

The Mass

The Parts of the Mass

1. Introductory Rite: entrance of priest, greeting and penitential rite (acknowledging we are sinners)
2. Liturgy of the Word: 1st Reading (readings can be from Old or New Testament), Responsorial Psalm (can be sung or read), 2nd Reading (often not done on weekday Mass unless a holy day), Gospel (the stories of Jesus from the Bible), Homily (the priest explains the Gospel), Profession of Faith (Sundays primarily)
3. Liturgy of the Eucharist: gifts, prayer over offering, Eucharistic prayer, Our Father, Sign of Peace, Communion, prayer after Communion, final prayer

Sitting/Standing/Kneeling

We stand at the start of Mass as well as at the Gospel to acknowledge the significance of Jesus' words. We also stand to recite our creed, our beliefs, the Our Father and the Sign of Peace. We stand at the end of Mass as well. We kneel in humble worship during most of the prayers of the Eucharist. This is our way to completely submit to God. We sit for the first and second readings, the homily and the preparation of the gifts.

Holy Water

Holy water is found at many church entrances or at baptismal fonts. Catholics can dip their finger in and make the sign of the cross as a way of blessing themselves and as a reminder of their baptism.

Genuflection

Catholics bend on their right knee to signify adoration. This is saved for the Blessed Sacrament. It helps one pray with their body and soul. This is done when one passes before the tabernacle that contains the Blessed Sacrament. Upon entering a church, one should look for the tabernacle and genuflect when they pass.

Communion (The Eucharist)

Catholics believe Communion is the actual body and blood of Jesus. Once Catholics have prepared to receive the sacrament and are in a state of grace, they can receive it during Mass. This sacrament is typically first given in second or third grade. However, non-Catholics or Catholics who are not yet ready for their first Communion are still welcomed to the altar at this time with the congregation. They cross their arms over their chest and receive God's blessing from the Eucharistic minister.