

The Most Powerful Prayer The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

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Why Pray?

In our busy lives full of so many things to do, we should give top priority to prayer. Prayer unites us to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. “To pray ‘Jesus’ [which means ‘Yahweh Saves’] is to invoke Him and to call Him within us. His name is the only one that contains the presence it signifies” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC, 2666*). Our Holy Catholic Church encourages us to have a personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. Daily prayer will help us to deepen our faith, fight against our short-comings and learn how to do His will. Jesus said, “*You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (*Matthew 5:48*). Even in our most difficult trials, while accepting and loving our crosses, as we lay praying in silence, sick and dying, we can be united with Him and He will give us hope and peace of heart. Jesus is the “Prince of Peace”.

Prayer is a powerful weapon against the evils of this world. The accumulation of SINS in the world enables the devil to do more damage. The accumulation of PRAYER in the world enables the Holy Spirit to inspire more souls to repentance and conversion. Our prayer opens our hearts and other people’s hearts to God’s graces, giving us consolation and heavenly light. We can help save souls by offering up our cross, our suffering, trials and pain, in union with the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. We can help melt hearts of stone. The sanctity or the fall of each individual soul has an effect upon the whole Church. When enough of us become saints following Jesus, then the problems of the world will be overcome.

The Most Powerful Prayer!

Jesus gave us the most powerful prayer—the Holy “Sacrifice” of the Mass! The saving power of the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the Cross is made present at every Holy Mass. During the Mass, silently in our hearts, we can offer each Holy Mass for souls whom we hold dear, in union with the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. This is powerful because Jesus offers Himself, along with our intentions, to His Father, His Body and every drop of His Blood for us! Holy Mass should be the center of our prayer lives. The highlight of the Mass is when we receive the living Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and are united with Him. I recommend studying our *Catechism* which teaches us about the Holy Eucharist, particularly numbers 1324, 1329, 1330, 1341, 1348, 1358, 1360, 1368, 1374, 1380 and 1381.

The Parts of the Mass

Introductory Rites

1. In silence before Holy Mass begins we must prepare ourselves to participate in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist and pray to be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. The priest celebrant will be carrying out the acts of Jesus Christ Himself that Jesus executed and entrusted to the Apostles at the Last Supper.
2. Entrance Hymn, Procession and the Greeting – The presence of Christ is represented in His ministers with different vestments, according to the Liturgical Calendar. The Greeting is proclaimed by the priest.
3. Penitential Act – We acknowledge our sins, with humility and with the spirit of conversion in our hearts, asking God to have mercy on us and to forgive us.
4. Glory to God – This is an exuberant, cheerful, praise of God showing our love for God, that we want to be transformed by the Holy Trinity and that we trust in Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for our salvation.
5. Collect – Then the priest reads the Opening Prayer or Collect that is appropriate for that day.

Liturgy of the Word

1. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son, is the “Word”.
2. The written Word of Scripture – We meditate on God’s messages in the Liturgy that we hear in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, that is, the Old Testament as interpreted through the person and life of Jesus, and the New Testament of Christ as a fulfillment of the Old Testament and the history of Israel. That is why we respond, *“Thanks be to God”* and *“Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.”*
3. The proclamation of the Gospel, read by the priest, is the climax of the Liturgy of the Word.
4. The Homily – The priest or deacon guides the faithful to discover the meaning of the Word of God and how it applies to their daily lives.
5. The Creed, the Profession of Faith
6. Prayer of the Faithful – This is an expression of the faithful, with petitions, our needs and our responsibilities for ourselves and the world.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Offertory

1. Preparation of the Gifts – The bread and wine are placed on the altar.
2. Prayer over the Gifts – The Celebrant offers and gives thanks for the bread and wine which will be transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Then a small jar of water is handed to the priest. He carefully pours one drop of water into the wine. This drop of water represents us and we become part of the wine. This is an important time to offer ourselves to Jesus, our whole life—all our cares and worries and all our good intentions as we try to do His will. The priest prays quietly, *“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.”*
3. The Preface – The priest proclaims this prayer of thanksgiving and praise to our Triune God.
4. Holy Holy – The Preface concludes with the “Holy Holy” as we unite our voices with the Angels and the Saints who sing unceasingly. We become united to the entire heavenly Church, which reminds us that the Liturgy on Earth is a participation in the Liturgy of Heaven. This is a Divine Act in which the Lord makes each one of us take part.

Eucharistic Prayer

1. We Offer the Gifts

Together with the priest, we offer the gifts of bread and wine to God our Father and ask Him: *“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.”* We offer these gifts for the Church, our Pope, the Bishops, all who are gathered here, and all the faithful, that we may hold fast to the True faith. We offer You, Father, this Sacrifice of praise for the redemption of their souls, in hope of health and well-being, in communion with Mary, Joseph, the Apostles and all the Saints.

2. **The Consecration** takes place, by an act of the Holy Spirit as the priest repeats the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, *“This is My Body... This is My Blood... Do this in memory of Me.”* The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Sacrifice and death of Jesus on the Cross is made present. Jesus offers all of us in union with His Sacrifice to the Father, in atonement for our sins, and the sins of the whole world. At this moment we are united with the Church in Heaven with all the Saints. In this way Jesus, our Saviour, reconciles all humanity to the Father. As a result, the closed gates of Heaven are now open to receive us.

3. **Post Consecration** – The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus are now proclaimed. This is a time of reflection on the nourishing presence of Christ in our lives.

4. **The Memorial** – The Sacrifice continues. In a memorial we call to mind Jesus’ death and Resurrection. This Act of Love took place in the past, but God who is eternally present, truly makes present this event in the Eucharistic Celebration. In thanksgiving for our salvation we recall our offering to the Father of this spotless Victim, *“this holy and living Sacrifice ... by whose death You willed to reconcile us to Yourself”*.

The Petitions – The Church assembly unites itself with the entire Universal Church. *May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world.*” We ask our heavenly Father to remember all of us, your servants. We come to Calvary with our sorrows, with our sins, with our failures, our spiritual ambitions and our simple attempts at love, and unite them to the Sacrifice of Christ. We pray for the living and the dead, and all who are dear to us. *“May all who have gone before us with the sign of faith attain fellowship with Your holy Apostles and Martyrs.”*

Final Doxology – The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the final doxology: our praise to God the Father, through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. We express our participation in the Lord’s Sacrifice, which has been celebrated and which has been offered to the Father for us.

Communion Rite

The Lord’s Prayer

We pray the Lord’s Prayer, the prayer to Our Father that Jesus gave us, which includes love of God, adoration, petition and expiation. We pray, *“forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”*. We can forgive others by praying for the good of their souls and offering Masses for them.

Sign of Peace

The Sign of Peace opens with the words of Jesus, *“My peace I leave you, My peace I give you.”* The priest says, *“The peace of the Lord be with you always. Let us offer each other a sign of peace.”* We are called to see Christ in each other and live His new Commandment, *“Love one another, as I have loved you.”* Jesus is Love! May we become what He is and be changed into love. In the hymn, *“Lamb of God”* we hear how much Jesus loves us. We hope to become like Him and we pray for forgiveness and for peace, in order to stand worthy in His presence.

The Breaking of the Bread and the Elevation

This is an element of the Last Supper, representing Jesus Who offered His life on the Cross, that is, Jesus broken and elevated on the Cross. The priest proclaims, *“Behold the Lamb of God”*. We kneel and adore Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Also this gesture of the Breaking of the Bread is what allowed the disciples from Emmaus to recognize Jesus, the Risen Lord. The faithful are invited to the banquet: *“Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.”* The people pray, *“Lord I am not worthy ...”*

Reception of Holy Communion

At this time the faithful, who have no mortal sin on their soul, come forward to receive Holy Communion. It is the Father’s will that all mankind be saved. When we receive Holy Communion, we are receiving the “living” Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in the Consecrated Host. It is Christ Himself in all His humanity and all His divinity. He offers Himself as a gift to us, as food for our journey. The more we believe, the more graces we receive. With each Holy Communion we can draw closer and closer to Jesus. He will transform us even if it takes a couple of years. He lifts us up to Himself so that we may become what He is and He is “Love”! He was kind to sinners who hated Him and prayed to the Father that their souls may be saved. We can pray for souls, too. When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion we become part of His Mystical Body which is the Church. It is also a participation in the Heavenly Banquet. It is a pledge given to us by Our Lord to be One with Him forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. After we have returned to our pews, let us not forget to pray silently and tell Jesus how much we love Him and thank Him for all that He is doing for us. Jesus is our Best Friend.

Concluding Rite

Prayer after Communion The priest recites the Prayer after Communion. Then he dismisses the faithful and gives the final blessing, making the Sign of the Cross and calling upon Jesus. Thus, through the priest representing Jesus, the Lord blesses the people of God gathered together in the Eucharistic Celebration of the Holy “Sacrifice” of the Mass. Lastly, the priest dismisses the people so that each one may return to their good works, praising and blessing God.