

Forming Mature Disciples

Understanding the Mass

October 2023 Vol. 2



This is the second in a series of monthly faith formation articles. The objective of the planned series of articles is to provide our parishioners with further insights on the tenets of our faith. This article focuses on the Sacrament of the Mass. In this article, we explore different components of the Mass. All the components of the Mass are connected and directed toward the source and summit of our faith, the Eucharist.

We encourage you to take the time to reflect on this article as well as reflect on any questions you might have about your faith or topics that we can address in future articles. These are helpful insights and explanations, but are not complete and exhaustive understandings of each component. Even if you feel you understand the monthly topic, please take the time to be open to the Holy Spirit to help you deepen your understanding.

Last month, we discussed how Jesus is present in our Church and in the Sacrament of the Mass. Let us now briefly reflect on preparing for Mass and an overview of the components of the Mass.



Immaculate Heart of Mary Roman Catholic Church

1571 South Martine Avenue. Scotch Plains New Jersey 07076

908-889-2100 | office@ihmparish.net | www.ihmparish.net



Preparing for Mass: We all live busy lives and try to live our faith by attending Mass regularly and participating in the sacraments. One practical step we can take before attending Mass is pre-reading the readings and/or the Gospel for the day and reflect on what is it saying to each of us.

If we don't have the time, we can opt instead for a short prayer, so we direct our focus away from our daily lives to our upcoming engagement with Jesus and Mary.

Crossing the Threshold: As we enter the Church, we cross the "threshold" from the earthly realm with all its sins and temptations into a Holy Place where we encounter Jesus. We bless ourselves with water, reminding ourselves of our baptism, our God and the call to discipleship.

The Introductory Rites: The Mass begins with a procession into the Church by the priest, deacon, eucharistic ministers, lector, and altar servers. This serves to gather the community and prepare us for worship and encounter with Christ. It is also reminiscent of Jesus's procession into Jerusalem at Passover.



The Liturgy of the Word: On Sundays and Feast days, we hear a reading from the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is included as it gives us insight into God's creation, His involvement in the world, His mercy and compassion leading to Him sending His beloved Son into the world.

- The New Testament is about Jesus and the early church. How Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and how He suffered death and was buried only to rise again on the third day so that we can be reconciled with God.

- The Gospel is followed by a Homily by either the priest or the deacon and its purpose is to open the word of God to us so we can understand not only its literal meaning but its deeper spiritual meaning to help us strengthen our relationship with Jesus Christ and better understand what we are being called to do.

- We then collectively recite the Nicene Creed- Our profession of faith. After hearing the word of God, we now acknowledge the tenets of our faith including our belief in God, Jesus, His only begotten son, the Holy Spirit, His apostolic church, our baptism and promise of Resurrection.



The Liturgy of the Eucharist: This is the Sacrament of Sacraments where we engage directly into Christ. The priest invokes the Holy Spirit to consecrate the bread and wine so that it becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This conversion is called "Transubstantiation". We believe that Jesus is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine.

- We then approach the altar to receive Jesus into our bodies and heart, our daily sins are forgiven and we become renewed in spirit to live our life as Jesus's has taught us. If all the consecrated hosts are not distributed during communion, they are placed in the tabernacle for future use and adoration.



The Concluding Rites: The priest blesses the congregation, and the deacon or priest instructs the people to go and share the Good News with all. Each of us leaves the Church with the Word in our hearts and mind strengthened by the Holy Spirit and a challenge to live our faith in not only word but deed.

If you have suggestion for a topic or topics you would like to be the subject of a future article or have any questions on this article please contact us via email at engagingdisciples@ihmparish.net