

Eucharist Is . . .

Check out these passages from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Each gives us a glimpse into what Eucharist is.

. . . Thanksgiving

The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for *all* God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity. (emphasis added)

#1359

List at least five things for which you are thankful:

. . . A Shortcut to Heaven

By the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.

#1326

What does saying the Eucharist is a shortcut to Heaven mean to you?

. . . Full Initiation Into the Church

The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

#1322

When did you receive your first Holy Communion? What do you remember most about the celebration?

... Memorial

The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.

#1409

What is your most precious memory? What do you do to keep it alive?

... Meal

Jesus gave the supreme expression of his free offering of himself at the meal shared with the twelve Apostles 'on the night he was betrayed.' On the eve of his Passion, while still free, Jesus transformed this Last Supper with the apostles into the memorial of his voluntary offering to the Father for the salvation of men.

#610

- Why do so many of life's special moments involve a meal?
- Besides food and drink, what gets shared at a meal?
- How are the people who share a meal together—for example, a family meal—nourishment for one another?

... Sacrifice

In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which He gave up on the cross, the very blood which he 'poured out for the forgiveness of sins.' The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its *memorial* and because it *applies* its fruit [our salvation].

#1365, 1366

What is your definition of sacrifice?

The Mass

The Introductory Rites

The Entrance
Greeting of the Altar and of the People Gathered
The Act of Penitence
The Kyrie Eleison
The Gloria
The Collect (Opening Prayer)

The Liturgy of the Word

Silence
The Biblical Readings (the reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word)
The Responsorial Psalm
The Homily
The Profession of Faith (Creed)
The Prayer of the Faithful

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts
The Prayer over the Offerings
The Eucharistic Prayer
The Communion Rite
The Lord's Prayer
The Rite of Peace
The Fraction (Breaking of the Bread)
Communion
Prayer after Communion

The Concluding Rites

Final Blessing or Prayer Over the People
Dismissal

The high point of the Liturgy of the Word comes at the proclamation of the Gospel. While the other parts are important, they are less climactic. The Gospel is so important, it even colors and focuses the Liturgy of the Eucharist that follows.

The high point of the Liturgy of the Eucharist comes at the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving called the **Eucharistic Prayer**. Each **Eucharistic Prayer** follows a fourfold design:

- An opening exclamation of praise and invocation of the Spirit (*epiclesis*)
- A remembering (*anamnesis*) of God's loving action—Institution Narrative
- An intercession for God's continuing kindness
- A closing summary exclamation of praise and Great Amen

In the **Eucharistic Prayer** we recall the story of the Last Supper and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We pray for the Church and the world. We give thanks for all God's blessings and love.

The Rite of Penance

There are three *forms* for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance: (1) individual reconciliation, one-to-one with a priest; (2) communal reconciliation with individual confession and absolution; (3) general absolution after a general confession, allowed only under special circumstances. The celebration of the sacrament is essentially the same for all three forms.

Greeting and Blessing

This welcome by the priest reminds us that God's grace has called us—and still calls us—to reconciliation.

Celebration of the Word

A proclamation of God's Word calls us to repentance and a life renewed.

Confession

We confess our sins to the priest. This is an act of conversion, demonstrating our willingness to change our hearts.

Prayer of Sorrow (Act of Contrition)

We offer a prayer of remorse as a sign we are sorry for our sins, are willing to change, and are eager for God to help and heal us.

Penance (Satisfaction)

The prayer to say or the action to carry out that the priest gives us is not a punishment for our sins, but a way to help us change our life and help us sin no more.

Absolution

In God's name, the priest offers us forgiveness:

God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Rite of Penance #55

Absolution restores us to right relationship to God and the Church.

Thanksgiving and Praise

We offer thanks for our rescue and restoration.

Dismissal

The priest dismisses us in peace to do what peacemakers do—forgive and reconcile others.

Celebrating Anointing of the Sick

Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church . . . Therefore liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it . . . It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #26–27

Introduction

- The priest formally greets everyone.
- The priest sprinkles holy water on the sick person and around the room as a reminder of Baptism.
- The priest prays an opening prayer and leads everyone assembled in an expression of sorrow for sin.

Liturgy of the Word

- The priest or someone in the assembly proclaims a Gospel text. (Matthew 11:25–30; Mark 2:1–12; or Luke 7:19–23.) Silence follows the reading.

Liturgy of Anointing

- The priest leads a litany, praying for the sick person's healing.
- The priest lays his hands on the head of the sick person.
- The priest then blesses the oil, unless the oil is already blessed, in which case he simply offers a prayer of thanksgiving.
- The priest anoints the sick person on the forehead and hands and offers a prayer of healing:
 - *Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who freed you from sin save you and raise you up.*
- All join in praying the Lord's Prayer.

Holy Communion (optional)

Final Blessing

The Divine Praises

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Blessed be the name of Jesus.

Blessed be his Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in his angels and in his Saints.

All: May the heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time.

Amen.

