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CHAPTER
FOUR



*The Structure
of the Mass*

Worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24b

❖ **CONSIDER THIS:**

Our official rituals are composed of small liturgical units linked together into larger units. The eucharist, for example, has four main liturgical units: the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rites. The Introductory Rites, in turn, are composed of a series of smaller liturgical units, such as the Opening Prayer which itself is a liturgical unit of four elements: the preparatory dialogue, the silence, the prayer proper and the closing Amen. The interplay of these various structures provides a certain rhythm to worship that is to be respected.

Proper preparation requires identification of these units and recognition of which are primary and which are secondary. (*Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers*, 39–40)

While a step-by-step, expanded development of these various ritual moments will be examined in the next four chapters, a look at the overall structure and order of Mass is presented here in chart form to provide an overall sense of the movement of the liturgy. The various parts of the Mass are named with a brief explanation of the part's corresponding spirituality.

STRUCTURE OF THE MASS	SPIRITUALITY OF THE MASS
The Introductory Rites	Many Becoming One
Entering, Gathering, and Hospitality	Forming the community
Preparation Time	Honoring the community's participation
The Entrance Procession and Chant (Song)*	Opening expression of gathering and statement of faith
Veneration of the Altar, Sign of the Cross*, Greeting*	Honoring our identity and beginning
Penitential Act and Kyrie*	Recognizing the mercy of God
The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**	Remembering our Baptism
The Gloria**	Giving praise
The Collect*	The community focuses on the mysteries in prayer

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD	TELLING THE STORIES
[Dismissal of Children for Liturgy of the Word]*	Growing in the Word
First Reading (Old Testament, except during Easter Time, then from the New Testament)*	Telling the ancestral story
Silence	The community pauses to reflect
Responsorial Psalm**	A prayerful bridge for the entire Word toward the Gospel
Second Reading (New Testament)*	Telling more of the story
Gospel Procession /Acclamation**	Praising the Word alive
Gospel*	Telling the Good News
Homily	Preaching the Good News
[Special Rituals: i.e. Christian Initiation rituals, anointings, blessings, etc.]*	Celebrating our sacramental life, blessings
Dismissal of Catechumens*	Going forth to be deepened by the Word
Creed / The Profession of Faith*	Stating our beliefs
Universal Prayer / Prayer of the Faithful*	Praying for the world
THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST	ACTING AND THANKING IN MEMORY OF CHRIST
Preparation of the Gifts*	Preparing gifts (us, money, bread and wine)
Prayer over the Offerings*	Calling on God's presence
Eucharistic Prayer*	Blessing, praising, giving thanks
Opening Dialogue* / Preface*	Thanksgiving for God's activity
Acclamation: Holy, Holy, Holy**	Joining the acclamation of the angels
Epiclesis*	Calling down the Spirit
Institution Narrative*	Calling to mind what Jesus did
Acclamation: Memorial Acclamation**	Remembering the mystery of faith
Anamnesis and Offering*	Honoring the memory
Intercessions*	Calling to mind the needs of the Church, the world, the community
Doxology and Acclamation: Amen**	Our communal assent of belief

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Communion Rite	Sharing the meal
The Lord's Prayer*	Praying as Jesus taught
The Sign of Peace	Extending communal peace and reconciliation
The Fraction of the Bread / Lamb of God**	Breaking and pouring
Invitation to Communion*	Humility and reverence
Sharing of Communion / Communion Song**	Receiving and becoming the Body of Christ
Silent Prayer and Song of Praise**	Thanking God for gifts
Prayer after Communion*	Summing it up

ACTING AND THANKING IN MEMORY OF CHRIST

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Announcements	Being Church
Greeting*, Final Blessing*, Prayer over the People*	Receiving God's care
Dismissal / Song*	Going forth in mission to love and serve

BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

*Text can be sung.

**Text is always sung.

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