

## Things to talk about

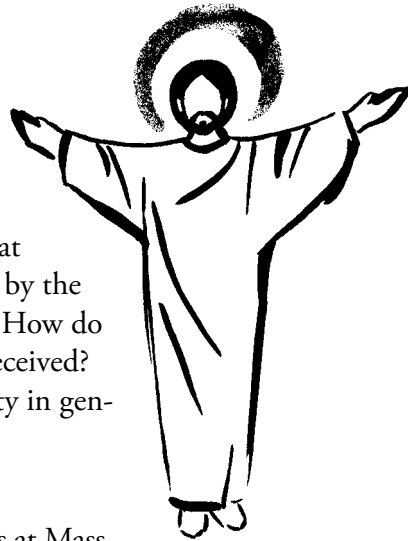
- What have we to be thankful for? How do we live our thanksgiving?
- One symbol of sacrifice and thanksgiving is a candle, which burns brightly to the glory of God, self-consumed in light and warmth. What other symbols or examples of self-offering and love can you think of? How do they help you to think of the Sacrifice which Jesus offers
- Are there particular phrases from the Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayers that strike you? What do the Prayers have us give thanks for? Use a Sunday Missal to refresh your memory or download some samples from the website below

*If you wish to gather with others for a more formal time of reflection based on these questions then you might like to download a group reflection resource from [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)*

## Things to do

### Reflection

- **Take stock.** One traditional form of sacrifice is tithing. In the Old Testament the tithe was given in thanksgiving for the blessing of God. In the New Testament that partial sharing seems to have been replaced by the practice of holding all things in common. How do you share the good things that you have received? With those in particular need? With society in general? With the Church?
- **Make fuller use of the prayers at Mass.** It is often helpful to use some of the prayers at Mass for example the Preface, the Opening Prayer (or Collect), as well as the Eucharistic Prayer. They might be used in part or whole; and might be used as a starting point for personal prayer, or as something to meditate with. The practice can help us deepen our awareness of the prayers used at Mass, and enrich our private prayer too.



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Additional resources can be accessed at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy)

# Praying the Mass 3

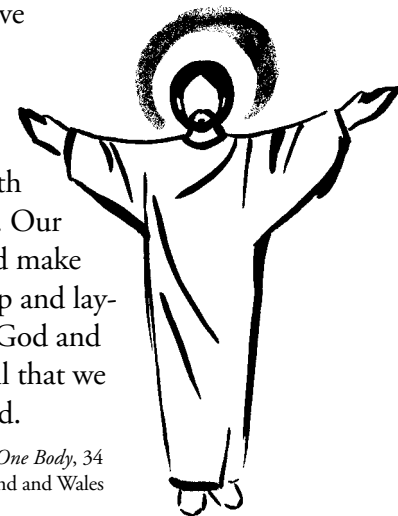
**A**t Mass so much happens. Sometimes we are aware of it, sometimes it passes us by. Sometimes Mass is so busy, we hardly find time and space to pray. *Praying the Mass* seeks to unite all the members of the Diocese in a time of rediscovering the Mass and its meaning.

A leaflet like this is being distributed each month until June. The earlier ones are still available to read on-line at [www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy). Do take this leaflet home to read and consider it. You might do this in a faith-sharing group, or as a family or with friends. You might even do it by yourself. If you have a ministry at Mass, let it help you look again at what you do and how you do it. But the leaflet is for us all, because the Mass is for us all, and we all have our own particular responsibility for how Mass is prayed in our parishes.

## Thanksgiving and Sacrifice

In the Eucharist, Christ's gift of his life to his Father for our salvation is made present, so that we may be united with him in his sacrifice and be accepted in him by the Father. The Mass is the ultimate act of worship. By our communion with the Risen Christ, we become one with him in his giving of himself to the Father. Our lives are at-one with his as he commends his spirit to the Father. United with Christ, we lift up our hearts to the Father and give him thanks and praise.

We give to God all that he first gave to us, all that we are and have, uniting ourselves with the self-giving of Jesus himself. Our sharing in the Eucharist should make us a sacrificial people, lifting up and laying down our lives in love for God and for one another, and sharing all that we have and are with those in need.



*cf One Bread One Body, 34*  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

## Living

Cardinal Newman teaches us that if we have accepted the truth of Christ and committed our lives to him, there can be no separation between what we believe and the way we live our lives. Our every thought, word and action must be directed to the glory of God and the spread of his Kingdom. Newman understood this, and was the great champion of the prophetic office of the Christian laity. He saw clearly that we do not so much accept the truth in a purely intellectual act as embrace it in a spiritual dynamic that penetrates to the core of our being. Truth is passed on not merely by formal teaching, important as that is, but also by the witness of lives lived in integrity, fidelity and holiness; those who live in and by the truth instinctively recognize what is false and, precisely as false, inimical to the beauty and goodness which accompany the splendour of truth, *veritatis splendor*.

By letting the light of faith shine in our hearts, and by abiding in that light through our daily union with the Lord in prayer and participation in the life-giving sacraments of the Church, we ourselves become light to those around us; we exercise our “prophetic office”; often, without even knowing it, we draw people one step closer to the Lord and his truth.

*Pope Benedict XVI,  
Hyde Park, 18th September 2010*

## Praying

At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest raises the Body and Blood of the Lord saying:

*Through him, within and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.*

And the whole people on behalf of the created order, respond: *Amen*, It is so, *Amen*. In these words we profess that the one and only prayer is Christ; the only possibility of human prayer is in him; the perfect prayer is him. In, through and with him we pray at this moment and always.

At this moment we are caught up in the one event which lies at the centre of human history. Prefigured in so many ways in the Old Testament, it took place on the Calvary and is now continue in the sacramental life of the Church. It can be summarised in these lovely words:

*As our priest, Christ prays for us; as our head, he prays in us; as our God, we pray to him, but let us recognise our voices in him and his voice in us.*

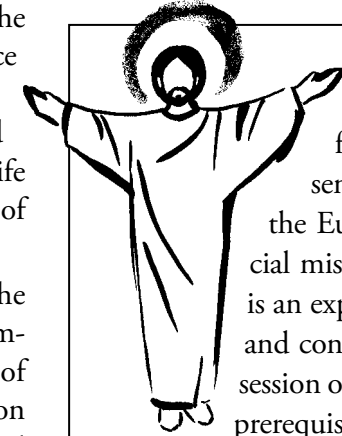
*Archbishop Vincent Nichols,  
Promise of Future Glory, p76f.*

## Celebrating together

The visitor to Westminster Cathedral cannot fail to be struck by the great crucifix dominating the nave, which portrays Christ’s body, crushed by suffering, overwhelmed by sorrow, the innocent victim whose death has reconciled us with the Father and given us a share in the very life of God. The Lord’s outstretched arms seem to embrace the entire church, lifting up to the Father all the ranks of the faithful who gather around the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice and share in its fruits. The crucified Lord stands above and before us as the source of our life and salvation, ‘the high priest of the good things to come’.

The Eucharistic sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ embraces in turn the mystery of our Lord’s continuing passion in the members of his Mystical Body, the Church in every age. Here the great crucifix which towers above us serves as a reminder that Christ, our eternal high priest, daily unites our own sacrifices, our own sufferings, our own needs, hopes and aspirations, to the infinite merits of his sacrifice. Through him, with him, and in him, we lift up our own bodies as a sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. In this sense we are caught up in his eternal oblation, completing, as Saint Paul says, in our flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church.

*Pope Benedict XVI,  
Westminster Cathedral, 18th September 2010*



The Procession with the Gifts is a powerful expression of the assembly’s participation in the Eucharist and in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the disposition of self that is a necessary prerequisite for making the true offering which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him. The Procession with the Gifts expresses also our eager willingness to enter into the ‘holy exchange’ with God: ‘accept the offerings you have given us, that we in turn may receive the gift of yourself.’

In the Eucharistic Prayer the mystery of Christ’s saving death and resurrection is recalled; the Last Supper is recounted; the memorial Sacrifice of his Body and Blood is presented to the Father; and the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the gifts and transform those who partake of them into the body of Christ, uniting the assembly and the whole Church and family of God, living and dead, into one communion of love, service, and praise to the glory of the Father.

*Celebrating the Mass 180, 187*