

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time — October 10, 2021

Gospel

"Go, sell what you have,
and give to the poor
and you will have treasure
in heaven; then come,
follow me."

Mk 10:21

Welcome to

THE CHURCH OF *Saint Luke*

A ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES

1980 Hillsdale Road
El Cajon, California 92019

(619) 442-1697
www.thechurchofstluke.org

Mission Statement

The Church of St. Luke is joyful, welcoming, caring, active family of believers striving to grow in knowledge of and love for God and each other. Challenged by the Word, nurtured by the Eucharist, and enlivened by the Spirit, we seek to live the message of Jesus in serving the needs of others both within our Parish and in the larger community.

Masses

Please check the St. Luke website for additional details.

www.thechurchofstluke.org

+ *Masks are Recommended* +

Wednesday, Thursday
& Friday—7:30am
Saturday—5:00pm
Sunday—9:00am
Sunday—11:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday—3:30pm

Parish Office Hours

Monday-Friday
9:00am—4:00pm
Call: (619) 442-1697
Fax: (619) 442-2293



28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING: WISDOM 7:7-11

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 4:12-13

GOSPEL: MARK 10:17-30

First Reading:

Today's reading presents wisdom and prudence as life's most precious gifts. Why do you think these virtues were held in such high regard by ancient Israel?

Second Reading:

Hebrews connects the power of the word of God with divine judgement — one day we must all "render an account" of our lives before the Lord. How often do you think about your own judgement day?

Gospel:

Jesus teaches the rich man and the disciples that while wealth can often hinder one from entering the kingdom of God, self-sacrifice and discipleship can earn eternal life. How well do you balance these realities in your life?

Parish & Finance Councils, Gospel Meditation

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council normally meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Visitors/observers are welcome. If you wish to have an item placed on the agenda, contact a Council Member to present it for you, or contact the Parish Office.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jane Cruz Alfano,
Parish Life Director
Fr. Don Coleman,
Parish Priest
Dcn. Dennie Nickell
Dcn. Jerry Stenovec
Julia Caputo
Chairperson
Theresa Dodd-Butera
Michele Curl
Bob Guarnotta
Michelle Hayford
Kay Krueger
Kevin Lawrence
Don Mercurio
Aaron Perry
Tom Selfani
Shannon Vint
Rich Warcholik

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

The Parish Finance Council meets every other fourth Wednesday of the month.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jane Cruz Alfano,
Parish Life Director
John Krueger,
Chairperson
Amy Cannon
George Heidenreich
Cathy March
Dave Sapper
Jim Stepovich

ENCOURAGE DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

Gospel Meditation

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time • October 10, 2021

If we are truly in love with God, then the basics are not going to be enough. That love is going to want to be expressed in going above and beyond, in leaving the comfortable and familiar, in stretching and growing, and in following a voice other than our own. St. Teresa of Calcutta rightly instructs us that for “love to be real, it must cost, it must hurt, it must empty us of self.” Being in love with God requires more than just checking the boxes of the commandments. It requires a sincere and unconditional self-investment. Desiring God with our whole heart, mind, and soul means that I must also desire a relationship with my neighbor with that same degree of fervor.

Biases and prejudices usually occur when people are kept at a distance and treated as objects. We cannot truly know our neighbors, especially if they are different than us, if we keep them in boxes and do not listen to their stories. When we open ourselves to listen to another person’s story, we begin to realize more how similar we are than dissimilar. Being overly attached to our possessions, ideologies, agendas, lifestyles, and personal needs are absolute barriers to achieving the type of personal investment love demands. This is why following Christ can be difficult. It is less a matter of intellect and more a matter of heart and soul. It requires that we transfer our treasure from an investment in tangible secular things and move it into the Kingdom of God. It is only the gift of wisdom and discernment that can help us decide what to do and how to do it.

Contemporaries of Jesus would know that a camel could not enter through the portal of a city weighed down with the baggage it was carrying. In order to enter, the baggage must be removed so that the animal could fit through the entry way. The same is true for us. We carry a lot of excessive baggage around with us that keeps us tethered to our past histories, wounds, myopic world views, prejudices, fears, and suspicions. To invest ourselves in the Kingdom of God, do God’s work and live out our love relationship with God, we need to shed the extra weight. While it may seem that a lot of that stuff is necessary, it really is not. We are much more than the things that we think define us and more secure than we think. The more there is to hold on to and the more that we carry with us, the harder it will be to leave it all behind. Many choose not to and walk away sad because they are not ready to trust.

28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Prayer Requests, Weekly Readings and Mass Intentions

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Prayer Requests

Mimi Murphy, Mary Sturm,
Janet Pickard, Gary Reece,
David & Annmarie Quezon,
Laman Abdulahad, Sophia David,

Dcn. Dennie Nickell, Nancy Ursey, Thelma Zinich, Jonathan Zumwalt & Family, Davin Brooks, Pat Maultra, Jerri Ann Carroll, Willy Gatus, Kristen Izotic, Chris Foraker, Brian Hill, Connie Bowen, Cherokee Eddy, Eileen Milnick, Jose Luis, Bobbie Allen, Frank Wilusz, Thomas Dennison, Michael Sanchez, Joanne Silva, Thomas & Charlie Frechette, Janice Jones, Meg and Jacob Seilheimer, Michele Peterson, John Vugrin, Marckis Lee, Carlos Zarate, Gail Balga, Bill Washkevich, Juan Jiménez, Donna McWalter, Cindy McLaughlin, Christian Colon, Sofia Healy, Citali Chavez, Rosalie Cline, Sandie Tessier, Logan Bedsole, Jeanette Craig, David Ashbaugh, Chris Martin, Mavi Ghio, Ryan Smith, Matthew Chu, Rose Falls, Richard Frechette, Reilly Phipps, Mike McFaul, Richard Spurling, Dean Mellos, Eric Matus, Gabe Eddy, Harriet B, Nora Toscano, Eugenio Cesena, Jeanne Brunner, Patty Hayes and Family, Glen Stewart, Corrine Warcholik, Colleen London, Laurie Lindow, Joey Enderwood, Bob Cole, Paul Folsom, Zoey Thomas, La Mice Denton, Brian Hill, Gary Corwin, Bill Phillips, Isaac Armas, Mary Botte, Lara Pasi, Ryan Cochran, Rachel Chavez, Michele Chavez, Helen Chu, Al Bowen, Joyce Kammer, Theresa Warcholik, Cheryl Berry, Natalie Enriquez, Candace Dayton, Ladel, Michael Ward, Nina Murphy, Noel Fisher, Karen Bennett, Christine Banuelos, Jose Orrantia, Mina Scannicchio, Carol Petrich, Carey Moore, Jose Azarza, Parker Landis, Joan Smith, Chase Laird, Alice Zizzo, Sophia Christensen, Cindy Russell, Karen Walker, Mike Murphy, Ann Mussomeli, Jeanine DeSanti, Joe James Sowards, Vie Liddell, Jennifer Soares, Dorothea Wall, Antoinette Daquisto-Guidi, Bob Weisham, Teri Harrison, Danielle P., Maria Warcholik, Mike Marcon, Theresa & Vito Siragusa, Tracy Weaver, Rick Gores, Sue Sullivan, Tommy Collet Sr., Richard Perricone, John Agostini, Austin Gatus, The Hill Family, The Morrison Family, Frances Colombo, Zaim Attisha, Teresa Russo; *all our relatives and friends who are sick or need prayers.*

To add or remove a name, please contact
Nancy Adema

PARISH FINANCES

In order to fulfill our budget, we need to receive an average of \$12,722 in the collection basket each week. Additionally, we have budgeted for an average of \$12,802 to be contributed monthly through our Online Giving contribution program.

Week of October 3rd:

Weekly Mass offering: \$ 13,846.00
Weekly WeShare/Online Giving: \$ 5,815.00

SUPPORTING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH: *Once you've made a decision on how much you should be giving, decide how to give.*

WAYS TO GIVE: You can use envelopes as many people do, or set up automatic donations through your bank (forms available in the parish office); you can go to *Online Giving* on the St. Luke website and set up an online giving plan. You may personally manage online giving or call the parish office to arrange a plan administered by the parish Business Manager. Online Giving Link: <https://www.thechurchofstluke.org> (click on **Online Giving**, on the right side of the menu bar). For additional information, please call the parish office at 619-442-1697.

Please pray for October Wedding Anniversaries



Ken & Susan Stempien 62 years
Rex & Karen Cole 55 years
Richard & Barbara Theisen 43 years
Miguel & Erika Villavicencio 23 years
Dan & Amy Cannon 21 years
Anthony & Marivel Gonzalez 16 years
Garrett & Susan Martin 16 years

If you would like to have your Wedding Anniversary placed in the bulletin, please call 619-442-1697.

Readings for the week of October 10

Sunday: Wis 7:7-11/Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17 [14]/Heb 4:12-13/Mk 10:17-30 or 10:17-27
Monday: Rom 1:1-7/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 [2a]/Lk 11:29-32
Tuesday: Rom 1:16-25/Ps 19:2-3, 4-5 [2a]/Lk 11:37-41
Wednesday: Rom 2:1-11/Ps 62:2-3, 6-7, 9 [13]/Lk 11:42-46
Thursday: Rom 3:21-30/Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [7]/Lk 11:47-54
Friday: Rom 4:1-8/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11 [cf. 7]/Lk 12:1-7
Saturday: Rom 4:13, 16-18/Ps 105:6-7, 8-9, 42-43 [8]/Lk 12:8-12
Next Sunday: Is 53:10-11/Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22 [22]/Heb 4:14-16/Mk 10:35-45 or 10:42-45

Prayer Intentions

Saturday, October 9

5:00pm—Tommy Colet Jr., RIP; Tom Colet Sr., RIP; Mary Pinta, RIP

Sunday, October 10

9:00am—Parishioners of Saint Luke
11:30am—Presider's Intention

Wednesday, October 13

7:30am—Presider's Intention

Thursday, October 14

7:30am—Presider's Intention

Friday, October 15

7:30am—Presider's Intention

Saturday, October 16

5:00pm—Presiders Intention

Sunday, October 17

9:00am—Frank Alfano, RIP, Judy Gamble, RIP
11:30am—Parishioners of Saint Luke

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

Live the Liturgy

Presumption can be a great sin. We can easily convince ourselves that as long as we do the bare minimum or master the basics, it is sufficient. Love doesn't operate this way. If we are truly in love with God, then the basics are not going to be enough. That love is going to want to get expressed in going above and beyond, in leaving the comfortable and familiar, in stretching and growing and in following a voice other than our own. This is what those who are truly in pursuit of wisdom come to realize. Just like any human relationship worth achieving reveals, we never reach a plateau in following the Gospel or growing in wisdom and holiness. Wisdom is the rudder that guides us through all of life's attractions and options. It alone determines what is worth pursuing and what must be left behind. That is why those who are only concerned about checking the boxes and doing the least amount possible often walk away sad when offered God's gift of life eternal. They are not truly in love.

The Church of St. Luke

Fall Movie Series

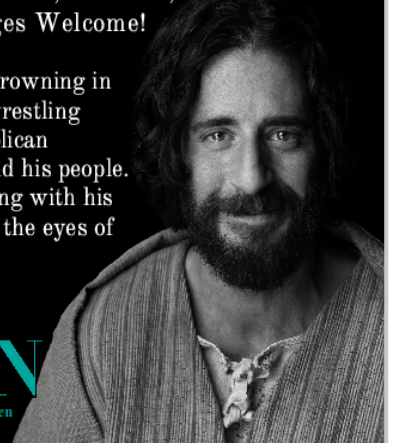
6:30-8:30pm Tuesdays

• October 5 • October 12 • October 19 •
October 26 • November 2

This dynamic series will take place outside in front of the Church. BYO Chairs, Blankets, & Snacks.
All Ages Welcome!

A charismatic fisherman drowning in debt. A troubled woman wrestling with demons. A gifted publican ostracized by his family and his people. A religious leader struggling with his beliefs. See Jesus through the eyes of those who met him.

The CHOSEN
<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>



Enter
to Win

Knights of Columbus

Wine Raffle

\$10 each

or 3 for \$25

**50% of proceeds
benefit**

Faith Formation!



September 23 - November 1
40 DAYS FOR LIFE®



We will be covering prayer shifts
**from 7am to 7pm every Monday
through October 31st**



Planned Parenthood, 1685 E. Main Street, El Cajon
(near Greenfield and E. Main St., next to McDonalds)

For information, please contact:

Pat Riggs

Becky

IN the month of October, the Catholic Church observes "Respect Life Month." During this Year of St. Joseph, the Holy Father invites us to reflect more deeply on how St. Joseph loved Jesus with a Father's heart. Joseph's unhesitating adherence to God's will as he faithfully and lovingly protected the Christ Child and the Blessed Mother bears witness to our own call as Christians to safeguard God's gift of human life.

THE 2020 Census shows the US population grew at the slowest pace since the 1930's. Every 30 seconds a baby is lost to abortion – 63 million abortions since 1973. At 6 weeks, the baby's heart has been beating for three weeks. The foundation of the brain, spinal cord and nervous system were made even before that. Two weeks earlier tiny arms began to bud and legs followed a few days later. A week later the color developed in the baby's eyes. Right now fingers and toes are making their appearance and the brain is developing 3 parts: one to experience emotion and understand language, one for hearing, and one for seeing. "The human life is sacred and the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society."

IN September of 2021, the San Diego Board of Supervisors passed a proposal stating that San Diego is a "champion for reproductive freedom." Governor Newsom signed legislation strengthening access to reproductive health care. He also invited anyone who is considering abortion to come to California where abortion is accessible to all.

MANY of you are already praying daily for an end to abortion. I want to especially invite you to be physically present with us at Planned Parenthood for one hour on Mondays. Our physical presence sends a strong message to our community that this prayer witness is important. It is vital work. One thing we know for sure: the more people pray together the stronger our prayers are. **For more information, or to sign up to pray, please contact Pat Riggs.**



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

1. Domestic Violence is any pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner.

2. It may physical, sexual, mental, emotional, financial, or spiritual.

3. One in 4 women experience some degree of Domestic Violence

4. One in 5 teens experience some form of dating violence

5. The U.S. Catholic Bishops state in "When I Call for Help,"

"As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified."

4. Learn More at:

pvm.archchicago.org/human-dignity-solidarity/domestic-violence-outreach



Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast

Sunday,
October 17th
10:00am

Pancakes,
Eggs, Sausage,
Coffee,
Orange Juice

Adults: \$7
Kids 11 & under
eat free!



LOOK FOR THE **Yellow Vests**

October 16th-17th

Join the St. Luke Knights of Columbus for their annual Tootsie Roll Fundraiser! All proceeds benefit persons with intellectual or developmental challenges at Noah Homes, St. Madeleine Sophie Center and The Arc East County Training Center.



Your 2021 Co-Chairs:
Mike Wasyliv
Tom Kelly

Children's Liturgy of the Word
9 am & 11:30 am
Sunday Masses



Bring the Children!

HELP WANTED for the 9 am Mass!
Call or Contact Jenny@stluke-ec.org

Parish Directory and Observances

PARISH DIRECTORY

Parish Life Director: Jane Cruz Alfano (619) 442-1697 x103

Parish Priest: Fr. Don Coleman (619) 442-1697

Deacon Emeritus: Dennie Nickell (619) 442-1697

Deacon: Jerry Stenovec (619) 334-1191

Financial Assistant: Tina Miller (619) 442-1697 x110

bkkpr@thechurchofstluke.org

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facman@thechurchofstluke.org

Web Master: Madeline Flores

madeline@stluke-ec.org

Choir Director: Colin McColl

Organist: Susan Paul

FAITH FORMATION

Catechetical Ministry: Jane Cruz Alfano, Parish Life Director
(619) 442-1697 x103 pldir@thechurchofstluke.org

Coordinator of RCIA: Dcn. Jerry Stenovec

gerald.m.stenovec@boeing.com

Coordinators of PreK-5 Faith Formation:

Michelle Hayford; Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

(619) 442-1697 x 105 • CGS@thechurchofstluke.org

Jennifer Kroeger; Sacramental Preparation

(619) 442-1697 x 104 • K-5reled@thechurchofstluke.org

Coordinator of Middle & High School Faith Formation,

Youth & Young Adult Ministry: Evelyn Beale

(619) 442-2515 x106 • youthreled@thechurchofstluke.org

MINISTRIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Altar Servers: Jane Fuzak

Baptism Class: Dcn. Jerry Stenovec

Church Cleaning Crew: Peggy Nelson

Cub/Boy Scout Religious Emblems:

Shannon Vint

Domestic Violence: Rich Warcholik

Eucharistic Adoration: Mike Wasyliv

Eucharistic Ministers: Kathy LeMay

Knights of Columbus: Don Mercurio, GK

Lectors: Susan Smothers

Marriage Preparation: Jane Cruz Alfano

(619) 442-1697 ext.103

Marriage Support: Rich Warcholik

Ministry to the Sick and Homebound:

Dcn. Jerry Stenovec

Outreach Ministry: Ken Stempien (619) 442-1697

Prayer Chain: Nancy Adema

Culture of Life: Pat Riggs

Scrip: Ed Broadhurst

Small Church Communities:

Jane Cruz Alfano (619) 442-1697 x103

Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

Mike Wasyliv

St. Luke Business Network: Cathy March

Ushers: Susan Smothers

JOANIE MAITILASSO, Bulletin Editor

Office Phone: (619) 442-1697 • Fax (619) 442-2293

Office hours: **Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm**

secretary@thechurchofstluke.org

DEADLINE FOR BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS: MONDAY AT NOON

Please call the church office with any inquiries.

Thank you!

This Week at St. Luke

Calendar events are subject to change. For additional calendar and event information, please visit www.thechurchofstluke.org

SATURDAY, 10/9 *St. Denis & Companions, Martyrs; St. John Leonardi*

3:30pm Reconciliation

5:00pm Mass

7:30pm High School Core Team Event—offsite

SUNDAY, 10/10

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Rosary for Peace Sunday

8:15am Family/Pro-Life Rosary

9:00am Mass

10:00am High School Youth Group

10:15am Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Levels I & II

11:30am Mass

11:30am High School Core Team Meeting

MONDAY, 10/11

St. John XXIII, Pope; Columbus Day

2:30pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Levels I & II

4:30pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level III

4:30pm Middle School Ministry

TUESDAY, 10/12

4:30pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level III

6:30pm Fall Movie Series: Chosen

7:00pm Knights of Columbus General Meeting

WEDNESDAY, 10/13

7:30am Mass

4:00pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level I

4:30pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level II

7:00pm Knights of Columbus Business Meeting

THURSDAY, 10/14

St. Callistus I, Pope and Martyr

7:30am Mass

4:30pm Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level II

FRIDAY, 10/15

St. Teresa of Avila

7:30am Mass

SATURDAY, 10/16

St. Hedwig; St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

Annual Tootsie Roll Drive

3:30pm Reconciliation

5:00pm Mass

SUNDAY, 10/17

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Annual Tootsie Roll Drive

8:15am Family/Pro-Life Rosary

9:00am Mass

10:00am Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast

10:15am Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Levels I & II

11:30am Mass

MONDAY, 10/18

❖ *Feast of St. Luke* ❖

Please visit <https://www.thechurchofstluke.org> for additional calendar events

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

"Restrictions lifted, but caution prevails."

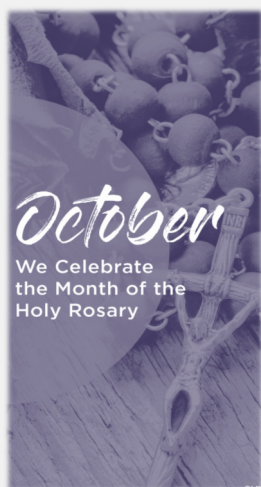
(Updated Aug. 4 2021) Since mid-June, when COVID-19 positivity rates fell to .7% (their lowest rate since the beginning of the Pandemic) and Bishop McElroy was able to lift all the Mass restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of the disease, two things have happened:

The highly contagious COVID-19 Delta variant has become the dominant strain of the disease in California and positivity rates have increased more than 10 times, topping 7.2% at the end of July.

Health authorities in San Diego and Imperial Counties are following CDC guidance that recommends everyone wear a face covering in indoor public settings, whether they have been vaccinated or not.

The Diocese continues to urge that anyone medically able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine do so and that anyone unvaccinated continue to use a mask around other people. The COVID-19 rules currently observed in our diocese are:

- **Masks are recommended at Mass and other indoor diocesan functions for everyone, regardless of vaccination status;**
- All restrictions on capacity and spacing for worship have been lifted;
- All limitations on meetings and social activities have been lifted;
- Distribution of the Eucharist on the tongue is now allowed, although it will continue to be available in the hand. The reintroduction of the shared cup will be determined sometime in the future;
- The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has ended. Some members will continue be exempt, however.
- It is recommended that non-family members bringing the Eucharist to the sick be vaccinated.
- Children under the age of 14 in formation classes and students in Catholic Children schools will have to continue to wear masks because is there no vaccine yet available for the bulk of these youngsters.



Please join us for a
**Pro-Life/Family
 Rosary**
Sundays at 8:15am
(before the 9am Mass)

CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

Why Do We Do That?

Question: Why are Catholics required to get married in a church, and not outside or at a different venue?

Answer: Because the sacrament of marriage is a sacred covenant between the husband and wife, the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony is much more than a social or family event. So, the rule that the sacrament be celebrated in a church is a way to help reinforce the deeper meaning of Christian marriage. To help make this clearer, the Church's tradition also normally includes the celebration of the Mass when the marriage is being celebrated between two Catholics, and so a church or chapel is the ideal setting. For special reasons — which vary from diocese to diocese — the local bishop can give permission for the marriage to be celebrated in another suitable place.

RECOGNIZING GOD IN
 EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Everyday Stewardship

If Heaven Were Like Harvard

There's no getting around it: life on earth can seem easier if you're rich. Most of the bodily and material needs a person could have are fulfilled if you've got a little bit of money behind you. So why doesn't this same theory apply to entering the kingdom of Heaven? Why isn't Heaven like an Ivy League school, where a connection and a hasty tuition check might open a lot of doors?

When you think about it, the virtues required to enter Heaven — things like charity and justice and courage — should be even closer within the grasp of those who never had to worry about where their food is coming from. In theory, your capacity for good works should only increase with the resources at your disposal.

The same is true for stewardship potential. Let's say I've got a lot of talent. Maybe I've got a lot of free time. On paper, it should be easier for me to give freely of these gifts, because I have the luxury that eluded the widow and her two coins: I can see my ample gift being put into action, when so many can only offer what they have and remind themselves that God sees it and appreciates it.

But here we get into the mess of humanity: if we have a lot of something, it means we have a lot of something we could use any way we want. And then we hear the whisper of the serpent: *Think of what this (money, time, talent) could do for you.* May we pray for God to give us the heart of the widow, no matter our resources.

— Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

A Walk Through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation

Week One: Introductory Rites and Concluding Rites

Over the next three weeks across the diocese, we will be conducting a "Walk through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation".

The Mass is the ritual Catholics celebrate in response to Jesus' command to "do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19). One of the basic, distinctive marks of ritual prayer is that Catholics know what is going to happen next. We do things over and over. When the priest says, "The Lord be with you," without any thought or hesitation the congregation responds, "And with your Spirit." The priest says, "Let us pray," and the congregation stands up.

Our daily lives have their rituals also: There are set ways of greeting people, eating, responding to a text. And when we are accustomed to a certain way of doing things, we seldom ask why we do it that way. In the Eucharist, too, we have many ritual actions which we perform without asking why.

What is the Mass?

A good way to describe the Mass is to say that it is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday made sacramentally present today in ritual. It is not merely a meal which *reminds* us of the Last Supper, or a Passion play which helps recall Good Friday, or a sunrise service which celebrates the Lord's Resurrection. The Mass is, therefore, our opportunity as Catholic Christians to praise and thank God for the gift of our salvation in Christ Jesus. In short, the Mass is one way in which we share in the Pascal Mystery (the Passion, Death and Resurrection) of Christ.

The basic shape of the ritual of the Mass can be described as a meal. This is not to say it is "just another meal" or that we are ignoring the Mass as sacrifice. Not at all. The point is, the shape of the Mass, even when viewed as sacrifice, is that of a meal.

When friends gather for a meal, they sit and talk. Eventually they move to the table, say grace, pass the food and eat and drink, and finally take their leave and go home. On our walk through the Mass, we will follow this same map: we will see ritual acts of 1) gathering, 2) storytelling, 3) meal sharing, and 4) commissioning.

We will focus today on the gathering or Introductory Rites of the Mass and the commissioning or Concluding Rites of the Mass. Next week we will look at the storytelling, or what we call the Liturgy of the Word. And the following week we will focus on meal sharing, or the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Gathering (The Introductory Rites)

Coming together, assembling, and forming community is at the heart of our Sunday worship. The reason behind each of the ritual actions of the first part of the Mass can be found in this word: gathering. The purpose of these rites is to bring us together into one Body, ready to listen and break bread together. Note that God is the one who has summoned us to this celebration of the Eucharist. We are present in response to His invitation.

Genuflection. In medieval Europe, it was a custom to go down on one knee (to genuflect) before a king or person of rank. This secular mark of honor gradually entered the Church and people began to genuflect to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle before entering the pew. If the tabernacle is not located in the sanctuary, it is proper for members of the assembly to express their reverence for the altar with an even older custom and bow to it before entering the pew.

Posture, song. When the Mass begins everyone stands up. Standing is the traditional posture of the Christian at prayer that expresses our attentiveness to the Word of God and our readiness to carry it out. Often, we begin by singing together to unite our thoughts and our voices in a common word, rhythm and melody.

Greeting. We begin with the Sign of the Cross, reminding ourselves of our Baptism, and then the priest will greet us, saying, "The Lord be with you." This prayer reminds us of Christ's declaration that "...where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). The ritual response to this greeting is always the formula, "And with your Spirit", which acknowledges that the priest has received the Spirit of God through his ordination to the priesthood.

Penitential Rite. All the other ritual acts of this first part of the Mass are intended to gather us together into a worshipping assembly. In the Penitential Rite, we are invited to call to mind our sins and the one (the Lord) sent to save us from the power of sin. While this Rite lacks the efficacy of sacramental absolution, we believe that through the reception of Holy Communion our less serious (venial) sins are forgiven.

Glory to God. Just as the angels proclaimed the praise of God at the birth of Christ, saying "Glory to God in the Highest" (Luke 2:13-14), we make our own declaration of praise and worship of the Holy Trinity in singing or reciting the hymn, "Glory to God."

Opening Prayer. At the close of this first part of the Mass the priest will ask us to join our minds in prayer with the invitation, "Let us pray." As the priest pauses, we offer our intentions. Then he will collect (or gather) them all into one prayer, to which we all respond "Amen," a Hebrew word for "So be it."

Commissioning (Concluding Rites)

The burdens we have laid down at the door of the church for this Eucharist, we know we must now bear again—but now strengthened by this Eucharist and this community.

Blessing and Dismissal. We bow our heads to receive a blessing. As the priest names the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we make the Sign of the Cross. The priest or deacon then dismisses the assembly: "Go in peace." And we give our liturgical "yes" by saying, "Thanks be to God."

Living the Eucharist in the world. We leave the assembly and the church building carrying Christ within us. What happens in our lives during the week gives deeper meaning to the ritual actions we have celebrated at Mass, whether it is with family, work with the poor or just plain work. It is only in relation to our daily lives that the full meaning of the ritual actions of the Mass becomes clear to us. We bring Christ to the world.

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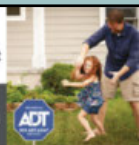
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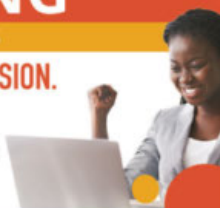


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