



5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 8, 2026
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So we've made it to the final installment of our homily series, Walking Through the Mass and our beautiful tradition as Catholics. Last week we covered the whole Eucharistic prayer, which ends with the Doxology, when Jesus is offered to the Father along with us, and we say or we sing Amen. And so this leads us to today, what is called the Communion Rite. And so after this high point of the Mass, where we left off last week, we stand together, and we pray the Our Father. But a question that might come to mind is like, why now? We have this beautiful prayer that Jesus himself taught the apostles and his disciples. And the question might be like, why do we do it at this part of the Mass? Well, because of Jesus' sacrifice of himself to the Father on the cross, which we just entered into, we are now invited into Jesus's place in the Holy Trinity.

So we are invited to his relationship that he has with the Father. Because what Jesus is by nature, we become through grace. And we were orphans because of our sin, because we have separated ourselves from God. But when Jesus redeemed us on the cross, the grace to become God's sons and daughters was opened up to us. And we received this grace through our baptism and so we can say these words along with Jesus - Our Father.

And so after we pray that beautiful prayer, the next thing that comes is the sign of peace. And this is another rare time of the Mass when the prayer is not addressed to the Father, it's actually addressed to Jesus. So the priest prays, "Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles, peace I leave you, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will, who live and reign forever and ever".

So an interesting part of this part of the Mass is that the peace that we experience comes from the unity that we have in Mass as brothers and sisters in Christ. Because we have, ideally, we have all offered ourselves along with Jesus to the Father, and we are all his children through the sacrament of baptism. And so in this unity, we can share with each other the sign of peace that only comes through that familial relationship that we have with each other and with God himself. But notice that the peace comes from Christ himself, who is present in the priest. Because the priest says first, "the peace of the Lord be with you always". And everyone says, "and with your spirit". So we recognize that it is the spirit of Christ bestowing his peace upon his brothers and sisters, as we all worship the Father together.

And then, while the sign of peace is happening, the priest breaks off a small part of the host and places it in the chalice. And he says quietly, "may the mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us to receive it". So again, we just celebrated Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, which involved his death. And we describe death as the separation of our souls from our bodies, right? That's what happens when we die.

But now the mingling of the body and blood of Jesus symbolizes the resurrection when his body and blood were reunited. Jesus conquered death by his resurrection. And he said that whoever eats his body and drinks his blood will have eternal life. So in light of this, the priest makes an act of faith on behalf of everyone who is going to receive Jesus' body and blood, that we might receive eternal life by the reception of Jesus' life within us through the Eucharist.

And after this, we have the Lamb of God, where we ask Jesus to have mercy on us and grant us peace. And at the end of the Lamb of God, everyone kneels, and the priest prays a quiet prayer asking God to free him personally from his sin and to heal him and to protect him and to help him to be faithful through the reception of Jesus body and blood. And then the priest holds up Jesus for all to see. And he says the words of John the Baptist, "behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world".



And that title, Lamb of God is packed with significance. Because we can go way back to Abraham when God asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. And as they were going up, Isaac was carrying the wood of the sacrifice, just like Jesus carried the wood for his sacrifice. And as they were going up, Isaac asked Abraham, like, we have the wood, and we have the fire, the flint and steel to start the fire. But where is the Lamb for the sacrifice? Abraham answered his son “God will provide for himself the Lamb of sacrifice”. Interesting.

And then they get up to the mountain, and Abraham is about to sacrifice his son Isaac, when an angel stops him. And then they see a ram that is stuck in the thickets, stuck in the thorns. And so Abraham sacrifices that ram instead. But notice that Abraham prophesied that God will provide a lamb for himself, not a ram. So that prophecy was not fulfilled in Abraham's time.

And then there's the Passover in Egypt, which used the blood of the Lamb that was put on the doorposts of the house of the Hebrews or the Israelites to protect them from the angel of death that came to kill the firstborn sons of each household. And I don't have time in this homily to explain it all again, but if you want to hear more about how the Last Supper and the Eucharist fulfilled the fast, the Passover feast, the Jewish Passover feast, I encourage you to watch the homily from last week that's posted on YouTube.

But when John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, “behold the Lamb of God”, that would have brought to mind everything that I just mentioned. The Jews of the first century would have automatically thought of the story of Abraham and Isaac and the prophesied lamb that God would provide, and they would have thought of the Passover feast.

So it was like John the Baptist was saying to the Jews at the time, this is the one we have been waiting for. He has come to save us from our sins. He's come to redeem us. And then years later, Jesus proceeded to offer himself as a sacrifice on Calvary, which is on what mountain? It's the mountain range of Mount Moriah. The same mountain where Abraham was going to sacrifice his son, and the same mountain where God was prophesied to provide for himself the sacrificial lamb.

And then after the priest says the words of John the Baptist, he says a quote from the Book of Revelation saying, “blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb”. Now, the Supper of the Lamb refers to the eternal wedding feast in heaven that celebrates the marriage between Jesus, the bridegroom, and his bride, the church. And what is our response to all of this? John the Baptist's words and this quote from the Book of Revelation? We say, “lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed”.

So most of these words come from the centurion from the Gospel, because he had enough humility to say to Jesus, lord, I am not worthy that you should enter into my house. And he had enough faith to say, but only say the word. It's like he was telling Jesus, Jesus, I know that you don't even have to touch my servant in order to bring him healing. I have enough faith to say, just say the word, and I trust that he will be healed. So the centurion asked for his servant to be healed. But in the Mass, we ask Jesus to heal our souls and make us worthy to receive him in the Eucharist.

Because the reality, brothers and sisters, is that none of us are worthy to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Yet Jesus wants us to receive Him. He wants us to have eternal life. He wants us to have his divine life within us. And so God forgives our venial sins at this time as we prepare to receive Jesus.

As we mentioned in previous parts of this series, there are other points of the Mass where venial sins are forgiven, but this one is just in case you might have judged someone who was singing off-key next to you during Mass. So Jesus still wants you to receive him, even if you judge people singing poorly.

But Jesus offered himself to the Father at the Mass, but now Jesus offers Himself to you and to Me in the Eucharist. He wants you to be united with him and with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. And he wants



us to be united together through the Eucharist as well, through the sharing of his bread, his Body, and the wine, his blood. That's why it's called Communion, because we have communion with God and with others. We have this divine love within us. All of us receive the same divine love that brings us unity.

And a few months ago, Father John and I preached about how to properly receive and to care for Jesus in the Eucharist. And so we won't get into all of that here this week, but once everyone has received Jesus, we purify the vessels, and we make sure that any remaining body and blood of Jesus is taken care of reverently. And after receiving the Eucharist, I encourage you to have some personal prayer with Jesus as the priest and the servers and the deacon finish their work on the altar. I mean, Jesus is literally inside of you. Divine love is dwelling within you.

So it's a privileged time to pray and encounter Jesus. It's not a time to just watch what the servers and the priests and the deacon are doing. This is a time to really encounter Jesus, whether that's through song or through our personal prayer during this time of Communion. And when that time is over, we have finished the communion rite, and the last part of the Mass is called the Concluding rite. And technically, before we get to that, because this isn't exactly part of the Mass now, but this is when Father John or I have to read to you a bajillion announcements, okay. This is, of course, my favorite part of the Mass, as you can probably tell. And so I offer that if you don't enjoy having so many announcements. We don't really enjoy that either, but I like to tell people, if everyone would read the bulletin, we wouldn't have to read it to you. So I blame all of you. Okay, it's all your fault.

But the actual concluding rite includes the final prayer, which thanks God for nourishing us by the sacrament that we have received the Eucharist. And then there's the final blessing from the priest. And then there's the dismissal that the deacon proclaims. Now, every dismissal, there's a few options, but every dismissal begins with the same word. It's go. Go. Go and do what? Well, go and live out what we just entered into during the Mass during this liturgy. Because what we experience and enter into during Mass is meant to be lived out in our daily life.

So just consider some of what we do at Mass. We gather together as God's people. We encounter God in Scripture, we intercede on behalf of those who need our prayers, we profess our faith, and we enter into Jesus Paschal mystery. His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. So these are all things that we are called to live out in the world through our daily life. So we should live out a life of Christian community, whether that's through a small group, Bible studies, or other forms of Christian community and service. We should help feed the hungry and shelter the homeless, as we heard from Isaiah today. And just like the Liturgy of the Word, we should encounter God in the Scriptures daily, whether it's Father Mike's Bible in a Year podcast, a formal Bible study here at the parish, or just reading a chapter of Scripture a day.

Allowing God to speak to us and encounter us in the Scripture is essential to living our life as Christians, and we should intercede for those who need our prayers, just like we do at Mass. This can be done during private times of personal prayer. It can be done praying with people specifically asking for more grace, more outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, or it can be offering up our daily sufferings for them. These are ways we can begin to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel with spirit and with power, as St. Paul encourages us to do today in our second reading. We should not be afraid to profess our faith in front of others, because it's not just something we stand up and do on Sundays when it's easy and we're all doing it together.

Whether it's personal prayer or, excuse me, whether it's personal conversations or in groups, we are called to share our faith as a witness to the truth. We're called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, as Jesus tells us in our Gospel today. And just like the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist, we are called to live out the Paschal mystery in our life. As Christians, we should live with Jesus and die with Jesus and rise with Jesus every day of our lives. We all have those ups and downs of our everyday life, and Jesus wants to encounter us in them and live with us and die with us and rise with us through those normal ups and downs of our days and our weeks.



So living our lives in union with Jesus' saving work, his Paschal mystery, has the power to transform us if we allow it, and it has the power to transform and to be a witness to those around us as well. But we need to consciously enter into those moments with Jesus in order for his grace and his power to work in and through us. So go and live out the Mass in the world. You just received Divine Life within you in the Eucharist. So go and be the light of the world that you are called to be.