

EMBRACING THE CHANGES

Beginning Sunday, November 27, 2011, the First Sunday of Advent, there will be changes in the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Mass. The changes will involve some of the responses of the congregation, some of the prayers of the assembly, and the prayers of the priest. These are found in the Roman Missal, known by many as the Sacramentary, the book used by the priest when presiding at Mass.

Preparing for these changes will provide us with an opportunity to examine and renew our celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy that stands at the heart of Catholic Christian Life.

This preparation will allow us an opportunity to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the Liturgy, nurture liturgical practices that will lead to fuller liturgical participation, and celebrate the Liturgy with renewed purpose.

We will begin by looking at the parts of the Mass.

The Mass follows a “fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1346).

Though the Mass is one unified act of worship, it consists of many parts, each with its own purpose and meaning. The entries in this article follow the order in which the parts occur in the Mass.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Introductory Rites: “The rites that precede the Liturgy of the Word, namely, the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the *Kyrie*, the *Glória in excélsis* (*Glory to God in the highest*) and Collect, have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily”

(*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* [GIRM], no. 46)

Collect: “The [opening] prayer . . . through which the character of the celebration finds expression” (GIRM, no. 54). This prayer literally “collects” the prayers of all who are gathered into one prayer led by the priest celebrant.

Liturgy of the Word: “The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of the readings from Sacred Scripture together with the chants occurring between them. As for the Homily, the Profession of Faith and the Universal Prayer (*you may know this as the Prayers of the Faithful or the General Intercessions*), they develop and conclude it” (GIRM, no. 55).

Creed: A brief, normative summary statement or profession of Christian faith. The Nicene Creed, which is recited or chanted at Mass, comes from the Councils of Nicea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381).

Based upon Roman Missal Formational Materials provided by the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "2010.