

# WHAT IS LITURGY

When I was a Catechist, one of the youngsters in my class asked me what the word LITURGY meant. I thought I knew the answer until I tried to explain it, and then I realised how wrong I was. They'd done it again. I had to do some research, and then I explained it.

Whenever you hear the word LITURGY, do you know what it means, what it implies and why we should notice? In different organisations, it has various meanings, but what does it mean to ordinary Roman Catholics?

In very simple terms, a liturgy is a religious ritual made up of WORDS, PRAYERS, and the ACTIONS we take when we want to worship God, with an emphasis on worshipping God.

A great example of this is the set of words, prayers and actions we Catholics call THE MASS, which is made up of two liturgies:

1. THE **LITURGY OF THE WORD.**
2. THE **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST.**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

In this liturgy, the Word of God is read out loud from the Bible. Initially, we usually hear how the ancient prophets explained to the Israelites what God wanted from them. We then reply using one of the Psalms.

These words of God are as valid today as they were when spoken in ancient times.

This is usually followed by us hearing part of a letter from St. Paul or an Apostle to people they'd previously visited and who needed encouragement. These, too, can be as valid today as they were around 2000 years ago.

Now we hear how some of the original Apostles and Christ explained how we can achieve what God wants from us in various ways. No wonder this particular Liturgy is sometimes called The Word of God.

It ends with everyone saying they believe in the Blessed Trinity and what the Catholic Church teaches, and we finally ask God to hear and grant some of our petitions.

This first liturgy in the mass is a spectacular way of showing our faith in God and worshipping Him. By going through it, we are showing Him we want to know what He wants from us and are eager to learn how to achieve this from the Apostles, but mainly from His son.

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

This liturgy includes the words, prayers, and actions of a ritual the church calls THE CONSECRATION. These allow the presiding priest to prepare in a sacred way gifts of bread and wine that will be changed into the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ during the CONSECRATION. What a magnificent gift from God.

Immediately after the Consecration, we thank and worship God by sacrificing back to God the body and blood of his Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no greater way of worshipping God.

After this sacrifice, we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion, as Jesus told us to do in His Memory.

By receiving the Eucharist, we now have Christ as part of us, or more realistically, we are now part of Him. What a great time to talk (pray) to Jesus, praise Him, thank Him for everything we have and ask Him to help us with our concerns. **This shows our great faith in Him** and is an ideal way of worshipping God.

THE MASS IS JUST ONE SERVICE WHERE WE USE A LITURGY. There are many others, such as when we participate in the Sacraments, each with its own special ritual of words, prayers and actions.

The beauty of liturgy is how it allows us to worship God in ways we would probably never think of ourselves.

Whenever you hear or come across liturgy, find out what it's for and then wonder at the words, prayers and actions the church has created for us to worship God.

**THE MORE WE WORSHIP GOD,  
THE MORE WE LOVE HIM.**