

A brief explanation of the Mass



Statues representing the apparition in Knock on 21st of August 1879 of Jesus the Lamb of God on the altar of sacrifice with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, adoring Angels and Saint John the Evangelist who is holding the Word of God. It is said that the apparition represents the Mass.

This is just a brief and hopefully simple description of the Mass especially for young people. We will divide the Mass into eight main parts.

Repentance

At the start of the Mass we repent of our sins by usually saying the "I confess" prayer (Confiteor) or the "Lord have mercy..." prayers. If we have serious sins we should go to confession at the next available opportunity where we will be forgiven our sins and we can ask God for the graces we need to make us stronger against sin.

God's Word

Next we can listen to the readings and the Gospel. The readings are suited to the time or season of the Church year we are in (Advent, Christmastide, Lent, Eastertide and Ordinary time) or to the Feast of the Saint that is celebrated on the day. On Sundays the Priest gives a homily to help us understand the readings and Gospel passages we have heard. Words can help and change us.

The Offertory

The priest takes the Bread and then the Wine and offers them up to God. He adds a drop of water to the wine and this should symbolise our own offering of ourselves to God. The Holy Spirit will come down and change the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus on Calvary over 2000 years ago. And just as the drop of water becomes part of the wine we hope the Holy Spirit will make us more like or into Jesus. We can offer our whole week, all that we will do, any joys, sufferings, play, and everything we may experience during this day or week. We can offer our whole lives to God to be offered up with Jesus to God the Father. Jesus will sanctify or make Holy our offering. We can offer up all the people who will die this night or week and ask that their hearts will be converted so that they may be saved. We can offer our deceased relations and friends or all the Souls in Purgatory.

The Consecration

Consecration means to "make holy" and now at the words of the Priest the Holy Spirit comes down on the Bread and Wine and changes them into the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus at Calvary on Good Friday over 2000 years ago. Usually everyone present kneels if they can but more important is that we adore Jesus really present on the Altar. We are truly present at Calvary. What do we do? we can adore and thank Jesus, we can beg Him to have mercy on us and on the whole world. We can offer up ourselves with all our problems, sufferings, good deeds to Him and ask Him to offer them up to God the Father in atonement for our sins and those of the world and for the souls in Purgatory. This is a great time of Mercy if we know what we are doing. This is the sacrifice of Jesus the Lamb of God made present for us. With God there is no Time, He can make the past or the future present to us and in the Mass He makes Good Friday present on the Altar. We can all pray to God at any time but now at Mass we can pray with God and to God dying on the Cross for us all.

"The Our Father"

We sum up all our petitions now as we say the "Our Father". This prayer is very appropriate to say now because we are asking God to forgive us our sins because Jesus has died to save us and His resurrection is made present for us so that we can receive Him into our soul as the "daily Bread" of Eternal Life. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the "Our Father" prayer for us by His passion, death and resurrection.

Lamb of God

As the Priest is saying the Lamb of God prayers he adds a fragment of the Host to the chalice of Precious Blood and this symbolises and makes Jesus' resurrection from the dead present on the altar for us. Jesus is now present for us risen from the dead.

Holy Communion

We can now receive Jesus into our souls. This is a time to build our relationship up more with Jesus and we can thank Him for His great mercy and generosity to us and mankind. It is good to spend time thinking about the great mercy and generosity Jesus has already given us in life and about how much more He wants to give us. He wants to give us Eternal Life! We can never do anything to deserve even one second of life or existence from God and yet He wants to have us in Heaven for Eternity.

Mission

The word "Mass" comes from the word "Mission" because when Mass was in Latin the final words of the Priest were that we go on Mission to love and serve the Lord. Our Mission is to bring Jesus to others just like Mary went on the mission to her cousin Elisabeth after she received Jesus after the Angel Gabriel appeared to her.

Some suggested prayers during the Consecration

During the Consecration we are present at Calvary so we need to ask ourselves what would we do if we were present at Calvary when Jesus was dying on the Cross? We might thank Jesus, we might apologise to Him, we might worship Him saying "My Lord and My God!" we might feel repentance for our sins, we might ask Him for mercy for the world and for the souls in Purgatory. With Mary we might offer Jesus up to the Father in reparation for the sins of the world. Here are just a few prayers from the Divine Mercy Chaplet that seem very appropriate during the Consecration because the Consecration is a great time to pray for mercy for ourselves and the whole world;

- 1) **"Eternal father we offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world"**
- 2) **"For the sake of His sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world"**
- 3) **"You expired Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls and an ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us." "O Blood and Water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You"**