

The Holy Eucharist

Praying together

Come Holy Spirit

This week we especially ask the Holy Spirit to make us 'one body, one spirit in Christ'.

Listening to the Word

We hear about the Last Supper which Jesus shared with the twelve apostles on the night before he died. We reflect on the gift of Holy Communion which Jesus gave to us.

Thanksgiving with all creation

The Mass is called the 'Eucharist', a word which means 'thanksgiving'. Whenever we come to Mass, we join the whole Church throughout the world and the Church in heaven. Our offering is a great act of thanksgiving for the wonderful works of God, especially for sending his Son to bring us the fullness of life.

A prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

Jesus, my Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are truly present in this most holy Sacrament, that you see me, that you hear me and that you listen to my prayers.

I bow down before you and I adore you. Help me to love you more each day. I look forward to the next time that I receive you in Holy Communion. Jesus help me in my daily life to be fully the person that you have created me to be.

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church; and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.



Eucharistic Prayer 4

A treasure beyond all telling

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Catholics could be put to death for attending Mass or for allowing a Catholic priest to be in their house. Many risked their lives in order to go to Mass. Why did the Mass mean so much to them? Can it mean the same to us today?

The greatest gift of God to us

The most important part of the Mass is the 'consecration' where the priest takes the bread and wine and says the words of Jesus 'This is my body...', 'This is my blood...'. He then genuflects on the ground in adoration because there is no longer bread and wine but the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. At this point in the Mass, it is good to say the prayer of St Thomas 'My Lord and my God'. Once we understand that Jesus really comes to be present on our altars, the Mass can never be the same again for us. We could not miss going on Sunday. The English martyrs even risked their lives to go.

Our greatest act of worship for God

We also believe that the Mass is a sacrifice. The greatest sacrifice offered was the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Mass, this perfect sacrifice is once again made present and offered on the altar.

All our prayers, our good deeds, our works of charity, can be taken up in the Mass to be offered to God as part of the offering of the whole Church. The Mass is the perfect act of worship and the most holy act in which we can take part.

By listening to the prayers and trying to understand them more each time, by trying to pray the Mass with our hearts and minds, we can join more closely in this act of the Church. The Holy Spirit binds us together in the Church, the body of Christ.

Communion with Jesus Christ and communion with the Church

Activity: Imagine...

Remember the story of the Last Supper.
Answer the following questions first:

- Who was there?
- What did Jesus say over the bread?
- What did he say over the chalice of wine?
- What happened as a result of these words?

Now choose one of the following tasks:

Either:

An apostle's diary

Imagine you were one of the apostles. Write your diary for the Thursday of the Last Supper.

or:

The song of the chalice

Write a song or a poem in which the chalice tells of the events of the Last Supper.



At Sunday Mass

This week when you go to Mass, pay attention especially to the consecration. Listen for the point where the server rings the bell for the first time. This is a reminder to everyone that we have come to the most important part of the Mass. It is a time for quiet, stillness and adoration.

When the priest says the words of consecration 'This is my body...', 'This is my blood...', think of Jesus as he celebrated his last Supper with the disciples on the night before he died.

When the priest holds up the sacred host and when he holds up the chalice, say quietly in your heart 'My Lord and my God' and really mean it as an act of faith. As the priest genuflects, bow your own head to adore Jesus.

Remember if you ever come into a Church at this part of the Mass, always kneel down straight away as quietly as you can.

Scripture

In your bible, look up St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 11, verses 17–34 and read what he says about coming together for the Eucharist.

- What problems were there in St Paul's time?
- Which of these problems might still exist today?
- In what ways could you help to build up the community of the Church in the way that you take part when you come to Mass?

Follow up

- Next time you come to Mass, try to come a few minutes early and stay for a few minutes after Mass has finished. Take time to say a prayer to Jesus who is truly present in the tabernacle.
- You might like to use the prayer on the other side of this sheet or you might like to use your own words.