

How is Holy Communion received?

Holy Communion is always received on the tongue, and (unless you have a physical constraint) while kneeling. Acquaint yourself with the extraordinarily beautiful blessing the priest gives to you as he makes the sign of the cross and places the sacred Host on your tongue: *Corpus Dómini nostri Jesu Christi custódiat ánimam tuam in vitam æternam. Amen.* (May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen.) Note that you don't answer "Amen" before receiving the sacred Host, as the priest says this for you.

What are the prayers after Mass?

After Mass is over, the priest (at Low Masses only) may lead the congregation in the Leonine prayers prescribed by Pope Leo XIII in 1884. These are normally said in the vernacular, but may sometimes be said in Latin, depending on local custom.

What are the 'ordinary' and the 'propers' of the Mass?

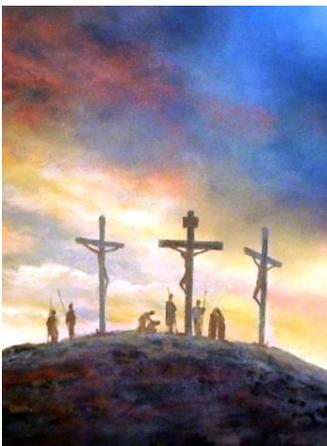
The *ordinary* (or *common*) of the Mass is what is prayed at every Mass: the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Offertory*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, and the *Canon* of the Mass. The *propers* are the prayers and readings proper to that Sunday or feast day: (*Introit*, *Collect*, *Gradual*, *Tract*, *Offertory*, *Communion* and *Postcommunion* prayers).

Do I need to get a 1962 Missal?

Not immediately, but eventually yes, as it will help you get the most out of assisting at Mass. Baronius Press, Angelus Press, and the FSSP all publish 1962 missals.

What's the most important thing in attending this Mass?

The most important thing is to open our hearts to Almighty God, fully trusting that He will show us what we need in order to be closer to Him through this venerable liturgy, what Fr. Faber called "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven".



Picture then the High Priest Christ leaving the sacristy of heaven for the altar of Calvary. He has already put on the vestment of our human nature, the maniple of our suffering, the stole of priesthood, the chasuble of the Cross. Calvary is his cathedral; the rock of Calvary is the altar stone; the sun turning to red is the sanctuary lamp; Mary and John are the living side altars; the Host is His Body; the wine is His Blood. He is upright as Priest, yet He is prostrate as Victim. His Mass is about to begin.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

Frequently Asked Questions

about the Traditional Latin Mass



New to the Traditional Latin Mass? This leaflet is for you!

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass always is and will be the perfect offering to the Father by the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The *Traditional Latin Mass* is making a return throughout the world, and more and more of the Faithful are curious about it. Many wish to find out more about how to participate in the Mass that sustained and nourished our forefathers over so many centuries.

If you are new to the Traditional Latin Mass, understand that you have been invited by Almighty God Himself through a particular grace to be motivated to attend it. He has much to reveal to you by your attending this Mass, even if you at first find it somewhat confusing.

What is the origin of the Traditional Latin Mass?

Our divinely inspired liturgical heritage which is manifest in the Traditional Latin Mass has been guarded with great love and care by Holy Church, having been received from Christ Himself, and from the religious practices He followed in the synagogue and the temple, which in turn stretch far back to the practices handed down to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And while the bloody sacrifices of the Old Covenant were replaced with Christ's own death on the cross, the Apostles changed little of the ancient practices of their faith in celebrating the early Mass, except to add the rite instituted by our Saviour at the Last Supper.

Developments in the Traditional Latin Mass since Apostolic times have been the culmination of a slow and gentle process of organic and incremental growth through the centuries certainly dating back to the reigns of Pope Saint Gelasius I (AD 492-6) and Pope Saint Gregory the Great (AD 590-604).

In the 16th century, in light of the momentous work of the *Council of Trent*, Pope Saint **Pius V** recognised the need to codify the holy liturgy that had been handed down in order to safeguard it from the introduction of errors. So in 1570 he issued a carefully revised edition of the Missal, and this link to the Council of Trent gave rise to the term *Tridentine Mass*. It's important to know that this was not in any way a new Mass, and Pius V also ruled that any rite over 200 years old could continue to be used, e.g. *Dominican, Sarum, Braga, Carthusian, Carmelite* rites.

Since that time, revised editions of the Missal were issued five times, in 1604, 1634, 1884, 1920 and 1962. The handing down of the sacred liturgy over so many centuries is reflected in the term "Traditional Mass".

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI ruled in *Summorum Pontificum* that this form of the Mass is to be regarded, legally speaking, as a form of the Roman Rite (with Pope Paul's Missal of 1970, assembled from various sources by a committee at his behest, being regarded as another form of the same Rite). Hence the term *Extraordinary Form* or *Usus Antiquior* (earlier use) of the Roman Rite.

What does “assisting at Mass” mean?

This term has been used for many years to describe what we do when attending Mass. The theological meaning of the sacred priesthood is manifold, but a central point is that a man is ordained a priest specifically to offer sacrifice, referring to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass where the priest immolates the Sacred Victim (Our Lord Jesus Christ) in an unbloody manner on the altar during the Consecration. The laity assist at Mass not in that they help the priest because the priest needs no help, but rather it means to participate mentally, spiritually, and physically in the sacred mysteries in the role proper to the non-ordained. Another way to say it is that the laity, through the sacrament of Baptism, are consecrated to a common, holy priesthood, sharing in the priesthood of Christ and along with the ordained priest at Mass we offer the Divine Victim to the Father. All the Faithful, both the immolating priest and the laity assisting, join ranks in completing the Holy Sacrifice by the priestly action of consuming the Victim through reception of Holy Communion.

Why does the priest have his back to the people?

The priest and people together face east, towards the Lord. The unified direction of prayer fully expresses the meaning of the Mass - the priest leading the Faithful towards the eternal goal of Heaven. The priest acting *in persona Christi* in the person of Christ offers the sacrifice that is Christ, to God, facing God. Catholic tradition sees Christ as coming from the East, the direction of the rising sun. This orientation also makes the priests' personality fade away, as he becomes but a servant to the sacred act that he performs according to the ancient rubrics.

Why so much silence?

The language of love is not merely a spoken one, nor does it require a great deal of activity to convey its meaning. Silence has always been associated with profound reverence. Much of the Traditional Latin Mass is said in a low voice by the priest, because our liturgical heritage involves sacred mysteries which are prayed inaudibly by the priest. The silent parts of the Mass are opportunities for contemplation of the great mystery of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The richness of the Extraordinary Form consists of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experiences which are meant to bring us to the highest possible level of unity with Almighty God.

Do I have to learn Latin?

No, not at all. The altar boys make the responses on behalf of the whole congregation so that we may concentrate all of our attention on uniting ourselves wholly with the sacrifice on the altar. After you have attended this Mass for a while, you'll find it easier to follow. Take some time before Mass to read the excellent English translations opposite the Latin text in the missal of your choice, and meditate on them. It can be good to simply watch the sacred actions of the priest while contemplating their meaning.

What is the significance of Latin?

Latin is the official language of Holy Church, and her sacred language as well, and this was firmly reinforced by Vatican II (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). Latin was introduced into the Mass very early on. For a brief period before that, Greek was used, and this is preserved in the *Kyrie*. And Hebrew words are also present, such as *Amen, Alleluia, Hosanna* and *Sabaoth*. These are the three languages used for the inscription on the Cross (John 19:20). Theological meanings are very precise when expressed in Latin, which is an unchanging language. Praying in Latin helps prevent the secular from invading the sanctuary, and helps protect sacred rites from political agendas which might rob them of their true meaning through the vernacular.

Isn't it divisive to use a different language?

No, in fact the opposite is true, it's unitive. The vernacular divides the Faithful, but the Latin language of Holy Church unites them across the earth. The Catholic Faithful of all races, languages and cultures can worship side by side. When the sacred liturgy is offered in Latin, there's no need for English Masses, Irish Masses, Polish Masses, Spanish Masses, French, Mandarin, Russian or other Masses. Any Catholic from anywhere in the world can walk into the Extraordinary Form and not only immediately know and understand what is going on, but also connect into the liturgical heritage that we share with all the generations that have gone before us.