

Explanation of the Mass

Introductory Rites

Everything in between and including the entrance procession and the opening prayer is called “Introductory Rites.” According to the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM), “the purpose of these rites is that the faithful coming together take on the form of a community and prepare themselves to listen to God's word and celebrate the Eucharist properly.” (GIRM, 24)

The Entrance Procession and the Singing

Towards the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth, the solemn entrance of the pope into the basilica was introduced.

This soon took on the form of a procession. Some attribute to Pope Celestine I (422-431) the incorporation of the entrance song. Even though the exact

date of this incorporation is unknown, we know for sure that it existed in the fifth century. For a long time it was a psalm that was sung, but which was later reduced to an antiphon.

At the moment, “the antiphon and psalm may be used or another song that is suited to this part of the Mass, the day, or the seasons.” (GIRM, 26) By its nature, it is a processional, solemn and fes-



tive song that corresponds to the people and whose “purpose is to open the celebration, intensify the unity of the gathered people, and lead their thoughts to the mystery of the season or feast.” (GIRM, 25) It is frequently simply an opening song that is not accompanied by any procession to the altar, perhaps because it is a daily celebration or because it takes place in a location with little space. In any case, it is convenient to have the entrance song so as to dispose the congregation and the celebrant for the celebration.

The Veneration of the Altar

The entrance procession ends in the veneration of the altar, as a symbol of Christ and location of the Eucharistic sacrifice. This veneration is expressed with three signs: the bow, the kiss and the incensation.



The bow is a very expressive sign of respect that forms part of the religious patrimony of all nations. Directed towards the altar, the gesture becomes an act of homage towards Christ, towards the place of sacrifice and the table of the Lord. At the same time it is transformed into a humble supplication for the fruits of Redemption.



The veneration gesture is completed with the kiss. As the altar symbolizes Christ and the minister kisses it in the name of the entire community gathered there, it is a kiss of greeting and of love between the Church and her spouse

Christ.

This veneration, commenced with the bow and the kiss, can be completed with the incensation. The primary symbol of this is honor, even though it



also includes that of purification and sanctification, as appears in the rites for the dedication of an altar, of which each incensation is a remembrance. The use of incense is no longer reserved to the solemn celebration of the Eucharist, but “is optional in any form of Mass.” (GIRM, 235)

The Greeting to the Christian Community



After venerating the altar, reserved for the sacrifice, “the priest and the whole assembly make the sign of the cross.” (GIRM, 28) It is an act that was introduced by order of Paul VI.

The sign of the cross, together with the words, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” is present at the beginning of all Christian celebrations. That is why it could not be missing from the Christian celebration par excellence: the Eucharist. This action reminds us that the sacrifice of Christ is the source of all sanctification, while the words are an act of faith in the Blessed Trinity and a supplication to the three divine persons. Act and words manifest that the faithful are not gathered together on their own initiative, nor in their own name, but rather in the name of the Triune God.

Having made the sign of the cross, the minister and the faithful exchange a greeting, by which “the priest declares to the assembled community that the Lord is present. This greeting and the congregation's response express the mystery of the gathered Church.” (GIRM, 28)

The Missal uses three possible forms of greeting. They are inspired in the Sacred Scripture, especially in the letters of the Apostles. The greeting is a promise of salvation from God. The response of the community is not a gesture of benevolence towards the minister himself, but rather a response to the minister of Christ, dispenser of the mysteries of God. The congregation asks that the Lord be with the minister so that he may carry out well his ministry.

The greeting of the minister and the response of the faithful manifest the dialogical structure of the Eucharistic celebration. From the beginning the Eucharistic celebration is an announcement of the Word and of the salvation of God, of His grace. Man must adhere completely to these graces and receive them, full of gratitude. Every man should freely welcome the salvation and love that God offers him.

Project Innocence Prayer



Dear Lord Jesus,
we pray that a movement
be raised up in this country,
that will turn the tide of violence
and abuse of children in
Aotearoa.

Your heart burns for love
for the little children, especially
those most vulnerable.

We pray that this movement
will bring healing and
forgiveness to many.

We ask this prayer through
the intercession of the
Immaculate Heart of Mary
and our Patron, Venerable
Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert.

Amen.

**HUMAN
PROMOTION**

