

THE SPIRIT OF THE LITURGY: Reflecting on the Mass

REFLECTION #1: Welcome

During this Mass,
we are going to pause at several important moments of our celebration
to meditate on what this shared prayer is all about.

Every time we gather to pray together,
we are being invited to become part of something larger than ourselves--
part of a community, part of the Body of Christ.
That is why there is so much singing at Mass:
because there is nothing like singing together
for expressing our unity and helping to strengthen it.

When we pray together at Mass in word and song,
we take an active role in the prayer of the Church.
We are not passive recipients, but active participants.
We sing ancient prayers from the time of Jesus,
like *Lord, have mercy* and *Holy, Holy, Holy*,
and we sing new songs as well.
Singing at Mass is not just for trained musicians.
Singing is for everyone. Every voice is needed.
So, now let us rise for the entrance - and sing!

REFLECTION #2: Liturgy of the Word

We are about to listen to the Word of God.
Sometimes, the scripture readings we hear in Church can seem far away.
They arose out of another community, another time and place.
But when the scriptures are proclaimed in the Church,
we are not just retelling old stories.
This is not about history; this is about now.
The scriptures are God speaking to us today.

Today, as you hear the scriptures, try to put yourself in the story.
Imagine the time, the place, the people.
Hear the words as though for the first time.
Who do you identify with?
What questions do the readings raise for you?
Are there words that console you?

**Are there words you find it hard to listen to?
That's where God is speaking to you through the Scriptures today.**

**The Church teaches that "Christ himself speaks
when the Scriptures are proclaimed in the Church."
Christ is speaking - so let us listen.**

REFLECTION #3: Liturgy of the Eucharist

**We have listened to God's word, and now we come to the altar.
As the servers prepare the altar, let us prepare our hearts.
As the bread and wine are brought forward,
let us offer something more: our lives, our very selves.**

**Think about all that has happened since the last time you were at Mass. What
things are you thankful for? Bring them to the altar today.
What are your disappointments and failures? Bring them to the altar.
Who are the people in your life who need to be lifted up in prayer? Bring
them to the altar.
What doubts and sadness and concern for the future
do you bring with you today? Bring them to the altar, offer them to God.**

**As the bread and wine are lifted up
to be transformed into the body and blood of Christ,
let us ask God to transform all that we have offered -
and God will give our offering back to us,
changed into something new and wonderful,
just as the bread and wine are transformed into something wonderful -
the body and blood of Christ.
Lord, here is my life. I place it on the altar today. Use it as you will.**

REFLECTION #4: Communion Rite

**Jesus Christ is in our midst.
He is here because he loves us:
he wants to remain in us, and he wants us to remain in him.**

**This sacred meal that we share is not just a remembrance of the past.
It is not just symbolic. It is a sacred reality.
For in this sacrament of his Body and Blood, Jesus is truly present.**

When we take part in this sacrament, when we say "Amen,"
we are saying, "yes, we believe that this bread and wine
have become the Body and Blood of Christ."

But we are also saying yes to our becoming Christ's Body in the world.
Because we become what we receive - the Body of Christ.
We become members of Christ, and of one another.

REFLECTION #5: Sending

At the end of Mass, we are sent forth,
not because our prayer is over, but because it is only beginning!

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian lives.
However, its authenticity will be measured
not so much by what happens within these walls
as by what we do when we leave here.

For we who have been welcomed by Christ in this community of faith
must reach out to the lonely, the friendless, and the stranger.

We who have listened to God's word and sung God's praises
must also listen to the cry of God's poor.

We who have broken bread together at this altar
must lift up those who suffer from hunger and thirst.

We who have shared Christ's peace with one another
must work for peace in our homes, our workplaces, and our world.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is with us always.
Jesus is still in our midst as one who serves.
In our service of others, we will see his face.