

Text of the
Explanation Mass or
“Why We Do What We Do!”

Presented on June 9 and 10

**Please take a copy home and
share one with a friend!**

**1. BEGINNING OF MASS – BEFORE THE OPENING HYMN IS
ANNOUNCED**

Good morning, welcome to Sacred Heart/Our Lady's and to our special "Explanation Mass." In place of the homily today, there will be ten one-minute explanations offered throughout this Mass. Here is our first.

When entering the church, we bless ourselves with holy water, recalling that we were brought into the family of the Church through water in the Sacrament of Baptism. Before entering our pew, we genuflect to the tabernacle, in order to reverence the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Moving over in the pew to allow others in is a kindness that is appreciated.

Full, active, and conscious participation is central to the celebration of the Mass, so we are all encouraged to join in the singing and in the recited prayers.

2. AFTER THE OPENING GREETING BY THE PRIEST

The sign of the cross is made twice during the Mass: to begin the Mass and at the final blessing. It recalls Christ's cross and calls upon the three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Mass is composed of three minor and two major parts. We are now in one of the minor parts, the Introductory Rite, whose main purpose is to gather us together as a community in God's presence and help us prepare to give full attention to God's word.

If the Confiteor, "I confess," is used, it is appropriate to strike one's breast at the words "Through my fault". During the "Kyrie" or "Lord Have Mercy," both the titles "Christ" and "Lord" refer to Jesus. Some of the words of the Gloria that we sing are taken from those the angels proclaimed to the shepherds on the first Christmas night.

3. BEFORE THE FIRST READING

We now begin the first of the two major parts of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word. While Christ is supremely present in the Eucharist, Christ is also present in the priest-presider, in the assembly, and in the words of Scripture as they are proclaimed at Mass.

The readings are on a three-year cycle. The theme of the first reading usually matches the theme of the Gospel, while the second reading usually does not. The first reading is from the Old Testament (except during the Easter Season, when it is from the Acts of the Apostles). The music following the first reading is from the Old Testament Book of Psalms, which are ancient prayers traditionally attributed to King David. The second reading is taken from one of the letters from the apostles. They were often writing to communities that they had already visited.

4. AFTER THE SECOND READING AND BEFORE THE ALLELUIA

In the verse before the Gospel, in all seasons but Lent, we sing the word "Alleluia," which is Hebrew for "praise the Lord." Also before the Gospel, with our thumb, we trace the sign of the cross on our forehead, lips, and heart, indicating we want the words of the Gospel to be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. We stand for the Gospel, because it is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word, given that it recounts the actions and words of Jesus, the Son of God.

5. AFTER THE GOSPEL

After the Gospel, the homily is given in order to encounter Christ and apply the word of God to our lives. During the Creed, we bow as we say the words “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Prayers of the Faithful, which are offered for the needs of our parish, the community, the nation and the entire world.

6. AFTER THE PETITIONS

We now are in the Preparation Rite, one of the minor rites of Mass. Its purpose is to prepare for the second major part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Representatives of our assembly bring forward the offerings of the community: the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Christ. The money contributed in the collection will be used for the needs of the poor and to make possible all the various ministries in the parish.

The mixing of a drop of water in the chalice is a symbolic reminder that Christ humbled himself to share in our humanity, so that we might share in his divinity. The washing of the priest’s hands is a symbolic reminder that we were washed clean of sin in the waters of baptism.

7. BEFORE THE PREFACE THREE PART DIALOG (The Lord be with you, lift up your hearts etc.)

We now begin the second major part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Following the upcoming three-fold dialogue between priest and congregation, a “preface-prayer”, chosen to fit the season or feast being celebrated, is prayed by the priest. Next, we sing together the “Holy Holy Holy”. The words of the second part are those same words said by the crowds as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Next follows the longer section of the Eucharistic Prayer. There are multiple Eucharistic Prayer texts to choose from depending on the day or season. The high point of the entire Eucharistic Prayer is the words of institution, the words said by Jesus at the Last Supper. However, it is the entire prayer, not just the words of institution, that change what was bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Also of great importance is that during this part of the Mass, the same love that Jesus had in giving his Body and Blood for us on the cross is again poured forth upon us here in this church. At the end of the Eucharistic

Prayer, the “Great Amen” is sung by all, as a way of affirming all that has been prayed for.

8. AFTER THE GREAT AMEN

The Our Father, the other prayers that follow, and the sign of peace are intended to help us prepare ourselves to receive Jesus, who is really present in Holy Communion.

Following the sign of peace, an important action takes place: the breaking of the one large host into many smaller pieces, which reminds us that, though we are many, we are one body in Christ. The three-fold singing of the “Lamb of God” accompanies this action.

9. AFTER THE LAMB OF GOD

When receiving the Eucharist, we have the option of receiving the Body and the Blood of Christ. The Church encourages us to receive both, because in this way we more fully participate in the sign value of the Mass, which liturgically recalls the Last Supper, at which all received both the Body and the Blood of Christ. A bow from the neck accompanies the reception of Holy Communion as a sign of reverence. The procedure goes as follows. The minister holds up the host, we bow, the minister says “the Body of Christ,” we respond “Amen,” the minister places the host on our hand or tongue, and we consume it immediately. A similar procedure is used in receiving from the cup.

For those who choose a blessing instead of receiving Holy Communion, the signal is to cross both arms over your chest. During the distribution of communion, all are encouraged to sing the Communion Hymn. A period of silent prayer is observed after the Communion Hymn. “The Liturgy of the Eucharist” concludes with the Prayer after Communion.

10. AFTER THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The Mass ends with the final minor rite, the Concluding Rite. At the final blessing, on some occasions, there are special solemn blessings, in one or three parts. The response to each of these is “Amen”. Following the blessing, we are sent forth with words that articulate our mission as we leave Mass, like “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life”, to which we respond “Thanks be to God”. The Mass ends after we all sing the recessional hymn.