

## Things to talk about

Why do I go to Mass?

What helps me to take part in Mass? What hinders me?

Where do I find times of silence helpful in prayer?

What difference does my being there make to others? To the Lord?

How might coming to Mass teach me to live in solidarity with others?



*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from <http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy>*

## Things to do

### Prepare

Before coming to Mass in the coming weeks take a few minutes to review your week. What do you want to thank God for? What to ask pardon for, or help with? Reading the scriptures from last Sunday or this Sunday might help you with this review.

### Be Present

Make a special effort to come to Mass in good time and to spend time in prayer before Mass begins - remembering why you are here, and asking the Holy Spirit to help you to pray with Christ and pray with the Church.

### Participate

Make a special effort to join in the responses and song of the Mass. Receive the words of Scripture not only with your ears and mind, but take them to your heart, and make your response to them in prayer. Speak with the Lord who longs to hear your voice.

**Praying the Mass** is published by the Diocese of Westminster. © 2011. **Acknowledgements:** Illustrations © 2003 Angela Albertazzi. Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales *Choosing the Common Good*, 2010. Pope Benedict XVI (formerly Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) *Spirit of the Liturgy*, Ignatius Press, 2000. Archbishop Vincent Nichols, *Promise of Future Glory*, Darton Longman and Todd, 1997. Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass*. Catholic Truth Society, 2005

# Praying the Mass

At Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray.

*Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

Each month between now and June there will be a leaflet like this one for us all. Please take it away to read and reflect on it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let the leaflet help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

## At one with Jesus

**In the Mass Jesus comes to meet with us.** He comes to speak with us and listen to us, and through the gift of his life offered to us in Holy Communion, to nourish us so that we might live as members of his Body.

**In the Mass we come to meet with Jesus, and to offer praise and glory to the Father with**

**him.** Together with the priest we offer again the once-and-for-all Sacrifice of Christ, which wins salvation of the world. We offer our own lives too, to the Father, in union with Jesus.

There is a certain formality about our meeting at Mass. But the meeting seeks to draw us into intimacy with God and with each other: to have us live love together.

St Augustine spoke of how Christ's gift of love makes us become members of his very Body - he is the Head, we are his Body, the Church. We draw our life from him, and he lives in us.



## Praying

Our praying of Mass begins before Mass begins, in our preparation.

Preparation may begin at home, with getting the children, and ourselves, ready for Mass. We tidy ourselves up, get into suitable clothes. Maybe we also spend a moment in prayer. Maybe we've looked at the readings before hand.

When we get to church our prayerful preparation takes various forms.

- When we dip our hands into holy water as we enter the church we remind ourselves of the baptism that made us members of the Church, members of the family of God.
- We make the sign of the cross: the sign traced over us first at our baptism, and countless times since - and the sign that will be made over us when we have died. We have life because Jesus offered up his life in love on the cross.
- We genuflect in reverence to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. Christ is already here to meet us, and we honour his presence.
- We take our place and kneel in quiet prayer, recollecting where we are; calling to mind the week just gone, and the week that lies ahead. We gather ourselves together, all the better to meet with Jesus.

## Living

The Catholic Church has a large body of teaching, its 'social doctrine', which presents a rounded understanding of the human person and of the importance of solidarity. Both of these are contained in the concept of the common good.

Promoting the common good cannot be pursued by treating each individual separately and looking for the highest 'total benefit', in some kind of utilitarian addition. Because we are interdependent, the common good is more like a multiplication sum, where if any one number is zero then the total is always zero. If anyone is left out and deprived of what is essential, then the common good has been betrayed.

The common good is about how to live well together. It is the whole network of social conditions which enable human individuals and groups to flourish and live a full, genuinely human life. At the heart of the common good, solidarity acknowledges that all are responsible for all, not only as individuals but collectively at every level. The principle of the common good expands our understanding of who we are and opens up new sources of motivation. The fulfilment which the common good seeks to serve is the flourishing of humanity.

*Choosing the Common Good, 8.  
The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales*

## Silence

We are realizing more and more clearly that silence is part of the liturgy. We respond, by signing and praying, to the God who addresses us, but the greater mystery surpassing all words, summons us to silence. It must, of course, be a silence with content, not just the absence of speech and action. We should expect the liturgy to give us a positive stillness that will restore us. Such stillness will not be just a pause, in which a thousand thoughts and desires assault us, but a time of recollection, giving us an inward peace, allowing us to draw breath and rediscover the one thing necessary, which we have forgotten.

*Pope Benedict XVI. Spirit of the Liturgy. p209*

Moments of silence are an important step in creating in ourselves a space, an openness, a receptivity to God, permitting the Holy Spirit to take hold of them. In these moments of silence we stand before the God who forgives, whose Word is about to be proclaimed, whose action we are to celebrate in the sacrament. And we do this not only as individuals, but together as the people called to this moment, this place of truth and life.

*Archbishop Vincent Nichols,  
Promise of Future Glory, p 20*

## Celebrating together

In the Introductory Rites, Christ joins the Church to himself and gathers her children to join their voices to his perfect hymn of praise. Thus, the liturgical assembly, "where two or three come together in Christ's name, and where he is found in their midst (cf. Mt 18:20), is the 'first image that the Church gives of herself'". Indeed the assembly itself is also the first instance of Christ's presence in the liturgy.

The purpose of the Introductory Rites is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

*Celebrating the Mass 139*



## Things to talk about

- Which passages from the Bible best help *you* to an understanding of God and of God's plan for us? What passages best express the meaning and teaching of Jesus?
- What passages of scripture have been a help and guide to you in living faithfully - as an individual or a family?
- What helps you to listen to the Lord? At Mass? In private prayer? In the various experiences of life? And what hinders that listening?

*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)*

## Things to do

- Read the Gospel of the day before you go to Mass. That reading is often the key to understanding the other readings and prayers of the Mass.
- When listening to or reading the scriptures, listen out for the word, or phrase or sentence that particularly strikes you. It might be a word of encouragement or of challenge. But if it strikes home it has something to say to you. Allow the word space to speak to you; ponder it in your heart; and then bring your response to the word to the Lord in prayer.
- Many people find it is easier to listen to the Scriptures in a group. The discipline of being with others helps sustain a time of meditation; hearing how the word speaks to others can help us to better appreciate its richness. Simple guidelines for scripture groups can be downloaded from the *Praying the Mass* section of the diocesan website. Parish readers in particular can find such groups a great assistance as they take up their responsibility of ministering the word in their parish.



**Praying the Mass** is published by the Diocese of Westminster. © 2011. **Acknowledgements:** Illustrations © 2003 Angela Albertazzi. 'Introduction to the Lectionary'. © 1969, 1981, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved. *The Gift of Scripture* © Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2005; 'General instruction of the Roman Missal', 3rd edition, © 1973, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.. *Verbum Domini*, Pope Benedict XVI © Copyright 2010 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Additional resources can be accessed at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)

# Praying the Mass 2

**A**t Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray.

*Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

Each month between now and June there will be a leaflet like this one for us all. Please take it away to read and reflect on it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let the leaflet help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

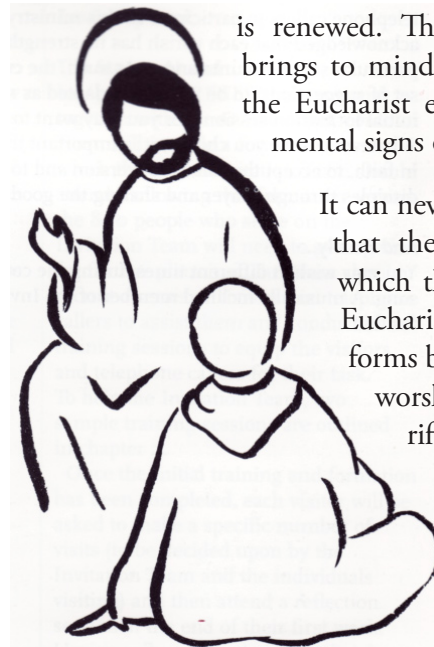
## Fed by the living Word

The Church is nourished spiritually at the table of God's word and at the table of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the

Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed. The spoken word of God brings to mind the history of salvation; the Eucharist embodies it in the sacramental signs of the liturgy.

It can never be forgotten, therefore, that the celebration of Mass in which the word is heard and the Eucharist is offered and received forms but one single act of divine worship. That act offers the sacrifice of praise to God and makes available to God's creatures the fullness of redemption.

*Introduction to the Lectionary 10.*



## Living

The Scriptures provide guidance on countless contemporary issues: the rights and responsibilities of the human person, the value of human life from conception to death, the need to protect the created world, the search for lasting justice and peace for all peoples. The gospel of Jesus in particular teaches the value of each and every person, the love with which each person is to be cherished, and the trust we should have in the God whose 'steadfast love lasts for ever' (Psalm 136/135.).

In our day the Scriptures are sometimes misunderstood as undermining and even stifling human freedom and growth. They are in fact the way of truth which leads to true freedom (John 8:32). They are often considered outdated and irrelevant. They are in fact words of life, always relevant, always new, with the power to change and renew people's lives (Hebrews 4:12). Above all, in the Scriptures we find not dead letters, but Christ, the eternal Word of the living God. In the Scriptures it is Jesus, the incarnate Word, who comes to meet us, for all Sacred Scripture speaks to us of Christ (cf *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 108, 134).

*The Gift of Scripture, 70  
The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales*

## Praying

The Lord speaks to us in so many ways - through events in life, through the sacraments, and in the words of Scripture. His speaking to us is never in doubt. More in question is our ability to listen to him, and our readiness to respond to what we hear.

Often we think of prayer as time when we speak to God. But of equal importance, and often the place for starting our time of prayer, is having time of quiet listening. Prayer is a time of communication: and communication thrives on a mutual speaking and a mutual listening.

We might begin a time of prayer by reading a passage of scripture (often the Sunday Gospel or Sunday Psalm is a good place to start). We listen to the words but also to the One who speaks with us through them. The time of reading is then usefully followed by a time of quiet, either just 'holding' the word or phrase that has caught our attention, or quietly pondering on it.

After such a time of quiet, our dialogue with the Lord might then commence - speaking with him about what he has said to us; bringing to him the things which concern and preoccupy us; giving thanks for his goodness and love.

## Celebrating together

Let us recall the words of Saint Elizabeth: 'Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord' (Lk 1:45).

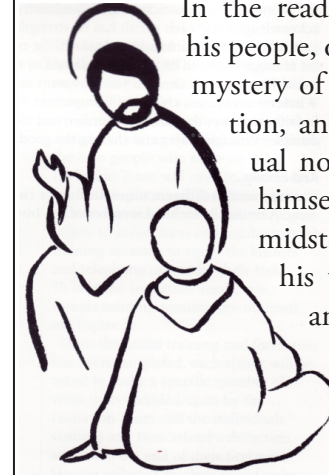
**L**Mary is blessed because she has faith, because she believed, and in this faith she received the Word of God into her womb in order to give him to the world. The joy born of the Word can now expand to all those who, by faith, let themselves be changed by God's word.

I turn to every man and woman, including those who have fallen away from the Church, who have left the faith or who have never heard the proclamation of salvation. To everyone the Lord says: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me' (Rev 3:20).

Let us be silent in order to hear the Lord's word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives.

*Pope Benedict XVI, Verbum Domini, 124*

### *The Liturgy of the Word*



In the readings... God speaks to his people, opening up to them the mystery of redemption and salvation, and offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his word. By their silence and singing the people make God's word their own... Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour

out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.

### *Silence*

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided.

During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the Homily.

*General Instruction of the Roman Missal 55-56*

## Things to talk about

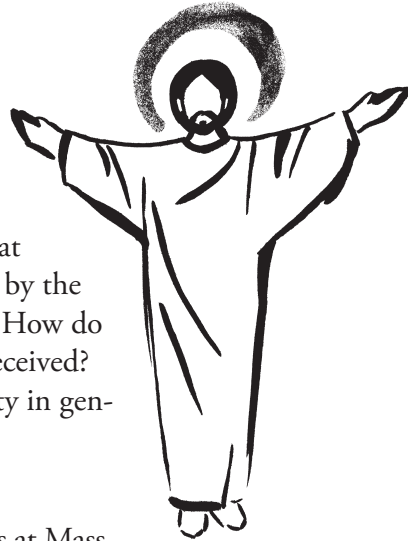
- What have we to be thankful for? How do we live our thanksgiving?
- One symbol of sacrifice and thanksgiving is a candle, which burns brightly to the glory of God, self-consumed in light and warmth. What other symbols or examples of self-offering and love can you think of? How do they help you to think of the Sacrifice which Jesus offers
- Are there particular phrases from the Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayers that strike you? What do the Prayers have us give thanks for? Use a Sunday Missal to refresh your memory or download some samples from the website below

*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)*

## Things to do

### Reflection

- **Take stock.** One traditional form of sacrifice is tithing. In the Old Testament the tithe was given in thanksgiving for the blessing of God. In the New Testament that partial sharing seems to have been replaced by the practice of holding all things in common. How do you share the good things that you have received? With those in particular need? With society in general? With the Church?
- **Make fuller use of the prayers at Mass.** It is often helpful to use some of the prayers at Mass for example the Preface, the Opening Prayer (or Collect), as well as the Eucharistic Prayer. They might be used in part or whole; and might be used as a starting point for personal prayer, or as something to meditate with. The practice can help us deepen our awareness of the prayers used at Mass, and enrich our private prayer too.



**Praying the Mass** is published by the Diocese of Westminster. © 2011. **Acknowledgements:** Illustrations © 2003 Angela Albertazzi. Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, *One Bread One Body*, Catholic Truth Society, 1998. Archbishop Vincent Nichols, *Promise of Future Glory*, Darton Longman and Todd, 1997; Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass*. Catholic Truth Society, 2005; Speeches of Pope Benedict are available at <http://www.thepapalvisit.org.uk/speeches>.

Additional resources can be accessed at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)

# Praying the Mass 3

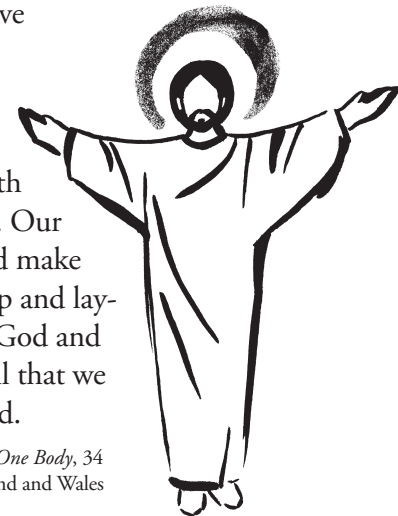
**A**t Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray. *Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

A leaflet like this is being distributed each month until June. The earlier ones are still available to read on-line at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy). Do take this leaflet home to read and consider it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let it help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

## Thanksgiving and Sacrifice

In the Eucharist, Christ's gift of his life to his Father for our salvation is made present, so that we may be united with him in his sacrifice and be accepted in him by the Father. The Mass is the ultimate act of worship. By our communion with the Risen Christ, we become one with him in his giving of himself to the Father. Our lives are at-one with his as he commends his spirit to the Father. United with Christ, we lift up our hearts to the Father and give him thanks and praise.

We give to God all that he first gave to us, all that we are and have, uniting ourselves with the self-giving of Jesus himself. Our sharing in the Eucharist should make us a sacrificial people, lifting up and laying down our lives in love for God and for one another, and sharing all that we have and are with those in need.



*cf One Bread One Body, 34*  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

## Living

Cardinal Newman teaches us that if we have accepted the truth of Christ and committed our lives to him, there can be no separation between what we believe and the way we live our lives. Our every thought, word and action must be directed to the glory of God and the spread of his Kingdom. Newman understood this, and was the great champion of the prophetic office of the Christian laity. He saw clearly that we do not so much accept the truth in a purely intellectual act as embrace it in a spiritual dynamic that penetrates to the core of our being. Truth is passed on not merely by formal teaching, important as that is, but also by the witness of lives lived in integrity, fidelity and holiness; those who live in and by the truth instinctively recognize what is false and, precisely as false, inimical to the beauty and goodness which accompany the splendour of truth, *veritatis splendor*.

By letting the light of faith shine in our hearts, and by abiding in that light through our daily union with the Lord in prayer and participation in the life-giving sacraments of the Church, we ourselves become light to those around us; we exercise our “prophetic office”; often, without even knowing it, we draw people one step closer to the Lord and his truth.

*Pope Benedict XVI,  
Hyde Park, 18th September 2010*

## Praying

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest raises the Body and Blood of the Lord saying:

*Through him, within and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.*

And the whole people on behalf of the created order, respond: *Amen*, It is so, *Amen*. In these words we profess that the one and only prayer is Christ; the only possibility of human prayer is in him; the perfect prayer is him. In, through and with him we pray at this moment and always.

At this moment we are caught up in the one event which lies at the centre of human history. Prefigured in so many ways in the Old Testament, it took place on the Calvary and is now continue in the sacramental life of the Church. It can be summarised in these lovely words:

*As our priest, Christ prays for us; as our head, he prays in us; as our God, we pray to him, but let us recognise our voices in him and his voice in us.*

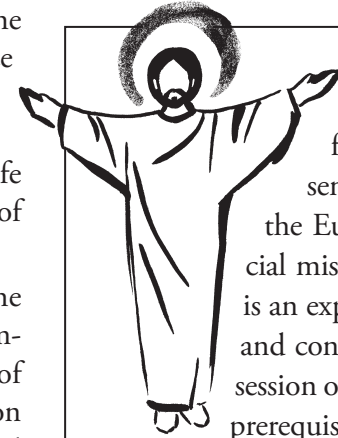
*Archbishop Vincent Nichols,  
Promise of Future Glory, p76f.*

## Celebrating together

The visitor to Westminster Cathedral cannot fail to be struck by the great crucifix dominating the nave, which portrays Christ's body, crushed by suffering, overwhelmed by sorrow, the innocent victim whose death has reconciled us with the Father and given us a share in the very life of God. The Lord's outstretched arms seem to embrace the entire church, lifting up to the Father all the ranks of the faithful who gather around the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice and share in its fruits. The crucified Lord stands above and before us as the source of our life and salvation, 'the high priest of the good things to come'.

The Eucharistic sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ embraces in turn the mystery of our Lord's continuing passion in the members of his Mystical Body, the Church in every age. Here the great crucifix which towers above us serves as a reminder that Christ, our eternal high priest, daily unites our own sacrifices, our own sufferings, our own needs, hopes and aspirations, to the infinite merits of his sacrifice. Through him, with him, and in him, we lift up our own bodies as a sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. In this sense we are caught up in his eternal oblation, completing, as Saint Paul says, in our flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church.

*Pope Benedict XVI,  
Westminster Cathedral, 18th September 2010*



The Procession with the Gifts is a powerful expression of the assembly's participation in the Eucharist and in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the disposition of self that is a necessary prerequisite for making the true offering which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him. The Procession with the Gifts expresses also our eager willingness to enter into the 'holy exchange' with God: 'accept the offerings you have given us, that we in turn may receive the gift of yourself.'

In the Eucharistic Prayer the mystery of Christ's saving death and resurrection is recalled; the Last Supper is recounted; the memorial Sacrifice of his Body and Blood is presented to the Father; and the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the gifts and transform those who partake of them into the body of Christ, uniting the assembly and the whole Church and family of God, living and dead, into one communion of love, service, and praise to the glory of the Father.

*Celebrating the Mass 180, 187*

## Things to talk about

- When have you most strongly sensed the unity of the Church?
- How does your being joined with Christ and the Church in the offering of the Eucharistic Prayer affect your sharing in Holy Communion?
- What helps you to experience reverence towards Christ's Real Presence at Mass? What hinders or challenges those feelings of reverence?
- How do the readings of the day prepare us to share in Holy Communion?
- Where do you find it most challenging to live your communion with Christ?

*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)*

## Things to do

- **Take stock.** How do you pray your going to receive Holy Communion?
  - How mindful and careful are you of others in the Holy Communion procession?
  - Do you respond clearly and firmly to the minister:  
'The Body of Christ: Amen.'  
'The Blood of Christ: Amen.'
  - Do you take care to pray in thanksgiving afterwards?
- **Read and reflect** on the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13: 1–15). *Do what I have done for you...* Use this time of prayer to reflect on how you are united with Jesus in your daily life and how you share in his ministry.



**Praying the Mass** is published by the Diocese of Westminster. © 2011. **Acknowledgements:** Illustrations © 2003 Angela Albertazzi. Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* © Copyright 2007 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana; Archbishop Vincent Nichols, *Promise of Future Glory*, Darton Longman and Todd, 1997; Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* © Copyright 2004 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana; Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass*. Catholic Truth Society, 2005. Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions is available in *The Eucharistic prayers arranged for Concelebration*. Great Woking; McCrimmons, 2004.

Additional resources can be accessed at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)

# Praying the Mass 4

**A**t Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray. *Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

A leaflet like this is being distributed each month until June. The earlier ones are still available to read on-line at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy). Do take this leaflet home to read and consider it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let it help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

## Living Communion

Father of infinite goodness,  
it is truly right to give you thanks,  
it is fitting that we sing of your glory.

Through the gospel proclaimed by your Son  
you have brought together in a single Church  
people of every nation, culture, and tongue.  
Into it you breathe the power of your Spirit,  
that in every age your children may be  
gathered as one.

Your Church bears steadfast witness  
to your love.

It nourishes our hope  
for the coming of your kingdom  
and is a sure sign of the lasting  
covenant which you promised us  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore heaven and earth sing  
forth your praise while we, with all the  
Church, proclaim your glory without end.

cf Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions,  
A. The Church on the way to Unity



## Living

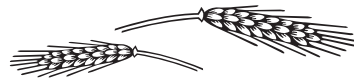
‘The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world’ (Jn 6:51). In these words the Lord reveals the true meaning of the gift of his life for all people. These words also reveal his deep compassion for every man and woman. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus’ feelings towards others, especially the suffering and sinners. Through a profoundly human sensibility he expresses God’s saving will for all people – that they may have true life. Each celebration of the Eucharist makes sacramentally present the gift that the crucified Lord made of his life, for us and for the whole world. In the Eucharist Jesus also makes us witnesses of God’s compassion towards all our brothers and sisters. Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become ‘bread that is broken’ for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: ‘You yourselves, give them something to eat’ (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 88.

## Praying

Let silence do its own work. It can speak for itself. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit can fill it. And that Spirit is surely not put off by the occasional cry of a child, or even persistent crying! My rule of thumb is that a Mass celebrated without periods of silence is robbed of a good deal of its potential. Participation does not just mean outward active participation. It can be most powerfully experienced in silences too.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols.  
*Promise of Future Glory*, p23.



Faith demands that we approach the Eucharist fully aware that we are approaching Christ himself.

The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfilment of Jesus promise to remain with us until the end of the word.

Pope John Paul II  
*Mane Nobiscum Domine*, 16

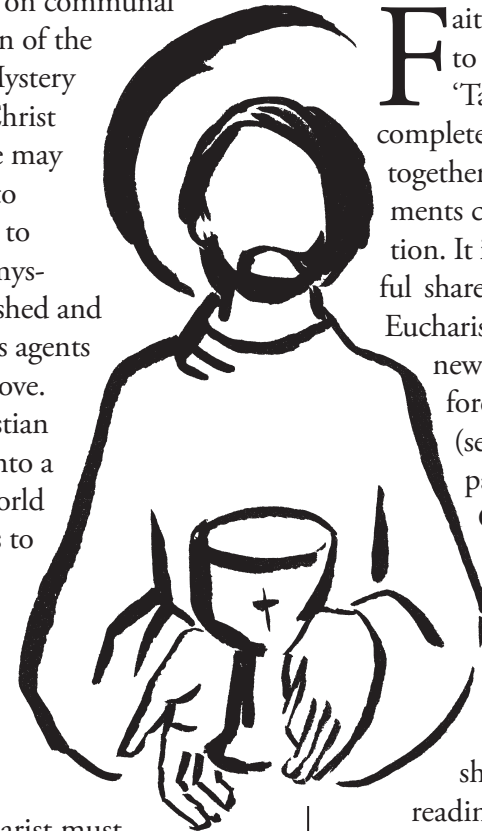
## Celebrating together

Active participation in the Eucharist is a transforming experience. In our prayers, and that of the whole Church, we seek the transformation not only of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but that the same Spirit transforms us also into the Body of Christ. But it does not end here...

Authentic Catholic spirituality is centred on communal celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ so that we may go out into the world to live that mystery, refreshed and restored as agents of God’s love. The Christian is called into a broken world to witness to and work for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The Eucharist must feed those who celebrate: for their work in the healing of relationships, in the promotion of peace and justice, and in the proclamation of the Good News.

Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass* 16-17



Faithful to the Lord’s command to his disciples to ‘Take and eat,’ ‘Take and drink,’ the assembly completes the Eucharistic action by together eating and drinking the elements consecrated during the celebration. It is most desirable that the faithful share the chalice. Drinking at the Eucharist is a sharing in the sign of the new covenant (see Luke 22:20), a foretaste of the heavenly banquet (see Matthew 26:29), a sign of participation in the suffering Christ (see Mark 10:38-39).

The Communion procession expresses the humble patience of the poor moving forward to be fed, the alert expectancy of God’s people sharing the Paschal meal in readiness for their journey, the joyful confidence of God’s people on the march toward the promised land. This action of walking solemnly in procession, together with a reverent bow before we we receive Communion is our sign of reverence in preparation for receiving Communion.

*of Celebrating the Mass* 180, 187



## Things to talk about

- Where do you see the clearest connection between what you do at Mass and what you do in the rest of your week?
- How do you witness to Christ? What helps you give that witness? What makes it more difficult?
- Where do you think 'the world' can see 'the Church' at its best? How can that 'best' be supported by you? And by your parish community?



*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)*

## Things to do

- Take a meditative walk.
  - As you walk look to see as God might see. What is happening? What is there that needs God's mercy and healing?
  - As you walk look to see signs of the Kingdom. What do you see that is a sign of God's goodness and love? What is there that is a sign of people's response to God's love and the Gospel?
  - As you walk where do you find yourself in all of this? What in your life needs God's healing and love? What is there in your life and the way that you try to live that shows your love of God and your welcome of the Gospel?
  - Bring your thoughts and feelings with you to your next celebration of Mass - let them inform your thanksgiving and your intercession.
- Find out more about any special mission project of your parish or diocese, or London Citizens, CAFOD, etc.
- Read and reflect Read Mark 7:1-23. Use this to review your priorities and the priorities of your parish.

**Praying the Mass** is published by the Diocese of Westminster. © 2011. **Acknowledgements:** Illustrations © 2003 Angela Albertazzi. Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions © 1994, ICEL; Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* © 2007 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana; Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, *One Bread One Body* © 1998; Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass*. Catholic Truth Society, 2005. Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions is available in *The Eucharistic prayers arranged for Concelebration*. Great Woking: McCrimmons, 2004.

Additional resources can be accessed at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)

# Praying the Mass 5

**A**t Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray. *Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

This is the last of the leaflets in a series that has been distributed since February. The earlier ones can be read on-line at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy). Do take this leaflet home to read and consider it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let it help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

## Glorify the Lord by your life

**L**ord, perfect your Church in faith and love together with Benedict our Pope, Vincent our Bishop, with all bishops, priests, and deacons, and all those your Son has gained for you.

Open our eyes to the needs of all;  
inspire us with words and deeds  
to comfort those who labour and are burdened;  
keep our service of others  
faithful to the example and command of Christ.

Let your Church be a living witness to truth and freedom, to justice and peace, that all people may be lifted up by the hope of a world made new.



of Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, D. Jesus, the Compassion of God

## Living

In my homily at the Mass solemnly inaugurating my Petrine ministry, I said that “there is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him.”

These words are all the more significant if we think of the mystery of the Eucharist. The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him.

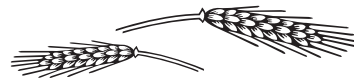
The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission: “an authentically eucharistic Church is a missionary Church.” We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us” (1 Jn 1:3). Truly, nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ and to make him known to others.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84.

## Praying

The Eucharist can be celebrated without a temple of stones, but there is no celebration of the Eucharistic mystery unless there is a community ‘faithful to the fellowship. Of the Church which is present - whether physically or not, but really - the Eucharist is both the expression and the source.

S. Lyonnet



The Eucharist is the daily meal of us poor Christians, the meal that continually feeds our lives and rebuilds our strength... It is the meal for people who always get hungry again, who never stop being weak... It is the meal for everyday people.

Karl Rahner



He is the bread of life.  
Whoever eats life cannot die...  
Go to him and be filled,  
for he is the bread of life.  
Go to him and drink,  
for he is the wellspring.  
God to him and be illumined,  
for he is the light.  
Go to him and become free;  
for wherever the Lord’s Spirit is,  
there freedom is.

St Ambrose of Milan

## Celebrating together

The celebration of the Eucharist commits us to the poor and should flow into social action; our active love for the poor and oppressed, the sick and the sad, leads us back to the Eucharist as the source and summit of all we do.

St John Chrysostom challenged those who recognised Christ in the breaking of bread to recognise him also in the broken lives of those around them: ‘Would you honour the body of Christ? Do not despise his nakedness; do not honour him here in church clothed in silk vestments and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside. Remember that he who said, “This is my body”, and made good his words, also said, “You saw me hungry and gave me no food”, and, “in so far as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me”. In the first sense the body of Christ does not need clothing but worship from a pure heart. In the second sense it does need clothing and all the care we can give.

cf Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *One Bread One Body*, 54



### Concluding Rites

After the Communion Rite, the Mass closes with a brief Concluding Rite. Its purpose is to send the people forth to put into effect in their daily lives the Paschal Mystery and the unity in Christ which they have celebrated. They are given a sense of abiding mission, which calls them to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

### Dismissal of Commissioned Ministers taking Communion to the Housebound or Sick

It is fitting for Holy Communion to be taken directly from Mass to the sick or those unable to leave their homes.

The Presider will normally speak words of dismissal or missioning over the ministers taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound. These words may be based on the words of the Communion antiphon, on the readings of the day, or in a simple form such as:

*Go now, to our sisters and brothers unable to be with us for reasons of sickness and infirmity. Take to them from our celebration the word of God and Holy Communion, that they might share with us these signs of the Lord’s goodness.*

*Celebrating the Mass* 217, 221