



PART FOUR THE CONCLUDING RITES

WE COME TOGETHER TO BE SENT TO BRING CHRIST TO THE WORLD

(Contd. from Part Three) Breaking and Sharing: The Communion Rite

This is the final part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Within the Communion Rite we take part in the final two actions of **BREAKING** and **SHARING**.

At the beginning of the Rite, we **stand** with one another to pray the *** Our Father**. This is the prayer that unites all Christians. As children of God, we can 'dare' to call on our God in an intimate term of relationship – Father. Within this prayer we ask for our daily bread. Jesus is the Bread of Life who feeds our real hungers in a way physical bread never can. And just as we ask God to forgive our sins, we declare in this prayer that we, too, will be people of forgiveness towards others.

Our care for others brings us to the *** Rite of Peace**. Here we actively pray for unity and the peace of Christ in our hearts, families, Church, community, and the whole human family. We demonstrate the authenticity of our prayer by sharing a Sign of Peace with one another. Our prayer is not just lip service; it must find expression in actions that mean what we pray. This is a powerful reminder to us of the call to be at peace with one another as we receive Holy Communion – the sacrament of unity. **With whom do I need to make peace? How can I be a builder of peace in my circle of influence?**

The singing, or saying, of the *** Lamb of God** is accompanied by the action of **BREAKING** the consecrated Host so that it can be shared among us – just as Jesus did at the Last Supper. Jesus is our Lamb of God, the one who sacrificed himself for our salvation. Before receiving Holy Communion, we **kneel** and in the invitation to Communion, with eyes of faith, we *** Behold the Lamb of God**. Like the centurion in the Bible, we acknowledge our unworthiness but also our belief in the healing mercy of God.

In the *** Procession with reception of Holy Communion** we come forward, **walking** as people of faith. We underscore our unity with a shared **hymn**. We are a pilgrim people on our journey to God and this is a procession we do together. Here the ultimate nourishment for our journey is **SHARED** with us. The minister of Holy Communion makes a statement of faith to us: 'The Body of Christ / The Blood of Christ'. And we affirm this faith in our response of 'Amen'. We are called to receive so great a gift with **reverence** and respect, conscious of what it is we are saying 'Amen / yes' to and then spending time in quiet prayer. **How do I receive the Body of Christ at Mass?**

We **stand** and conclude this part of the Mass with a *** Prayer after Communion**, praying that this Communion will bear fruit in our daily lives.

"In each of our lives Jesus comes as the Bread of Life - to be eaten, to be consumed by us. This is how he loves us. Then Jesus comes into our human life – as the hungry one, the Other – hoping to be fed with the bread of our life; our hearts by loving, and our hands by serving." (St Teresa of Calcutta)

"Nourished by the bread of life, we become a living Eucharist; in a word, we become what we receive." (Pope Francis)



THE SHAPE OF THE MASS

Introductory Rites

The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Concluding Rites



“Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.” (Pope Benedict)

The Concluding Rites: The End is just the Beginning!

The purpose of the Concluding Rites is to send us out to put into effect what we have just celebrated! They are necessarily brief!!

We have met Christ in one another; we have listened to God speaking to us today and we have received the Body of Christ into our very selves. Now we have to go from here and *be the Body of Christ*. Now we have to go and give witness in our lives to the faith we have expressed and deepened.

So, the end is truly the beginning – we are not just dismissed, we are sent! Each one of us is sent with a purpose, a mission. **Our mission is to be the face, heart, and hands of Christ for others in the individual life we find ourselves.**

What we have celebrated in the Mass now must find an echo in how we are in our homes, workplaces, schools, and community.

Exploring the Concluding Rites

* **Brief Announcements:** We begin to make our transition from this sacred place with *brief* notices, perhaps highlighting key events and opportunities in the parish in the week ahead.

* **Greeting and blessing:** The greeting, ‘The Lord be with you’, is a timely reminder that, as we leave, we go with Christ – we are not alone in our endeavours. And we go with the blessing of God upon us. God continues to be our strength and source of life. In particular Masses during the year, the blessing may be preceded by a prayer over the people or by a more solemn form of blessing in which the people respond three times during the blessing with Amen, ‘so be it’. Our last action is to mark ourselves with the **Sign of the Cross**, the sign of our faith. This is the faith we live not just for a few minutes on a Sunday but in every moment.

* **Dismissal:** There is a choice of four alternative dismissals that can be used. Each of them is intended to express the missionary nature of what it is to be a member of the Church. Go forth the Mass is ended; Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord; Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life; Go in peace. *We go in order to do...*

* **People’s Response:** Our ‘Thanks be to God’ is a final statement of praise and thanks for meeting and being with Christ in this celebration of the Mass.

