summit of our Christian faith” because it is Jesus Himself from Whom we receive our identity and to Whom we direct our lives. This is indeed a great mystery, one that transcends our understanding. Yet it is also the thing that makes us Catholic: the Church’s entire identity, mission, outreach, and prayer comes from the Eucharist and leads us back to it.

Questions to consider:

- Can you think of quotations from the Bible that are used in the Mass?
- What is most important in your life right now? How can you consecrate that to God?

- What preparations do you make to enter into the presence of the Lord in Heaven?
- What does it mean to you to say that your heart is lifted up to Heaven?
- What does it mean to you to approach the Father through the Son?
- How does your outward expression of prayer match your inward disposition as you enter the Eucharistic Prayer?
- Some commentators argue that what happens to the bread that is offered also happens to the congregation. How are you taken, blessed, broken, and given?
- Do you have a favorite Eucharistic devotion?
- Have you ever spent time with Jesus in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament?
- Where do you see each member of the Trinity active in the Eucharistic Prayer?

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER CONTINUED

When Jesus lived among us, He revealed His Father's divine revelation to us in the words He said and the things He did. He taught His apostles what He wanted them to pass on to others. He organized a group, the Apostles. They had different responsibilities, i.e. Judas was in charge of the money. Jesus appointed Peter as their leader. Jesus left them rites to celebrate when He was no longer with them. He sent the apostles out to baptize with water, to cast out demons and cure the sick, He gave them power to forgive sins in His name. The most important celebration He left with the Apostles took place the night before He died. Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave bread...He instituted the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, when Jesus said the words "This is my Body" over the bread and "This is my Blood" over the cup of wine, the bread and wine were transformed into Jesus' own Body and Blood.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles taught the teachings Jesus gave them and celebrated the rites He left with them. Acts 2:42, 46 relate: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the

breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Everyday they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes.” These passages describe the Jerusalem community who centered their religious life in the Eucharistic Liturgy. They were following Jesus’ command given at the Last Supper to “Do this in remembrance of Me.”

The writing of the Gospels and letters of the New Testament followed decades later. The letters of St. Paul were the first written documents of the New Testament. They were written probably during the 50s AD. The earliest written account of the Eucharist is 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (read.) The Gospel accounts, which describe Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist were written down for the first time about 30-40 years after Jesus died. For 2,000 years the Catholic Church has been celebrating the Eucharist following the command of Jesus given at His last supper when He revealed the New Covenant which the Father was making with His people through the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross.

7. The Event Character of the Eucharist

In the Old Testament, God made covenants with individuals like Abraham and Moses. However, the covenants were then open to all people by a ritual act, whereby each person was made present to the moment of the establishment of the covenant. This is seen in things like circumcision or the Passover. Even to this day at the Seder meal (the Passover meal), the youngest person will ask, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” This ritual makes those gathered present to the moment of the Passover. Hence, God commanded that the Passover be done every year.

The same is true of the Eucharist. We too partake in a ritual act. We too are made present to the establishment of the New Covenant at the Last Supper. We

too do this because of a divine command: “Do this in remembrance of me.” The Eucharist is indeed the New and Eternal Covenant.

8. The Eucharist as Sacrifice

The word “sacrifice” comes from two Latin words which literally mean “to make holy.” Something is made holy by being offered to God. Thus, when we speak of “sacrifice” we speak of a ritual action by which something is offered to God. We see this in the life of Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ begins the ritual offering at the Last Supper, offers His life on the Cross, rises from the dead to conquer death, and finally ascends, completing the sacrifice by going to the Father.

In the Eucharist, we are made present to this entire sacrifice of Jesus: To Jesus in the upper room at the Last Supper, to Jesus dying on the Cross, to Jesus risen from the dead, and to Jesus ascending to the Father. This is the reason these events are always mentioned in the Eucharistic prayer.

9. The Epiclesis

The Epiclesis is the term for the invocation of the Holy Spirit to sanctify that which is offered to God. The First Epiclesis over the bread and wine is accompanied by the Priest extending his hands over them. That is meant to be a symbol of the Holy Spirit’s descent upon the gifts we have brought to the altar, that they may be changed into the Body of Christ. Additionally, after the Consecration, there is another Epiclesis as the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to sanctify those who are gathered together around the Altar, so that we who receive the Body of Christ may become the body of Christ.

Up to now, the Eucharistic Prayer is in the past tense. At the consecration the Priest speaks in the first person, present tense. As the Priest speaks the very

words of Jesus: “This is my Body; This is my Blood” God is currently acting in this bread and wine to make present the Body and Blood of His Son.

The Consecration is the narrative of what Jesus did and said at the Last Supper. Bread and wine are consecrated because that is what Jesus chose. This is the heart of the Eucharistic Prayer. When said by the Priest during the Mass, these words refer to what is happening here and now: The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The words change the elements through the power of the Holy Spirit. That action is taking place while the Priest, who speaks in the very Person of Christ, pronounces his blessings over the gifts of bread and wine. This is a mystery: what Jesus did 2000 years ago is happening now...The Consecration and the Last Supper are one! The Consecration re-produces and extends the mystic memorial of the Last Supper!

Do you ever wonder why the bread and wine are not consecrated together but separately? First the bread -- His Body; then the wine -- His Blood. This separation equals the death on Calvary. Jesus is mysteriously made present in each element as the Christ Who eternally sacrifices and gives Himself to the Father. The wine recalls the blood so freely shed on Calvary’s hill by Jesus Christ in His sacrificial act. In the Consecration, Jesus calls us to follow His example and die to ourselves with Him in order to share in His glory.

After the Priest speaks the words of Consecration he elevates the Host, then the Chalice. This is a tribute to the *Presence* of the Body and Blood of Christ.

10. The Mystery of Faith

After the words of Consecration, the Priest will proclaim “The Mystery of Faith.” However, when the Priest proclaims those words, he isn’t inviting the people to say what the mystery of faith is. Rather, he is declaring that the Mystery of Faith is present here and now...he is speaking of the Eucharist on the Altar. The

Eucharist IS the mystery of our faith. Hidden in THIS bread and THIS wine is the presence of Jesus. The response we make is our belief in what that means for us: That Jesus Christ's sacrifice and our participation in it through the Eucharist brings us life.

11. "For Francis our Pope and Daniel our Bishop"

During the Eucharistic Prayer we name the saints in Heaven with whom we are united in the Body of Christ, the Pope and Bishop who represent the universal Church and the local Church, all members of the Church throughout the world, everyone in the world even those who do not know Christ, and the dead because we want to be one body in Christ with all of them. In the Mass, the whole world is coming to the Father through the Son.

When we speak of the Church, there is the danger of treating it like an abstract reality. However, the Church is and always has been composed of individual people. Within the Church there are those who have been given the difficult task of uniting and leading us. So in a special way we pray for these visible signs of unity and authority in the Church: we pray for the bishop who is the primary pastor in the local church and we pray for the Pope who is the sign of unity within the Church as a whole.

Our celebration of Mass is not just the act of a local congregation with the local priest. It is an offering of the whole Church that takes place in a particular building at a particular altar. At every moment of the day, Mass is said in one place or another throughout the world! (Only exception: Good Friday)

12. Doxology

The final act of the priest in the Eucharistic prayer is the Doxology, in which the paten and chalice are elevated while the Priest praises the Father through, with,

and in the Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. This is the climax and conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.

A doxology means “word of glory”; it is a hymn of praise. Jesus Christ is our Mediator Who is at the side of the Father. IN Him Jesus is the fullness of divinity, WITH Him Jesus we go to His Father, THROUGH Him Jesus we are reconciled with God. Notice that as the Priest is lifting up the Chalice and Host he refers to them as HIM!!

The Priest lifts the Eucharist as the pure Sacrifice to God the Father. The Eucharist is not elevated so that the people might see it...that took place immediately after the consecration. Rather, during the Doxology, the Eucharist is elevated as an offering to the *Father*. And it is through the offering of the Son to the Father that we enter into union with Him. Jesus is our only Way to the Father. To this wonderful hymn of praise the Church resoundingly responds...

13. The Great Amen

The Great Amen is the final statement of the laity in the Eucharistic Prayer. Through this Great Amen, the community that has gathered together professes its full participation in this sacrifice and offering. We are standing before the throne of God as members of Christ’s Body.

“Amen” is a Hebrew word which is very difficult to translate. Roughly it means “so be it,” or “I agree completely,” or “I believe,” or “I accept.” It also has the connotation of existential investment, such that one can translate it as “I pledge my life to this.” Because of this, the Great Amen is the moment in which we give our own personal assent to all that has happened in the Mass and we pledge our lives to God in and through the Eucharist.

As a Church we believe that God the Son became man in Jesus Christ. That Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead for us. That Jesus Christ purchased

our redemption with the price of His Divine Blood. That in joining ourselves with His sacrifice to the Father we gain eternal life. That the bread and wine which the Priest holds up is truly Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, offered to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit! Amen!

Questions to Consider:

- To Whom does the Priest speak throughout the Eucharistic Prayer? Why does that matter?
- When you imagine the Last Supper, what does it look like?
- Why is it significant that the verbs all change to the present tense during the Institution Narrative?
- When you receive the Eucharist, what part of Christ's sacrifice do you relate to most keenly? His Passion, His Resurrection, His Ascension?
- Where do you see the Holy Spirit working in your life?
- How might you listen more attentively to the promptings of the Spirit?
- How are you participating in the death and resurrection of Christ at this moment in your life?
- Have you ever met Bishop Mueggenborg, Bishop Calvo, or Bishop Strailing?
- Doxology means literally "a word of praise." How do you praise God?
- To what do you dedicate your life?
- When the Priest prays "Through Him, with Him, and in Him," who is referred to?

Notes for

REDISCOVERING THE MASS: A TASTE OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

Part 3: Continuing Our Walk Through the Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Offertory Rites

1. The Offertory

“Jesus took bread...” Matthew 26:26

2. The Collection

“And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and...in a word takes care of all who are in need.” St. Justin Martyr

3. Fruit of the Earth and Work of Human Hands

“Blessed be God Most High!” Genesis 14:20

4. The Mystery of the Water and Wine

“O Lord, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we may be found in the likeness of Christ, in whom our nature is united to you.” (Christmas Liturgy)

5. Washing of Hands

“I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, Lord, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.” Psalm 26:6-7

6. “Pray, Brothers and Sisters...”

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession...” 1 Peter 2:9

7. Prayer over the Gifts

“What shall I return to the Lord for all His goodness to me? Psalm 116:12

Notes for

REDISCOVERING THE MASS: A TASTE OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

Part 3: Continuing Our Walk Through the Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Eucharistic Prayer

1. The Divine Liturgy

“You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.”

Hebrews 12:22-23

2. Preface

“...when you hear ‘Lift up the heart’ from the high priest, you answer, ‘We have lifted it up to the Lord.’ Try very hard to make your answer a true one, because you are making it in the course of the activity of God; let it be just as you say; don’t let the tongue declare it, while the conscience denies it.” St. Augustine

3. Sanctus

“And they [the seraphim] were calling to one another ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.” Isaiah 6:2-4

4. The Eucharistic Actions

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’” Matthew 26:26

5. The Eucharistic Presence

“...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” John 6:53

6. The Eucharist

“Truth Himself speaks truly or there’s nothing true.” St. Thomas Aquinas

Notes for

REDISCOVERING THE MASS: A TASTE OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

Part 3: Continuing Our Walk Through the Mass: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Eucharistic Prayer

7. The Event Character of the Eucharist

“This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” Luke 22:19

8. The Eucharist as Sacrifice

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise.”
Hebrews 13:15

9. The Epiclesis

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.” Veni Sancte Spiritus

10. The Mystery of Faith

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” 1 Corinthians 11:26

11. “For Francis our Pope and Daniel our Bishop”

“Let all reverence...the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the priests as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church.” St. Ignatius of Antioch

12. Doxology

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.”
Psalm 145:3

13. The Great Amen

“Be a member of Christ’s body, then, so that your ‘Amen’ may ring true!” St. Augustine