

Things to talk about

- When have you most strongly sensed the unity of the Church?
- How does your being joined with Christ and the Church in the offering of the Eucharistic Prayer affect your sharing in Holy Communion?
- What helps you to experience reverence towards Christ's Real Presence at Mass? What hinders or challenges those feelings of reverence?
- How do the readings of the day prepare us to share in Holy Communion?
- Where do you find it most challenging to live your communion with Christ?

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

Things to do

- Take stock. How do you pray your going to receive Holy Communion?
 - How mindful and careful are you of others in the Holy Communion procession?
 - Do you respond clearly and firmly to the minister:
'The Body of Christ: Amen.'
'The Blood of Christ: Amen.'
 - Do you take care to pray in thanksgiving afterwards?
- Read and reflect on the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13: 1–15). *Do what I have done for you...* Use this time of prayer to reflect on how you are united with Jesus in your daily life and how you share in his ministry.



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Additional resources can be accessed at www.rcdow.org.uk/liturgy

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At 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. 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.

Living Communion

Father of infinite goodness,
it is truly right to give you thanks,
it is fitting that we sing of your glory.

Through the gospel proclaimed by your Son
you have brought together in a single Church
people of every nation, culture, and tongue.
Into it you breathe the power of your Spirit,
that in every age your children may be
gathered as one.

Your Church bears steadfast witness
to your love.

It nourishes our hope
for the coming of your kingdom
and is a sure sign of the lasting
covenant which you promised us
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore heaven and earth sing
forth your praise while we, with all the
Church, proclaim your glory without end.

cf Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions,
A. The Church on the way to Unity



Living

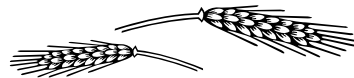
‘The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world’ (Jn 6:51). In these words the Lord reveals the true meaning of the gift of his life for all people. These words also reveal his deep compassion for every man and woman. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus’ feelings towards others, especially the suffering and sinners. Through a profoundly human sensibility he expresses God’s saving will for all people – that they may have true life. Each celebration of the Eucharist makes sacramentally present the gift that the crucified Lord made of his life, for us and for the whole world. In the Eucharist Jesus also makes us witnesses of God’s compassion towards all our brothers and sisters. Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become ‘bread that is broken’ for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: ‘You yourselves, give them something to eat’ (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 88.

Praying

Let silence do its own work. It can speak for itself. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit can fill it. And that Spirit is surely not put off by the occasional cry of a child, or even persistent crying! My rule of thumb is that a Mass celebrated without periods of silence is robbed of a good deal of its potential. Participation does not just mean outward active participation. It can be most powerfully experienced in silences too.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols.
Promise of Future Glory, p23.



Faith demands that we approach the Eucharist fully aware that we are approaching Christ himself.

The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfilment of Jesus promise to remain with us until the end of the word.

Pope John Paul II
Mane Nobiscum Domine, 16

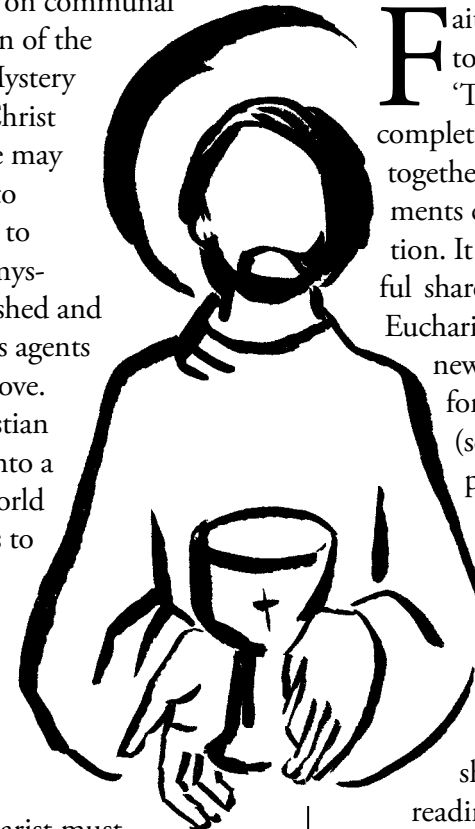
Celebrating together

Active participation in the Eucharist is a transforming experience. In our prayers, and that of the whole Church, we seek the transformation not only of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but that the same Spirit transforms us also into the Body of Christ. But it does not end here...

Authentic Catholic spirituality is centred on communal celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ so that we may go out into the world to live that mystery, refreshed and restored as agents of God’s love. The Christian is called into a broken world to witness to and work for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The Eucharist must feed those who celebrate: for their work in the healing of relationships, in the promotion of peace and justice, and in the proclamation of the Good News.

Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, *Celebrating the Mass* 16-17



Faithful to the Lord’s command to his disciples to ‘Take and eat,’ ‘Take and drink,’ the assembly completes the Eucharistic action by together eating and drinking the elements consecrated during the celebration. It is most desirable that the faithful share the chalice. Drinking at the Eucharist is a sharing in the sign of the new covenant (see Luke 22:20), a foretaste of the heavenly banquet (see Matthew 26:29), a sign of participation in the suffering Christ (see Mark 10:38-39).

The Communion procession expresses the humble patience of the poor moving forward to be fed, the alert expectancy of God’s people sharing the Paschal meal in readiness for their journey, the joyful confidence of God’s people on the march toward the promised land. This action of walking solemnly in procession, together with a reverent bow before we we receive Communion is our sign of reverence in preparation for receiving Communion.

of Celebrating the Mass 180, 187