

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE MASS

As I've engaged in conversations about the mass over the years, I've often encountered intriguing questions. For instance, have you ever wondered about the different parts of the mass and their significance? I've heard a few times that people believe that the second half of the mass is more important than the first.

This is not true because, without the first, we would not understand the significance of the second.

this article explores the first significant part, and while I may not have all the answers, I hope the journey of discovery is rewarding.

To start with, how many know that the mass has two major parts:
THE LITURGY OF THE WORD.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST.

In simple terms, a Liturgy is a time when we come together as a community to pray, sing hymns, and engage in activities honouring God.

The mass also has a small part just before the Liturgy of the Word called the Introductory Rite, plus a small prayer and blessing after the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which ends the mass.

We encounter a profound moment within the Introductory Rite: the Penitential Act. This solemn act involves humbly beseeching God for forgiveness and extolling and glorifying Him. It's a pivotal time to find solace in our bond with God before we embark on the mass.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Bible parts are read to the congregation in the first half of the mass. There is so much to read that it takes three years to complete. The church calls these YEARS A, B, and C.

The Bible, the sacred text that contains all the revelations of God and his Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, is the foundation of our faith. It provides us with all the tactics needed to gain the strategies required to ensure the salvation of our souls.

At the end of this first part of the mass, the presiding priest or deacon guides us through these teachings with a homily or sermon, shedding light on their profound meanings. These readings contain a wealth of information, yet for many Catholics, the Mass is the only occasion they encounter the Bible's contents.

Let's delve into the GOSPEL from John 20:19-31 in Year A as an example of the enlightening nature of these readings. It may be brief, but Jesus Christ instituted profound events within it.

No.1 The disciples had locked themselves in a secret room with windows and doors barred for fear of the Jews. Suddenly, Jesus appeared among them, and they were filled with joy.

Here's something that's hardly mentioned as a miracle. It's a great one, too, as he'd only been killed and put in a tomb a few days earlier; so how could he appear to them?

No.2 When Jesus was being whipped, abused and finally crucified, his disciples were nowhere to be seen. When Jesus appeared among them, he didn't admonish them by asking, "Where were you?" he said, "PEACE BE WITH YOU." Total forgiveness. This was a very important lesson, showing them that if he could forgive them for what could be called their betrayal of him, they should never even think of not forgiving anyone.

No. 3 After witnessing their joy at seeing Jesus alive and well and saying, 'Peace be with you', he said: 'As the Father sent me, So am I sending you'. Jesus instructed them to begin Christianity.

No.4 Immediately after saying, 'As the Father sent...', he went on to say: **Receive the Holy Spirit.**

For those whose sins you forgive

They are forgiven

For those whose sins you retain

They are retained

The sacrament of reconciliation was introduced here. It meant that anyone who honestly went to it would have their sins forgiven. It's the only way we know for sure that our sins have been forgiven. What a great gift from God.

No. 5 In No.3 and 4 above, Jesus starts with the words 'As the Father sent me...' And 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. What more proof do we need for the existence of THE HOLY TRINITY?

No. 6 Showing the disciples the holes in his hands and feet made by the nails during his crucifixion and the hole in his side made by a Roman soldier's spear thrust was undeniable proof that he'd risen from the dead. Even 'doubting Thomas' said, 'My Lord and my God'.

No. 7 Christ said to Thomas, **'You believe because you can see me.**

Happy are those who cannot see and yet believe'.

Jesus illustrated the wonder and power of faith of millions of people who would never have been able to see what Thomas and the others had.

No. 8 Here was the final proof to all the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead

If Jesus, who is part of the Holy Trinity, can die and then come back alive once, he can do it again and again and again for all time. This proves beyond any doubt that God is eternal.

This is just one small Gospel used in the first half of the mass. Think of all the wonders we get from the others spread over three years. Never doubt that both halves of the mass are equally important.