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Catholic News Report

Special In-Depth Study Series

The New Rite of the Mass

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THE NEW RITE OF MASS — Prepared by John F. Schleicher, Associate Editor, CATHOLIC NEWS REPORT. Edited by James L. Alt, Editor, CATHOLIC NEWS REPORT. Based upon pictures and script prepared by Rev. George F. Remm, Sacre Coeur Rectory, Creve Coeur, Ill. Photography by Rev. Arnold Klauer and Rev. Robert Gilles. Theological Consultant: Rev. Thomas Schroeder, M.A., S.T.L., Holy Name Seminary, Madison, Wis.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES: To inform viewers about the changes in the rite of the Mass. These changes are a result of guidelines set forth by the Second Vatican Council in its "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," Chapter 1, Part III. Their purpose is to make the Mass simpler, more meaningful, and easier to understand. They promote a greater degree of active participation by more of the people. By 1971, according to a recent Vatican instruction, the new rite will be mandatory throughout the Catholic world.

MESSAGE TO VIEWERS: At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me." We follow his request when we celebrate the sacrifice of his death and Resurrection. This is the Mass. This, its basic meaning, doesn't change. What does change is the WAY the Mass is celebrated. This is called the RITE. During two thousand years the rite has changed many times. The Mass has been celebrated in various languages in hundreds of countries. In our day, Catholics all over the world are beginning to celebrate the Mass in a new way. This way was suggested by the Second Vatican Council. Let us look at the new way.



2

"Welcome to the celebration." The priest greets the worshipers as they come to Mass. What do we, as Christian worshipers have to celebrate? We have the joy of believing that God loves us. The sacrifice Jesus offered of his life and death renews our friendship with God. It atones for our sinfulness. Joining Jesus in his sacrifice gives us hope. We need no longer be desperately afraid when we sin. We know we always

have the chance to change. God never stops forgiving us. We need no longer fear bodily death. We know we will rise again as Christ did in his Resurrection. We also celebrate our unity with one another. As Christians, we are God's people. We must help one another do God's work in our world today. Our celebrating together strengthens our love for one another. With more love, we can do better work for more people. Besides preparing our inward selves to celebrate, we must also make some outward preparations.



3

In preparation for Mass, the Missal and veiled chalice are placed on a table near the altar. Other preparations must also be made to get the church building ready. All the things about the church should be arranged so they help rather than hinder the celebration of the Mass. Having the altar placed so the priest faces the people helps unify priest and people in their actions and attitudes during Mass. Putting up decorations such as banners and posters is a sign that the Mass is a joyful occasion.

as banners and posters is

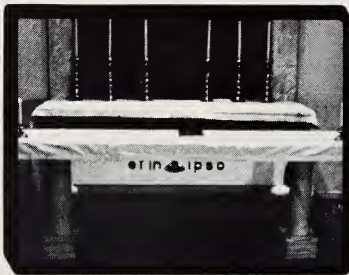
The architecture of the church building itself aims to provide a fit setting for the mood of the Mass. What do you think of the designs of some of our church buildings? How do they succeed in creating a good atmosphere for worship? How do they fail?



4

Our gifts — the communion bread, and cruets of wine and water — are set out to be offered. Later on, during the Mass, representatives from the people will carry these gifts in procession to the altar. In the early church, people brought bread and wine from home to share with their fellow Christians at Mass. The new way of the Mass will see us using different kinds of bread. The Mass bread must be unleavened. But it

doesn't have to be the traditional white wafer. It may, for example, look and taste more like whole wheat bread. Some think such a type of bread makes a better sign than the traditional wafer. Do you agree?



5

With candles lit, the altar, covered by a white cloth, stands ready for sacrifice. Throughout history, the place where religious sacrifice is offered has been held sacred or holy. Pagan peoples of long ago set up altars, often outdoors, and offered sacrifices to their gods. The altar on which the Mass is offered is a table. Why a table? (Perhaps as a sign that the Mass is a meal.) It is a very special sacrificial meal

where Christians share the food God gives them. This food is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Lighted candles are a sign of the light Christ brings into the world by his sacrifice. Christ lights the way for us to follow him. We must approach sacrifice honestly and sincerely. We realize that God knows us and accepts us, even loves us, just as we are.



6

Beginning the INTRODUCTORY RITES, a procession opens our celebration of the Mass. The Introductory Rites begin with our standing when the priest enters the church. They end at the prayer just before we sit down for the scripture readings. The purpose of the Introductory Rites is to draw the individual people together so they form one body. Then, as a united community, they can better celebrate the Mass.

One way of unifying people is to have a procession. How does a procession do this? (It signals a happy occasion. It brings people into a kind of order. A procession is something like a parade.) Not everyone, of course, can march in a parade or walk in a procession. But those who watch participate just as fully as the walkers. They contribute with their cheerful attention and joyful response.



7

During the procession, the people join together in singing the entrance song. St. Paul told the Colossians in one of his letters to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs when they assembled as one body looking for the Coming of the Lord. We still follow his suggestion when we prepare for Christ's coming in the Mass. The entrance song may be a popular hymn which fits the occasion. Its words are often in tune

with the day's feast or the current season of the church year. We should always pay attention to the words we are singing. We raise not only our voices, but also our hearts and minds in song. On special occasions a choir may lead the singing. Ordinarily the people and the choir should sing together. Music is an important part of the Mass. The new rite of the Mass allows for quite a large variety of music and musical instruments.



8

After the entrance procession, the celebrant kisses the altar as a sign of reverence. This is one of many signs the priest gives us during Mass. If we are alert, we will watch for these signs and learn to understand what they mean. For example, we might watch how the priest uses his hands and arms at different times during the Mass. For certain prayers he holds his arms out wide as if to enclose all the people. At other times

his hands seem pointed upward as a sign of our lifting our minds and hearts up to God. The vestments the priest wears are also signs. Do you know what different colors he wears, and what they stand for? (Green is for hope; white for joy; purple for penance; red for the sacrifices of the martyrs who died for love of God.)



9

Gathered in the name of the Trinity, people and priest together make the sign of the Cross. The sign of the Cross should have special meaning for us when we make it at Mass. The Mass is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. In the Mass we can join Christ in offering his life and death to his Father. We can look forward to our being gloriously raised back to life with him in the Resurrection. The

Mass is a summary of the saving work of the Trinity through history. God the Father, the Creator, gives us a world in which to live. He also gives us his Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from sin and show us the way to live in the world. Christ, returning to the Father, promises to send the Holy Spirit to his followers to guide them in living in his way.



10

"The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." In the new rite, after the sign of the Cross, the priest faces the people with hands extended. He formally welcomes them to the Mass in the Lord's name with one of three greetings. One you read as the caption for this picture. The other two are, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellow-

ship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you," or simply "The Lord be with you." Whichever greeting is used, we answer "And also with you." This gesture of greeting makes us aware of the presence of the Lord at our celebration. After greeting the people, the priest, or a commentator, may tell us something about the theme of the day's Mass. Then comes what is called the Penitential Rite.



11

Priest and people admit their sinfulness, and ask for God's generous mercy. It is especially fitting to ask God's forgiveness before offering sacrifice. Through sacrifice we seek God's friendship. Can we sincerely seek his friendship if we do not confess our sorrow for being sinful and selfish? The new Penitential Rite may use one of several possible forms. The traditional Confiteor may be said with its new

words. Or priest and people may exchange some similar words expressing the idea of penance. The Lord Have Mercy, or Kyrie, is always said or sung. But now each of its three parts is only repeated once. Then follows the hymn of praise, the Glory to God, if the liturgical season calls for it. In the new rite, some of the words in the Glory to God are different from the text we have been using up until now.



12

In silence we recall God's presence and our own special needs. The new Mass rite calls for a few moments of silence before the priest begins the prayer traditionally named the Collect. Another name for Collect is simply Opening Prayer. During this time priest and people should collect their thoughts. Day-dreaming might be easier. But, seriously, what should we think about? Perhaps of God's presence among

us, his people. Of what we are celebrating at Mass. Of the special needs and special people we have to pray for. We might recall what we have said and done thus far in the Mass, and why. There are many things to think about if we really want to think.



13

The Opening Prayer completes the INTRODUCTORY RITES and sets the tone for the day's celebration. Therefore it is different from day to day. This prayer is usually directed to the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. If you listen to its ending you will hear all three persons of the Trinity mentioned. The people can join the spirit of this prayer by answering "Amen" at the end. Notice the position of the celebrant's hands during the Opening Prayer. The Introductory Rites are now over.

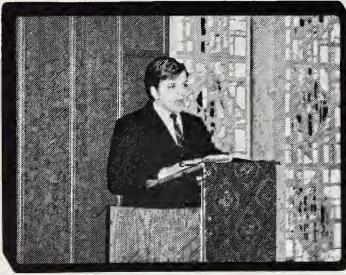
The various parts — entrance song and procession, sign of the Cross and greeting, comments on the day's theme, community rite of penance, Glory to God and Opening Prayer — all have prepared us for what follows.

14

In the LITURGY OF THE WORD, we listen as God speaks to us through Scripture. The Liturgy of the Word begins here and ends with what is called the Prayer of the Faithful, after the Gospel and homily. We are used to hearing two readings — the Epistle and the Gospel — in this part of the Mass. The new rite will sometimes add a third. This additional reading will be an Old Testament passage, and will

come first in the order. Next will follow the reading from one of the New Testament letters. And then, the Gospel. Between these three readings we say responses or sing chants.

Something else is new: We will no longer be listening to the same readings year after year. The new rite arranges its readings in a three-year cycle for Sundays and a two-year cycle for weekdays. For example, only every fourth year will we hear the Gospel of the three kings read on Epiphany Sunday. We will begin hearing in the lessons and Gospels parts of the Scripture that may be unfamiliar to us. We'll have much to learn.



15

From the Old and New Testaments the lector reads the lessons the Bible teaches us. Notice that the reader is a lay person. The practice of having a layman as a reader, or lector, is not new. From tradition the duty of reading the lessons belongs not to the priest celebrant but to another minister. Being a reader or lector is a privilege. Would you like to perform this duty? How would you prepare for it?

The lector must read the words over to himself ahead of time. He should understand what he is going to say, and know how to pronounce the words properly. He must speak distinctly so the people can hear all the words. In the new rite lay people have many ways of participating actively in the Mass. Acting as lector is one of the most privileged of these.



16

We must listen carefully if we want to hear God's message for us. The words from the Bible open up for us the mystery of how God redeems and saves his people throughout history. In the new rite we will hear more from the Old Testament, in the added first reading. We will learn about the exodus from Egypt. We will see how God loved his chosen people, the Hebrews. We will hear words from his prophets

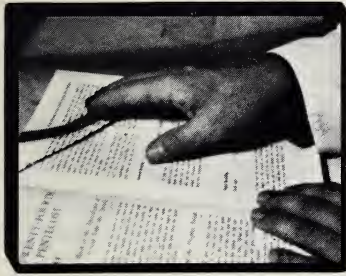
such as Isaias, Jeremias, and Ezechiel. We will become acquainted with Kings David and Solomon. In the second reading, from the New Testament, we hear parts of Paul's letters to the early Christians in different cities of the ancient Mediterranean world. We also hear the letters of Peter, James, and John. All these readings contain helpful insights for us. But they will do us little good unless we listen. At the end of both readings, the lector says "This is the Word of the Lord." We answer, "Thanks be to God."



17

We sing an answer after the readings to show our thankful response to God's word. This sung response is usually a part of one of the psalms followed by a few words related to the psalm. It is commonly called the Gradual. It may be sung by one person called a chanter or psalmist, or by the choir, or by the people. Often the psalm part is sung by one person or the choir, and the related words, or response, by the

people. Sometimes, of course, the psalm is simply recited rather than sung. Singing psalms after the readings is a good way of expressing our joy at hearing God's word. The Alleluia announces Christ's coming in the words of the Gospel.



18

The Gospel, God's good news for us, tells a story from the life of Jesus. We always stand during the Gospel. Another sign of reverence is the small cross the priest makes with his thumb, first on the Gospel Book, then on his own forehead, lips, and heart. Why is the Gospel so special? Because in it God speaks to us through the words and deeds of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus commanded us to follow

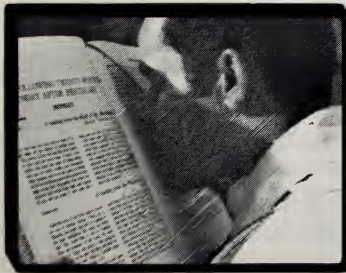
him. Here is where we learn how. In the Gospel we can look at examples from Christ's earthly life in ancient Israel. When Christ spoke his Father's good news to his disciples, or to the lepers, or to the Jewish crowds, he also spoke it to us. His parables and miracles, all his words and actions, have meaning for us today as they had for people 2,000 years ago.



19

How well do I listen and learn from the words and actions of Christ? What does the Gospel mean right now to me? How does the good news of salvation affect the way I live? How hard am I trying to understand the message Christ is speaking to me by his life and death? He said: "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Am I following Christ? Is my cross heavy? He said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden is light." Is it easy to live as Christ did? Why

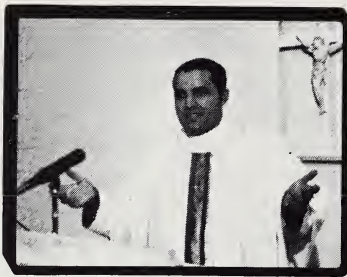
or why not?



20

Kissing the Gospel book, the celebrant shows his love for the words of Christ. This kiss comes at the end of the Gospel. In the new rite, after the day's Gospel selection is finished, the priest says, "This is the Gospel of the Lord." The people alertly answer, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ." This answer shows our love for Christ's words. We give our thanks for God's speaking to us in the Liturgy of the

Word. We praise Jesus for saving us. We are grateful to Christ for allowing us to share in his words and actions in the sacrifice of the Mass.



21

In the homily the priest explains God's words to us and urges us to live by them. Often we find it hard to understand what the scripture readings mean without some added explanation. The priest has studied the Bible carefully. He can help us understand. He can set the mood of Old or New Testament times for us. The priest often shows likenesses between the situation in the readings and our situation today.

He helps us apply what the Old Testament prophets said or what St. Paul wrote or what Christ said or did to twentieth century times. We should listen well to the words of the homily.



22

We all form one body in hearing together the word of God. After the homily, on Sundays and on some large feasts, we say or sing our Profession of Faith, the Creed. In it we express our belief in the Trinity and in the saving truths our Church teaches. Some words of the Creed are changed in the new rite. Its meaning is still the same, of course. Next comes the Prayer of the Faithful, also called the General Intercessions.

This is the people's own prayer for special needs. In it we ask God to help, for example, the members of his Church on earth, the rulers of our cities and country, the people of our local community and parish, and those who are troubled by some particular difficulty or beset by disaster. Each petition calls for a common response by all the people. We should listen to the prayers so we can give our response. The Prayer of the Faithful concludes the part of the Mass called the Liturgy of the Word.

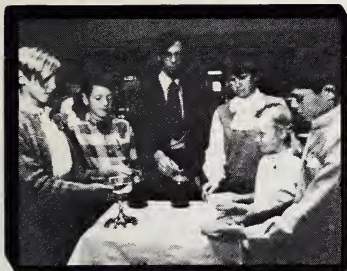


23

As the LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST begins, we must make ready the table of the Lord. Upon it is placed the chalice. The small white cloth you see hanging over the chalice is called the purificator. The pall is the square, stiff piece covering the chalice. The Missal is also set up on the altar.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, the third part of the Mass, begins here and ends after Communion.

It has three sub-parts. In the first, The Preparation of the Gifts, we ready the bread and wine for consecration. In the second, The Eucharistic Prayer, we thank God for the entire work of salvation. We offer him the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ. The third, the Communion Rite, includes a peace ceremony and the breaking of the bread. Then the Body and Blood of Christ are distributed to the people. The Greek word "eucharistein" means to give thanks. Why do you think the related word "Eucharist" is used to describe this part of the Mass?



24

Children prepare to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the Lord's banquet table. These, our gifts, will then be readied by the priest celebrant for consecration. The new rite encourages the custom of having representatives from the people carry the gifts in procession to the altar. It also encourages that money and other gifts for the Church and for the poor be collected and brought forward at this time. Such gifts, however, are

not placed on the altar. Here is a way the new rite provides for people, like these children, to take a more active part in the Mass. Have you ever been in a procession which brings the gifts to the altar? Would you like to be?



25

As our gifts are carried in procession, we may sing an offertory song. This song, like other songs during Mass, is a sign of our unity and joy. Though we can't all be in the procession, we can all join in the song that accompanies it. Sometimes guitars are used to help the singing along. Other times choir and organ provide support. Do you like the guitar's sound? Do you think guitars should be used in church? By studying

the history of music used for worship we see where different instruments have been used in the past. David, in the Old Testament, played a stringed instrument, called a lyre, in God's holy Temple. When the Ark of the Covenant was carried into the Temple, the Bible mentions musicians using trumpets, voice, cymbals, organs, harps, zithers, and "all kinds of musical instruments." Using a guitar in church is really nothing very new if we look back far enough in the history of worship.



26

Along with the bread and wine, we present ourselves and our lives to be sanctified. In the Mass we join Christ's sacrifice. Christ gave himself and his life to his Father. We present ourselves and our lives together with him. Christ died on the Cross. We die to our life of sin. The Father sanctified Christ by raising him back to life in the Resurrection. So we will be raised back to life, today from the death of sin, one

day from physical death itself. The Christian gives up the selfishness of sin and receives the promise of everlasting life in Christ.



27

The celebrant holds up the bread which will soon become our Bread of Life. Before placing it back on the altar, he says in the prayer of the new rite:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

If the offertory song is still being sung, the priest says this prayer quietly to himself. If not, he may say it aloud and we may answer at its end: "Blessed be God for ever." Then the priest pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying:

By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share our humanity.



28

Next the priest holds up the chalice of wine, which will become our spiritual drink. He says, before setting the cup back on the altar:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

As before, if the singing is done, the priest says this prayer aloud. We answer: "Blessed be God for ever." Why do you think Christ chose ordinary products of the earth, like bread and wine, to be the signs whereby he comes to us?



29

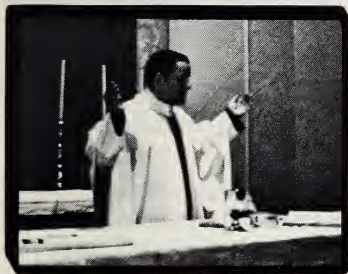
Be pleased with what we have presented you, Lord; wash away our sins; cleanse our hearts. Water is a sign of purification. The priest's washing his hands is a sign of his desire to be holy, to be rid of every kind of sin. He says during the washing ceremony at the side of the altar:

Lord, wash away my iniquity;
cleanse me from my sin.

We should have the same desire as the priest, to be cleansed from our sinful ways and attitudes.

Returning now to the center of the altar, the priest faces the people. He extends his hands and invites us: "Pray brethren, that our sacrifice be ac-

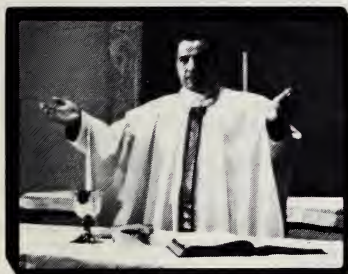
ceptable to God, the Almighty Father.” We answer: “May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.”



30

Having invited us to join him, the priest says the final Prayer over the Gifts. At its conclusion, we answer: “Amen.” Notice the position of the priest’s hands. What does it signify? (That all the people are included in the prayer, even though only the priest is saying it aloud.) Like the Opening Prayer earlier in the Mass, this prayer changes from day to day. The Prayer over the Gifts brings to an end our

Preparation of the Gifts. We are now about to begin the central and focal prayer of our whole celebration.



31

We lift up our hearts to the Lord in the Eucharistic Prayer of thanksgiving and praise. This continuous prayer includes the words of consecration and ends with the great “AMEN” before the Lord’s Prayer. Its purpose is to unite the whole gathering of the faithful with Christ. Together they proclaim the wonderful deeds of God in the offering of sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer begins with a part called the

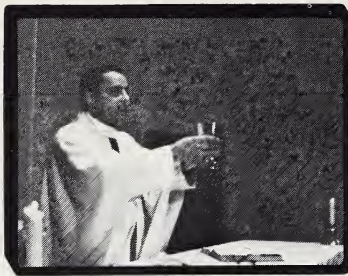
Preface, which changes for different seasons and feasts. In the Preface, the priest gives glory to the Father in the name of all the people. He thanks God for saving us. The Preface ends with all of us together saying or singing the Holy, Holy, Holy. Then the Church asks, through the priest celebrant, that man’s gifts become consecrated offerings.



32

“Take this, all of you, and eat it; this is My Body which will be given up for you.” With these words the Last Supper is made present to us. That is where the Lord first instituted this sign of his passion, death, and resurrection. He gave his apostles his Body and Blood to eat and drink, under the appearances of bread and wine. He asked them to continue the same mystery in his memory. We are still carrying out

his request today, almost 2,000 years later.



33

“Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the Cup of My Blood.... the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all men so that sins may be forgiven.” After these words consecrating the wine, the priest says to us: “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.” What do we answer? (“Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again,” or one of the other three responses.) Our response here shows that we really believe in Jesus as the center and model for our lives. We believe that his sacrificial death and glorious Resurrection have set us free. By dying he destroys our death; by rising he restores our life. Now we joyfully await his coming, both in Communion and at the end of time. This is the mystery of faith.

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34

“Through him, with him, in him . . . for ever and ever. AMEN.” ends the Eucharistic Prayer. The final part of the Prayer, between the consecration and this conclusion, says several things. It recalls in a special way Christ’s passion, resurrection, and ascension. It brings to mind the needs of the people present at the Mass. It mentions the needs of the Church and its leaders throughout the world. It prays for the living

and the dead, including every member of the Church in heaven and on earth. All share in the same redemption, through the Body and Blood of Christ.

The priest chooses one of four Eucharistic Prayers each time he celebrates Mass. So we do not hear exactly the same Eucharistic Prayer every day. The words of the consecration, however, are the same in each of the four versions.



35

After the Lord’s Prayer comes the rite of peace. Christ brings peace and unity to the world. In the Lord’s Prayer we have asked God to forgive us as we forgive our brothers. Have we really forgiven those who hurt us? Do we still hold any grudges? Before eating Christ’s Body and drinking his Blood, we must be one with him and with all our brothers and sisters in the Church. The rite of peace is a

good sign of this oneness. After saying aloud a special prayer for peace, the priest says: “Let us offer each other a sign of peace.” He offers a sign to the servers. The people exchange a sign of peace with one another. The embrace of priest and server you see in this picture is a traditional peace sign.



36

The handshake, a gesture of peace, is one sign of our unity and love for one another. The handshake is perhaps the most common peace gesture used in this country, though not the only form. When the handshake form is used, it is usually exchanged by each person with those near him. This symbolizes the way the peace of Christ makes neighbors of all his people everywhere in the world. Do you like the handshake as a sign of peace? Why or why not? Could

you think of a better sign? The bishops say the sign of peace in the new rite should fit the temperament and customs of the people. Does the handshake do this for the people of your parish? What peace sign might people of other countries use at Mass?



37

We, who are many, in Communion are made one body from the one Bread of Life, Christ. The "Breaking of the Bread" was performed by Christ at the Last Supper. In the early Church this phrase was often used to describe the Mass. Do you remember the story of Jesus meeting some of his apostles on the road to Emmaus, after his Resurrection? They didn't know him at first, but later recognized him in the "breaking

of the bread." In small group Masses, all may receive Communion from the one bread broken by the priest. Even at Masses with many people present, the new rite suggests giving small pieces from the large host to at least some of the people. Of course, it is usually impossible for everyone receiving Communion to have part of the large host.



38

"Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace." The priest drops a small piece from the broken host into the chalice, saying quietly: "May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it." Meanwhile the people are saying or singing the Lamb of God. Before receiving Communion himself, the priest prays silently. Then he holds up the host and the

people join him in saying: "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." In the new rite we say this phrase only once.



39

May the Body and Blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life. The priest receives Communion under the signs of both bread and wine. He eats the Bread of Life and drinks from the Cup of the Lord's Blood. On certain occasions the people too may receive Communion under both species. Have you ever been at a Mass where this happened? Do you like this way of receiving Communion? Do you think receiving

Communion under both signs, by the people, will become more common in future years? Why or why not?



40

Our receiving Christ's Body and Blood in Communion is a time for rejoicing. God's people join in sharing together the food he provides for them. This food is Christ, his Son and our brother. All who eat this food and drink this drink become one body.

(Notice that the man in this picture is receiving a piece broken from the large host.)



41

Singing during the Communion procession is a vocal sign of our joy and brotherly unity. Communion is, naturally, a time of great personal joy. But this joy is also shared by the whole worshiping community. That is the reason for having singing at Communion time. The song, whether it be a psalm from Scripture or a popular folk hymn, shows the spiritual unity of the people of God. Sometimes the choir alone will

sing, and the people's task will be simply to listen and enjoy. Sometimes people and choir will alternate in singing parts of the psalm or song. At other times a single chanter will alternate with the people. The new rite of the Mass encourages having this person, called chanter or psalmist, lead the singing. He is often a layman who is skilled in music. Would you like to be a chanter and lead church singing?



42

Silence after Communion gives us time for thoughtful prayer. We can talk mentally to Christ and to his father. It is a good time to think what the Mass means to us. The word "communion" means "union with." With whom are we united in communion? (With Christ AND with our fellow Christians.)

After Communion the priest generally cleans the chalice and the other sacred vessels he uses during the sacrifice. The new rite allows him to postpone this duty until after Mass if time is running short, or for any good reason.

When he is ready, the priest prays aloud the Prayer after Communion. We answer "Amen" at its end. This Prayer concludes the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the third part of the Mass.



43

In the CONCLUDING RITE, we receive God's blessing; we go forth to live in peace and love. We have heard God's Word and shared the meal of the Lord's Body and Blood. Now it is time for us to leave. We go forth to do good works, following Christ's example. Ours is the challenging task of praising and serving the Lord by the way we live our daily lives. In the new rite the priest will occasionally send us forth

with a different, alternate form of the final blessing. Most often, though, the blessing will be the traditionally short one addressed to the Trinity: "May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." We make the sign of the Cross and answer "Amen."

Sometimes, following the Prayer after Communion but before the final blessing, the priest will make a few announcements. The new rite permits this time to be used for that purpose.



44

Our banquet over and the Lord's table cleared, the sacrificial celebration nears its end. The celebrant, as at the beginning of Mass, kisses the altar. The altar is a symbol or sign of Jesus. Upon this altar have been offered his Body and Blood. From this table of the Lord, we, his people, have been nourished with spiritual food and drink. Now priest, servers, and any other ministers prepare to leave the church in procession.



45

We sing thanks and praise to God for letting us participate in the celebration of the Mass. What have we to sing about? We have celebrated God's goodness in saving us from sin. God has given us the gift of life. He has offered us Christ to show us the best way to live. In the Mass we have offered ourselves with Christ back to the Father. Christ's sacrificial death truly destroys death's power over us. His rising again

gives us real hope. Perhaps it seems strange to speak about "celebrating" a "sacrifice." After all, isn't sacrifice usually giving something? Who wants to do that? Unless, of course, he loves the person to whom he gives. In the sacrifice of the Mass, we change our lives. We want to be like our Lord Jesus Christ simply because we love him. So we give him our lives. In return Christ shares a new life of hope, trust, and love with us simply because he loves us. Isn't that something to celebrate?



46

Happiness and joy are ours to share as we go forth to live the Christian life. Our celebrating Mass together has strengthened our love for one another. As Christians, as God's people, we must share this love. We must share it with our families and our friends. We must share it with our neighbors. WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS? Christ says we must even share it with those neighbors we don't like. Re-

member his telling us to love our enemies. How can we do this? How can we show our love for the many different members of the human family? For the poor? For the sick? For criminals? For foreigners? For people of other races? For people of other religions? For those who have power over us? For those over whom we have power? How well do we share the joy and love of our Christian lives? Will joy and love grow if we don't share them? Why not?



