

PRAYERS AT MASS

Many years ago, when I was told about that little action used to introduce prayers and Catholic religious services, I started getting to know the MASS. We all recognise it when we use our hand to reach our forehead, chest, left shoulder, and right shoulder. We call it BLESSING OURSELVES. This can be done by just blessing ourselves, or by saying that little prayer as we do so, which is:

**In the name of the Father
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

At school, we were told that when we do this, it reminds us of the Blessed Trinity and that Jesus died on the cross. What was never told in my school was the extra meaning of that little prayer.

It's like when the police wanted to enter a building, shouting out, "Open up in the name of the law." This was their way of declaring that what they were doing was approved by the laws of the UK.

At the start of any service in the Catholic church, it's saying that what we are about to do is all **in the name of** the Blessed Trinity. What a profound way of praying at the start of any religious service.

I found that it's the same with all the prayers in the mass. Whoever is responsible for them must have been cloaked in the Holy Spirit, as they are all profound, wonderful, and meaningful.

The mass is made up of two liturgies, a liturgy being defined as religious services made up of words, prayers and actions. These are:

**The Liturgy of the WORD.
The Liturgy of the EUCHARIST.**

These are preceded by a small INTRODUCTORY RITE and a small part at the end of the mass called THE CONCLUDING RITE.

The Introductory Rite involves the people attending mass admitting that they are sinners and asking God to forgive their sins. The prayers used in this small beginning are so meaningful. Just think about what you are saying, which is asking God in a wonderful way to forgive you and then praising him.

We then have "The Liturgy of the Word." In this, we hear readings from the Bible, which are revelations from God and his Son via writings from Prophets and some of Jesus's apostles.

They tell us many simple and wonderful ways of making sure we obey God's commandments.

It ends with us asking God to hear some of our petitions, called the Bidding Prayers.

Now, we have the second major part of the mass, called "The Liturgy of the Eucharist." In this, we hear the priest's very simple but meaningful prayers to prepare bread and wine for the CONSECRATION.

This is an exciting time as we are about to have bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ for us to receive in Holy Communion. Just before this happens, we are probably excited and want to shout out Hurray, Hurray, Hurray, and a prayer used lets us do this, with the people saying, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY Lord God of Hosts....."

Now we hear the sacred prayers used in the Consecration. The bread and wine become the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are so thankful that God has provided his Son for us to eat and drink in Holy Communion that the **priest offers up to God** in thanksgiving, a perfect Sacrifice of the same blessed sacrament, the body and blood of Christ.

When we listen to the prayers used in this LITURGY, mainly the Eucharistic Prayer, they are so meaningful and inspirational right up to the "DOXOLOGY" at the end.

Now we get ready to receive Holy Communion and start this part of the mass by saying the prayer that Christ gave us called:

"THE OUR FATHER".

During this part of the mass, we also say wonderful prayers asking God to give us peace in our lives, and from the Bible, such as the reply made by the Roman Centurion who wanted Jesus to save his dying servant, it's a wonderful statement of FAITH:

"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my (servant) soul shall be healed".

Then when the priest holds up the consecrated host and shows it to the people, saying:

"Behold the Lamb of God....." These are words used by St. John the Baptist to describe Jesus.

After Communion, the priest performs the CONCLUDING RITE by saying a final prayer, blessing us and telling us that the mass has ended.

The prayers used in the mass have been carefully worded and, when taken from another source, have been carefully selected. If you mean what you say and say what you mean where the prayers are concerned, you'll find participating in the mass inspiring and enjoyable.