

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS

The Mass is comprised of two main parts:

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

And

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

These two main parts are bookended by

The Opening Rites

And

The Concluding Rites.

Some parts of the Mass, with some minor variations, are always the same at each Mass. These are called “the ordinary” parts.

(eg – the Gloria, the Holy Holy, the Lamb of God)

Other parts of the Mass change according to specific feasts or season.

These are called “the proper” parts.

(eg - the presider’s prayers, the readings)

**FYI: The Mass is also sometimes referred to as
“The Eucharist” or “The Liturgy”
of “The Liturgy of the Eucharist”**

The Structure of the Mass in Detail

Introductory Rites

- Entrance
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- Gloria
- Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (on Sundays, solemnities, and special occasions)
- Universal Prayer

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar
- Prayer over the Offerings
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - Preface
 - Holy, Holy, Holy
 - First half of prayer, including Consecration
 - Mystery of Faith
 - Second half of prayer, ending with Doxology
- The Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

- Optional announcements
- Greeting and Blessing
- Dismissal

In Vatican II Documents the Liturgy of **the Eucharist** is called
the source and summit of our Christian life.

At a Mass the real presence of Jesus is known in three ways:

In the Assembly

(“where two or three are gathered in my name, there Am I”)

In the Word Proclaimed, especially the Gospel

In the Eucharist

(Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist is called “the most excellent presence.” It is different than his presence in the Assembly or the Word, because his presence in the Assembly is conditional upon our gathering; in the Word it is conditional upon it being proclaimed; however, in the Eucharist, once the bread and wine are consecrated, Jesus’ presence remains whether we are present or not.)

The Celebration of the Mass or The Eucharist
is an action of the Assembly (the People of God)
presided over by an ordained priest.