

The Allegory of the Mass: A Mystical Participation

In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are taking part in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. He gives us His risen Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Consecrated Host. He gives us His life; we give Him ours.

We desperately need to learn how to see and enter into this reality of the Mass.

Below is a devotional exercise that has completely transformed the way I participate in Mass. I had seen old versions that lined up The Latin Mass or the Extraordinary Form, but I never found one for the *Novus Ordo*, the new order of the Mass from the Second Vatican Council. Well, here it is! After careful discernment, I've decided to share it here. I firmly believe that every Catholic should be aware of what this devotion reveals. And I strongly encourage my brother priests especially to meditate on it and implement it into their celebration of the Mass.

I call this devotion "The Allegory of the Mass". It is simple, yet profound. For each of the actions that the priest (and in many cases the congregation) performs during the Mass, there is a corresponding action in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus that can be mapped onto that moment. Once you learn to see how these actions correspond, you will effectively be walking mystically with Jesus from Gethsemane, along the Way of the Cross, into the Tomb, through Sheol, and ultimately into the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.

You will come to see the Mass for what it truly is. Read it slowly. Pray for God to open your eyes to see the mystical reality behind each action of the Mass. I hope it serves you powerfully.

The Priest at Mass	Christ
Enters sanctuary	Enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday
Prays the Sign of the Cross	Begins to pray in Garden of Gethsemane
Says the Confiteor ("I confess")	Falls down in agony, sweats blood
Leads the Kyrie ("Lord have mercy")	Cries out to the Father three times
Prays the Collect (Opening Prayer)	Collects our prayers as He is taken away
Listens to and proclaims the readings, offers the homily	Provides divine answers to human questions
Prays the Creed	Is defended and believed in by Nicodemus
Prays the Petitions	Collects the prayers of His Mother, John, and Mary Magdalene

Offertory	Prepares to receive the hearts of believers
Removes chalice veil	Is stripped of His garments
Prepares the bread and wine	Is prepared for Crucifixion by being scourged at the pillar
Covers the chalice with the pall	Is crowned with thorns
Washes his hands	Is declared innocent by Pilate
Turns to the people and says, "Pray, brethren . . ."	Is shown to people by Pilate who says "Behold the man"
Recites the Preface	Is mocked and spat upon and condemned
Prays the Sanctus ("Holy Holy")	Is joined by the angelic hosts even during His passion
Commemoration of the Living	Carries the Cross to Calvary
Prays the intercession of Our Lady	Meets his mother on the Via Crucis
Epiclesis (Calls down Holy Spirit and lowers hands)	Is nailed to the Cross
Consecrates the Host, elevates and adores It	Is raised on the Cross
Consecrates the Chalice, elevates and adores It	Sheds Blood from His wounds
Memorial Acclamation (The Mystery of Faith . . .)	Listens to the good thief professing faith
Sings the Doxology ("Through Him, with Him, in Him")	Dies on the Cross, and is offered to the Father
Lowers the Chalice and Host	Is taken down from the Cross
Places the pall on the chalice	Has a stone rolled across His tomb
Prays the Our Father	Lies in His tomb while His Mother prays the Our Father in her sorrowful heart
Offers the sign of peace	Greets the souls in Sheol
Takes Pall off Chalice	Has His stone rolled away
Breaks the Sacred Host	Is recognized in the breaking of bread at Emmaus
Drops a particle of Host into the Chalice ("Commingling")	Enters the upper room and appears to His Apostles

Chants the Lamb of God	Fulfills all the OT prophecies: Abel, Abraham, Passover
Presents our Lord — “Behold the Lamb of God . . .”	Is proclaimed the risen Lamb echoed in the words of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist
Receives Communion, and then the people	Marries the Church at the heavenly wedding feast of the Lamb
Joins in the Communion Antiphon or hymn	Delights in the praises of the angels and saints
Places our Lord in the Tabernacle	Ascends to heaven
Purifies the Chalice	Is seated at the right hand of God, ready to come again
Prays the Prayer after Communion	Sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
Blesses and dismisses the people	Declares to us the Great Commission
Leaves the sanctuary	Accompanies us as we go to all nations with the Gospel