

Dear sisters and brothers, good morning / good evening.

What a beautiful journey these past weeks have been.

Together, we have been walking step by step through the Mass—unfolding its beauty, its meaning, its power for our lives.

Some of you have written to say how helpful it has been, and asked for the homilies and slides. We will make them available on the parish website after this weekend.

We feel deeply blessed because this is not just about knowing the parts of the liturgy—it is about entering more fully into the heart of our Catholic life.

The Mass is where Jesus comes into our lives in a real way. And when we understand *why* we do what we do, it transforms the way we pray.

So far, we have walked through the **Introductory Rites**.

We have stood at the two great tables: the **Table of the Word** and the **Table of the Eucharist**.

Last week, we paused at the very center: the Preface, the Epiclesis, the Words of Consecration, and the Great Doxology with its solemn *Amen*.

And now, we come to the crown—the final movements of the liturgy: the **Communion** and the **Concluding Rites**.

So let us begin with the **Communion Rite**. It flows through these six key actions:

1. The Lord's Prayer (Our Father) 2. The Embolism and Doxology
3. The Sign of Peace 4. The Fraction Rite (Breaking of the Host)
5. Invitation to Communion 6. Holy Communion

The Communion Rite begins with the Lord's Prayer. The Gospels show us Jesus as a man of deep prayer, and when His disciples asked Him how to pray, He gave them His own prayer—the perfect prayer.

Before we begin, the priest invites us: “*At our Savior’s command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say: Our Father...*” **Why do we dare?** Because left to ourselves, we could never presume to call the Creator of heaven and earth “Father.” But Jesus has taught us, and through the Spirit we are adopted as God’s children.

And the word Jesus used is ***Abba***. In His own Aramaic language, it is the word little children used for their father—something like “Daddy” or “Papa.” It is intimate, close, trusting.

Notice too the word ***Our***. We never pray this alone. It is the prayer of God’s family, united at His table. And when we ask for “our daily bread,” we ask above all for the Eucharistic Bread, “Christ Himself.” Just as Israel received manna in the desert each day, so we beg the Father for the true Bread from heaven: Bread that forgives, nourishes, and strengthens us, so we may receive Him worthily.

Following the Lord’s Prayer, the priest continues with what is called the ***embolism prayer***: “*Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace...*” The word ***embolism*** means “**expansion**,” because this prayer expands on the last petition of the Our Father: “*deliver us from evil.*” Here we ask that the whole community be freed from sin and protected from all distress as we await the second coming of Christ.

The priest’s prayer concludes, and we join in with the doxology: “*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.*” The word *doxology* means “**a word of glory**.” The Great Doxology came just before, at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, “*Through him, and with him, and in him...*” the supreme praise offered by the priest at the altar. This shorter doxology belongs to the whole assembly.

We then move to the Sign of Peace. The word ***communion*** means “union with”: union with God and with one another. That is why, before approaching to receive the Lord, we pause to make a gesture of forgiveness and unity with those around us.

This practice is rooted in Scripture. In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us to be reconciled with our brother or sister before bringing our gift to the altar. From the beginning, the Church has understood this as a vital preparation for the Eucharist.

The Church teaches that it expresses our *ecclesial bond*: in Christ, we are one family, children of the same Father.

Then comes the Fraction Rite: the breaking of the consecrated Host. So central is this action that the early Christians often called the Mass simply “*the Breaking of the Bread*” (Acts 2:42). It recalls Jesus at the Last Supper, and the disciples at Emmaus who recognized Him in the breaking of the bread.

Why do we break the Host? To show that Christ’s Body, once broken on the Cross, is now shared among us, making us one Body in Him. The priest then places a small piece of the Host in the chalice, signifying that Christ’s Body and Blood remain inseparably united in His risen presence.

As the Host is broken, we pray or sing: “*Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.*” We call Him the Lamb of God because, like the Passover lamb, His blood delivers us from death, and like the lamb in Revelation, He is the one whose sacrifice redeems the world.

Now we come to one of the most solemn invitations in all of Scripture: The priest raises the Body and Blood of Christ and proclaims: “*Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.*” These words unite **two powerful moments** of Scripture. **First**, John the Baptist pointing to Jesus: “*Behold the Lamb of God*” (John 1:29). **Second**, the vision of Revelation: “*Blessed are those invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb*” (Rev 19:9). Every Mass is nothing less than a foretaste of that eternal banquet in heaven.

And how do we respond to such an invitation? With the humility of the centurion in the Gospel. We say: **“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”**

In the Gospel, the centurion trusted that Jesus could heal his servant with just a word. Now we make his words our own, believing that Christ, by His word, can heal the wounds of our souls as He comes under the “roof” of our very lives in the Eucharist.

Now we come to the summit of the Mass: the reception of Holy Communion. With reverence, we bow, and the minister says: *“The Body of Christ.”* Our single word, *“Amen,”* is a profound act of faith.

This intimate moment is the fullest expression of our worship. In receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, He dwells within us, uniting us to Himself and to one another.

After Communion, we are invited to spend time in silent prayer. In that quietness, we speak heart to heart with Christ dwelling within us: giving thanks, seeking strength, and offering our love.

Finally, the priest gathers all our silent thanksgiving and petitions into one as he prays the Prayer after Communion. This prayer, part of the Church’s most ancient tradition, concludes the Communion Rite and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Now we move to the Concluding Rites. It has four parts: 1. **the announcements**, 2. **the final greeting of the priest** 3. **the blessing**, and 4. **the dismissal**.

First, there may be **announcements** to remind us that parish life extends beyond this hour of worship, calling us to continued fellowship and service in Parish, Church and the world.

Then comes the **final greeting**: “*The Lord be with you.*” At the start of Mass, those words welcomed us. Here at the end, they send us forth with God’s presence.

Next is the **Blessing**. We bow for the blessing, entrusting ourselves to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and we mark ourselves with the Sign of the Cross as His own. On solemn feasts the blessing is expanded, and when a bishop presides, he traces the triple sign of the Cross.

Finally comes the **Dismissal**: The deacon or priest says: “**Go forth, the Mass is ended**” or “**Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.**” In Latin the words are “*Ite, missa est.*” It does not simply mean “Mass is ended,” but “Go, you are sent.” Sent as missionary disciples, to bring into daily life what we have celebrated at this altar.

The priest and ministers then reverence the altar with a kiss and process out, leading us as Christ the Good Shepherd, who continues to walk with us in every joy and every trial until we gather again.

Dear sisters and brothers, please remember that every time we come to Mass, we do not leave empty-handed.

We are fed by **the Word**. We are nourished by **the Eucharist**.

We are filled with **the very presence of Christ**.

How privileged we are! Christ makes our hearts His living tabernacle, so that we may carry Him into our homes, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and into every part of our lives.

So dear sisters and brothers, let us treasure the gift of the Mass and let us continue to participate **more fully**, more **attentively**, and more **joyfully** each Sunday, knowing that the Eucharist is truly the **source and summit** of our Christian life. **Amen.**