

## **A Simple Explanation of the Mass for Visitors**

The Evangelization Committee of Sts. John and Elizabeth mission in Grayson, Ky., wanted to help visitors who had never attended Mass feel more comfortable. Research failed to turn up something they felt was appropriate; most "aids," they discovered, were too wordy or too confusing. So they created their own one-sided card, 8-1/2 x 11, that lists the major parts of the Mass with a concise, easily understood explanation. The content follows.

### **THE ORDER OF MASS**

#### **INTRODUCTORY RITE**

**ENTRANCE SONG:** A song to praise God and bring the community together.

**GREETING:** After the Entrance song all make the sign of the cross as a reminder of our Baptism and belief in the Trinity.

**PENITENTIAL RITE:** The priest invites the people to recall their sins and to repent of them in silence. We use the invocation of "Lord, have mercy" and "Christ, have mercy" in triplicate form.

**GLORIA:** Joyful prayer that praises our Trinitarian God. The prayer is either sung or recited.

**OPENING PRAYER:** The priest and people pray silently for a while. Then the priest says or sings the opening prayer. Everyone responds with "Amen."

#### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** There are three readings from the Bible. The first is taken from the Old Testament; the second is usually from a letter of St. Paul; and the third is from the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. Between the readings there are songs or prayers of response and praise.

**HOMILY:** The application of God's Word to our daily lives based on the Scripture readings of the day.

**THE CREED or PROFESSION OF FAITH:** The community professes their belief in the mystery of our Trinitarian God.

**PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:** Prayers of intercession asking for God's help.

#### **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

***Eucharist means "giving thanks." We remember Jesus, we sacrifice with Him, and we share His holy meal.***

**PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS:** The altar is set and the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward. These gifts will become the Body and Blood of Jesus during the Consecration. A song may be sung at this time as we also offer ourselves to God.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER** The high point of the Mass. It begins with the Preface, a prayer of thanksgiving. At the end of the Preface, we sing the "Holy, Holy, Holy," which has its roots in Isaiah 6:3. The Eucharistic Prayer includes praise to the Father, prayer for the Spirit, and the Last Supper. After the consecration, the priest invites the people to proclaim the mystery of faith. This is usually sung. The Eucharistic Prayer continues with a memorial prayer, prayer for the church, and prayer for all who have died.

**AMEN** (means "I Believe"): This is a sung response to the end of the Eucharistic Prayer.

### **COMMUNION RITE**

**OUR FATHER:** To prepare for Communion, all stand and join together in praying the Lord's Prayer.

**SIGN OF PEACE:** The priest prays for peace and unity and invites all present to extend an appropriate sign of peace to each other. Often the words, "The peace of Christ be with you," are used.

**BREAKING OF THE BREAD:** The Body and Blood of Jesus the Christ are prepared for reception by the Faithful. Let this remind you of the stranger at Emmaus. During the breaking of the bread, everyone says or sings the "Lamb of God."

**HOLY COMMUNION:** Those who are in union with the Catholic Church come to receive Jesus in the form of the sacred bread and the holy cup. During this time a communion song may be sung.

**CONCLUDING RITE:** The Mass concludes with a blessing and a dismissal for each person to do good works, praising and blessing the Lord. A concluding song is sung.

Permission is granted to reprint and use the above "The Order of Mass," provided credit is given as follows: Originally created by the Evangelization Committee of Sts. John and Elizabeth Catholic Church, the Glenmary Home Missioners' ([www.glenmary.org](http://www.glenmary.org)) mission parish in Grayson, Ky.