

What do we gain by participating in a Sunday Mass?

Blessings we receive from our active participation in a Sunday Mass. The parish community gathers for the Sunday Eucharistic celebration or Holy Mass to “*observe the Lord’s Day holy*” as demanded by the third commandment. Holy Mass is a double remembrance. We remember, celebrate and make present Jesus’ Last Supper as commanded by him “*Do this in memory of me.*” On the altar, we also remember and re-present the death and resurrection of Jesus as reminded by St. Paul: “*Every time, then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes*” (1 Corinthians 11:26), by using liturgical prayers, signs and symbols, and we offer the one-time Calvary sacrifice of Jesus to our Heavenly Father for the remission of our sins. We achieve these goals during the Holy Mass in seven steps. 1) We praise and worship God by singing and by responding to the prayers by the priest. 2) We ask God’s pardon and forgiveness for our sins. 3) We thank God for all the blessings received during the course of the past week. 4) We listen to God’s words in the three Scripture readings and in the homily preached by the priest. 5) We present our needs and petitions for the new week before God on the altar at the intercessory prayers, 6) We surrender and offer our lives and all our activities to God during the offertory, accepting Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior and surrendering our lives to Him with repentant hearts. 7) We recharge our spiritual batteries, gain spiritual nourishment and deepen our personal relationship with Jesus by sacramentally receiving his resurrected Body and Blood in Holy Communion. The structure of the Eucharistic celebration or Holy Mass is organized to achieve all these seven goals.

People who think that they don’t get anything from the Holy Mass forget all these blessings they receive by their active participation in the Eucharistic celebration.

Structure of the Holy Mass or Eucharistic celebration

What are the parts of the Holy Mass and what do we do during the Holy Mass?

The Eucharistic celebration consists of two main parts: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. The first part is liturgy of the Word. We prepare for this part of the Holy Mass by confessing our sins and seeking God’s forgiveness and by praising and worshipping God singing the “Gloria.” In the liturgy of the Word God speaks to us through the sacred Scripture and we listen to God and thank Him by singing the responsorial psalms. Thus we prepare our minds and hearts for the worthy celebration of the Eucharist. It is followed by our presentation of our needs in “intercessory prayers” and offering of our lives to God symbolized by the offering of bread and wine and our tithing in the “offertory.”

The second part of the Holy Mass is the liturgy of the Holy Eucharist. It is in the liturgy of the Eucharist that we do a double remembrance. Holy Mass is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday made present today in ritual. First, we remember and reenact the Last Supper as Jesus commanded his disciples at the Last Supper, “*Do this in memory of me.*” Here when the priest says the words of Jesus at the consecration, “*this is my body*”, “*this is my blood*” the Holy Spirit transforms our offering of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the risen Jesus. Second, we remember and reenact the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary and his resurrection, and offer him to God the Father for the remission of our sins. Jesus offered only one sacrifice by his death on the cross. On the altar, the priest is offering that single sacrifice of Jesus to God the Father, using liturgical

prayers, signs and symbols. Thus we are following the instruction given by St. Paul "*Every time, then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes*" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Then we share in God's life and surrender our lives to Him by properly receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. Finally, Jesus gives us his blessing through his priest, challenging us to bear witness to him and his gospel throughout the week in our daily lives.