

## Discovering The Riches of The Mass

### Session # 4: The Liturgy of the Eucharist Part 2 and The Concluding Rite – DVD Notes

#### T1. The Communion Rite:

**S1. The Lord's Prayer (Our Father):** This begins our final preparations, where we are about to enter into the most intimate union we could ever have with God here on earth – in Holy Communion. We begin our final preparations with the Words our Savior taught us – the Lord's Prayer.

A. God as our Father: The one Introduction in the New Roman Missal to this Prayer by the Priest is, "At the Savior's Command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say. ... Our Father." That line is striking – we dare to say. What is so daring about saying the "Our Father?" Most of us have grown up praying the "Our Father."

1. Let's look at the Biblical background, the Jews viewed God as the Father of Israel, the Father of the chosen people as a whole. But it was not so common for a particular individual to address God as his Father. And here Jesus tells us to call on God as our very Father. If this prayer was given in Jesus' original language, Aramaic, He may have actually used the word Abba for Father as He did elsewhere e.g. Mark 14:36. The word Abba has very endearing tone to it. It implies an intimate relationship with one's father. Some people would translate it like daddy. So we could call God our Father is astonishing. This is not figurative term use to say, God is like our Father.
2. St. John in 1 John 3:1 underscores the profound realism with our relationship with God as Father. He truly becomes our Father by grace. We truly are His Sons and Daughters. We really become in some way His sons and daughters. 1 John 3:1 – 'See what love the Father has for us that we should be called sons of God and so we are.' St. John did not say, isn't wonderful that we can be called sons of God. We are not just called sons of God; we are called sons of God because we really are sons of God.
3. This is point to the unique divine life that we have dwelling within us by virtue of our Baptisms. We have the life of the Son of God dwelling within us. This is a Catholic understanding of sanctifying grace. What is Grace? Grace according the Catechism is Christ's divine life dwelling within us. We have the life of the Son of God dwelling within us. This is profoundly real.
  - (a) The life of the eternal Son of God. The life that gives Himself totally in love the Father for all eternity. That Son of God that took on flesh and dwelt among us and continue to give Himself radically to the Father. Ultimately as seen on the Cross, where He gives His whole life to the Father. That life of the Son of God is dwelling in each of us by virtue of our Baptism. So we can begin to love not with our own weak fallen human frail love that is tainted my much pride, selfness, greed, but we can begin to love others with Christ's love, Christ's life working through us. So we can say like St. Paul, "It is not longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."
  - (b) That is a profound gift that we need, because in our various responsibilities, our missions in life, our fundamental relationships with God, our spouses, our children, our friends, we need God's grace. My wife deserves a lot more than my fallen, selfish human love. She needs Christ working through me to love her. My kids deserve a lot more than my fallen love. They need Christ working through me.
  - (c) In the Our Father, we are reminded God has truly become Our Father and we really have this profound life of the Son within us. So we can love God as

Father way beyond what we could do with our own fallen humanness. We can love one another well beyond what we could do with our own weakness. So we can dare to say ... Our Father. God has come to this intimate relationship with us. He has given us the life of His own Son dwelling within us, so we can truly call Him, Father because He really is. And we really our called sons of God because we really are by grace.

- B. Another line that is significant is "Our." We say Our Father. Now this points to the communal dimension of our Faith. That yes, God is my Father, but if we say Our Father all together what are we saying here - We all our brothers and sisters in the same family of God. We all are united in Jesus Christ and by virtue of this union in Christ's life within us; God is Our Father by grace.
  - 1. By Baptism, you and I have a real profound relationship as brothers and sisters. There are a number of you here that I have never met before, and yet you and I have a more profound bond of brother and sisterhood than I would on the natural level with my siblings. Because we are baptized, we have the life of the Son of God dwelling within us. These are bonds, if we are faithful to our Baptism, we will be bonded together as brothers and sisters.
  - 2. This is real, we really are brothers and sisters, and as we are preparing to receive Holy Communion, we cry out Our Father. We are recognizing the bond we already share; and as we are about to receive our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion, that bond with our God and that bond with each other is about to be strengthen, it is about to be deepened. So we say, Our Father...

## **S2. "For the Kingdom, the power, and the Glory are Yours..."**

- A. We do not have that ending at the end of the Lord's Prayer in Mass and it comes later in the Liturgy. This line you will not find in the Bible (Catholic) in the Prayer Jesus taught us. When He taught the Lord's Prayer in MT 6 and Luke 11, He did not include those words and that is why it is fitting that in the Liturgy we do not include them actually in the Lord's Prayer itself.
- B. We know these words are beautiful and important and the earliest Christians used those words. In the Didache, the teaching of the twelve Apostles, they used those vary words as a prayer of thanksgiving.
- C. Those words reach back into the OT; King David spoke very similar words in 1 Chr 29:10-11. Nearing the end of his live and reign, the great David who was given the great Kingdom, the great covenant promises. He at the end of his life realizes all that he had, all that he accomplished was not of his own power and ability - it was all from God. He gives God the due reverence and praise, he says, "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, and the glory ... thine is the kingdom. These are beautiful Biblical words that fit very well in the Liturgy. So we are recognizing God ultimately – He is the one that deserves all the glory, all the praise, all the honor. He is the true King. We accept and welcome the Kingdom that we just prayed for in the Our Father. We welcome that into our own hearts today.

## **S3. Agnus Dei: "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world"**

- A. This recalls the Passover lamb (Exodus 12). They were told to take a lamb and sacrifice it and those Jews who participated in that ritual were spared the death that came in the tenth plague. Jesus becomes associated with the great Lamb of God who lays down His life so we could be spared and receive the great salvation that Jesus has come to offer us.

- B. Also recalls Isaiah 53:7-11 the passage of the suffering servant. “He would be lead like a lamb to the slaughter ... He would offer is life as an offering for sin ... and the sacrifice would make many righteous.” Jesus is being described, as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world would definitely bring to mind the suffering servant.
- C. Clearest Biblical allusion to this line in the Lamb of God prayer comes from John 1:29. The words of John the Baptist: “Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” First title someone else gives to Jesus in the NT. John the Baptist is the one that identifies Jesus the great lamb led to the slaughter – the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. We echo that every time we pray the Lamb of God.
- D. In the middle of the Eucharist Prayer, Christ’s sacrifice was made present to us. The sacrifice of Christ made present sacramentally in the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the words of institution. So it is fitting that we pray that Jesus is the Lamb of God. We acknowledge that He is the one that took away sins of the world. And it was His very Body and Blood that was offered up on Calvary that we are about to receive in Holy Communion. We are acknowledging that this Jesus’ Body and Blood, but we remember that He gave His Body and Blood for our sins.
- S4.** Before we come up for Holy Communion the Priest holds up the Host and he says these words **“Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” Rev 19:9**
- A. In Rev 19, we are going to see Passover Eucharistic imagery and then we are also going to see some Marital imagery as well.
1. The Passover Imagery in Revelation 19:1,3,4,6 we read:
    - Rev 19:1: a great multitude in heaven, crying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
    - Rev 19:3: "Alleluia! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."
    - Rev 19:4: the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Alleluia!"
    - Rev 19:6: He hears a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder peals, crying, "Alleluia! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.
  2. We hear four times in the opening 6 verses of Chapter 19 the key word – Alleluia. This is an important Liturgical word used in the OT. It was used many times in the Psalms (a whole set of Psalms called the Hallel Psalms). They have this expression Alleluia which means Praise to the Lord, Praise Yahweh. Alleluia is found very few times in the NT, many times in the OT, but only found four times in the entire NT, and all four come here in Rev 19. Something big is going to about to happen.
  3. Sudden chorus of Alleluia's that bring to mind these Hallel Psalms, might also bring to mind the many Jewish feasts that use the Hallel Psalms particularly the Passover. The Hallel Psalms were sung in the context of the Passover. Jesus and His Apostles may very well been singing those Psalms when the Gospels reports how they left the Last Supper singing.
  4. So Alleluia may bring to mind the Passover. When read about Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia and then what happens next in verse 7: Let us rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come. When you read about the lamb, now we are really thinking about Passover. Then angels say, “Write this: Blessed are those invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. So we read about a lamb and the supper of the lamb. A lot of Passover imagery being alluded to here.

- B. In the Book of Revelation in the NT, the new Passover would have some type Eucharistic overtones. Rev 19:9 - Blessed are those called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. At Mass, the Priest is echoing the words of the Angels: Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. Here we have the great coming of the Lamb - also coming as a Bridegroom. There is going to be a great Passover Feast, but this Passover Feast is also a great Wedding Feast. The Lamb is coming dressed in a tuxedo; He is coming as the Bridegroom. This imagery of the husband and the wife – the bride and the bridegroom is used many times in throughout the Bible.
- C. In the Bible there are many images used to describe our relationship with God. God is Lord, Creator, He is the Lawgiver, He is the all-powerful One, He is the all Holy One – many titles for God. God also uses family as we have seen to describe His relationship with His people. God is Father, Jesus is our Brother, but the most intimate familial term that God uses to describe His union with us is that of a relationship between a Husband and Wife. A Bride and a Bridegroom – marriage entry.
1. The prophets saw that God had married Israel. They established their covenant at Mount Sinai with the giving of the Law. Then the dessert period is kind a like the honeymoon years. And when Israel is faithful to the covenant, they are like the spotless Bride, the pure spouse. But when Israel breaks covenant, when Israel starts worshipping other Gods, guess what this Bride is called in the prophets in the OT. She is called an adulterous, she is described as an unfaithful wife, when it gets really bad, she is described as a harlot, as a prostitute.
  2. So Biblical language uses this image of marriage describe the intimate union God want to have with His people. And even though Israel had been unfaithful, the prophets had foretold, Isaiah, Jeremiah, especially Hosea, - they foretold that one day, God would come as Bridegroom. And reunite Himself to His unfaithful spouse. Even though His people had been unfaithful, God would remain committed to them and seek her out – and woo her back! And betroth her to Himself again – renew His covenant with them.
  3. And when we get to the Book of Revelation, we get to the climax of this marital union between God and His people who had gone astray through their many infidelities. In the Book of Revelation at the end, we are approaching this climatic union between God and His people.
    - (a) Now think about this – at Mass the Priest echoes those words of the Angel in Revelation 19. The Priest says, “Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. He is echoing that angelic invitation. Do you realize that every time you go to Mass and you hear the Priest as he is holding up the Host say, “Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb” – do you realize you are getting an invitation. It is a Wedding Invitation. He is repeating those words of the angel, inviting people to the wedding supper of the Lamb. When the Lamb, Jesus Christ, is coming to unite Himself with His people. And you are getting a Wedding Invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb – this Heavenly Banquet.
    - (b) When you come down the aisle to receive Holy Communion, do you realize that you are not any ordinary guest at this wedding. You are not just showing up, you are not just someone putting you name in the guest registry, who are you in light of the Biblical imagery? You are the Bride; you as a member of the Church are the Bride. So you are coming down the aisle to receive Communion, it is almost like here comes the Bride. What is happening is our divine Bridegroom is coming unite Himself to us in the most intimate way

possible here on earth. He gives us His very Body to us, uniting Himself to us. Think of the most intimate union that two persons can have here on earth physically. Jesus our Bridegroom gives His very Body and Blood to us for the most intimate union we can have with Him this side of eternity.

**S5. Period of Silence:** So in a certain sense we can look at marriage is a Sacrament of Communion, but so is the Eucharist a Sacrament of Holy Communion. This is why it is so important for us to really take that time to be with our Lord and pray with Him. Our Bridegroom as He is dwelling within us. Those intimate moments after Holy Communion. The wonderful tradition of thanksgiving where Catholics at the end of Mass, kneel down, say some prayers, and be with our Lord. This is the time to give our Lord, pour out our hearts to Him, to love Him, to adore Him, to thank Him, as He is intimately dwelling within us.

**A.** Here I am reminded of something that John Paul II said about those intimate moments after Holy Communion. He once reflected on what it would have been like for the Blessed Virgin Mary to receive Holy Communion. Do you ever wonder about Mary's first Holy Communion would have been like. How amazing that would have been.

1. Listen to what John Paul II says about Mary and her first Holy Communion. He says, "Mary lived her Eucharistic faith even before the institution of the Eucharist. By the very fact that she offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of God's Word." For those nine months, Mary had Jesus' Body and Blood dwelling within her. She has Jesus Himself dwelling within her womb for those nine months during the pregnancy.
2. JP II goes on to say, "At the Annunciation, Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of His Body and Blood thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives under the signs of Bread and Wine, the Lord's Body and Blood."
3. So Mary anticipates the Eucharistic faith by having Jesus conceived in her womb she anticipates what happens to us believers who have Jesus sacramentally within us in the Real Presence of the Eucharist.
4. Now he goes on to talk about what it would have been like for Mary to hear about what happened at the Last Supper. She would have had to learn from the other Apostles what that was all about. What must Mary felt, JP II says, when she heard from the mouth of Peter, John, James and the other Apostles the words spoken at the Last Supper. This is My Body, which is given for you. The Body given up for us and made present under sacramental signs was the same Body, which she had conceived in her womb.
5. Then JP II concludes: For Mary receiving the Eucharist must have somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that Heart that had beat in unison with hers. That Heart which beat in unison with hers those nine months of the pregnancy and then she watched her Son in His public ministry, be rejected, be killed, raised than ascended into Heaven. Yet, when she would go to Mass and celebrate the Eucharist, she would receive the Body and Blood of that Son, whose heart beat in unison with hers in those nine months long ago.

**B.** So now, we have a profound reunion between Mary and her Son in every Holy Communion. And in a certain sense we become like Mary, each time we receive Holy Communion. Mary had Jesus in her womb for nine months. We have Jesus dwelling within us sacramentally in the Eucharist for nine or nineteen minutes or for however long while the species of the Eucharist remains, Jesus is dwelling within us. Think about how Mary would have been so careful, so attentive to Jesus dwelling within her.

1. Think about any mom carrying a baby in her womb, how exciting that is. And making contact with that child, being so careful as you are walking around, not wanting to do anything that would hurt the child.
  2. Imagine if you were Mary, you would not have any child you have the Son of God, the great Messiah dwelling within you. Any yet we experience something like that each time we have received Holy Communion to some degree as John Paul II says
  3. That is why we should give special attention to Jesus in those moments after communion. Really giving Him time, tenderly resting with Him, like a Bridegroom and His Bride.
- C.** Story of John Paul II who had a great Eucharistic devotion:
1. He once was visiting a parish in Rome, and hundreds of people showed up for Church that day. And after Mass, they were all outside lined up getting ready to greet him. And he just stayed in the Church for a half hour making a thanksgiving. Half-hour just resting and praying. Some of us could look at that saying; he should have gone out there and attended to the people. But he put first things first. He gave his fullest attention to Jesus for that half-hour after Communion.
  2. I am not saying we all have to spend a half-hour after Mass, if we could that would be wonderful. Most of us cannot do that. But can we spend some time with Him.
    - (a) Could we spend a few minutes, five or ten minutes after Mass.? Or are we going to be rushing out to race to get out of the parking lot quickly, rush home for the football game or go out and get those coffee and donuts.
    - (b) Or will we put first things first, which is to spend time with our Lord, resting with Him, loving Him, adoring Him, praising Him. There is no better time to give our Lord that loving attention than right after receiving Him in Holy Communion.

## **T2. The Concluding Rites:**

Not let us conclude with the Concluding Rites, where the Priest gives the final blessing and then he has this line where he uses the word, The Mass.

**S1.** Why is the Mass called the Mass many people wonder?

- A.** The word Mass is derived from Latin word Missa, which is a Latin word for dismissal or sending that was used to formally conclude a gathering, a large meeting. The early Christians took on that word, but Christians then saw a profound meaning in this word.
- B.** That the Liturgy, with its Missa, its dismissal, its sending was not simply a conclusion, but the word Missa in the Catechism connected with another word, “missio” (mission), it is a sending forth. Where now we have encountered the sacred mysteries of the Mass, the Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Pascal Mystery that is made present to us that we participate in.
- C.** The reception of Jesus, His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, now we are called to go out into the world and bring that into our homes, into our friendships, into our country, into our workplace and be light to this world and be salt to this earth. We are sent on mission at the end of every Liturgy.