

# Year of the Eucharist

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Part 34 in a series on  
**The Year of the Eucharist**  
from the  
Department of Worship & Spiritual Life  
Catholic Diocese of Memphis  
in Tennessee

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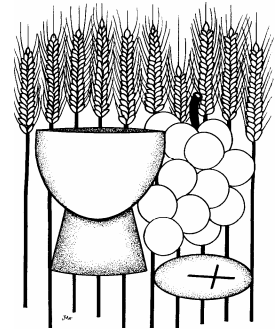
## The Structure of the Mass

### The Liturgy of the Eucharist

#### THE COMMUNION RITE

The Communion Rite is made up of the Our Father, the Rite (or Sign) of Peace, the Breaking of the Bread and the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion.

The word “communion” comes from the Latin *communire*. The word was originally used in reference to Christians having a common concern for each other, or holding possessions in common. Later it was used in reference to the fellowship of the Church; people were said to be “in communion” with the Church. Eventually the word “communion” came to be understood as unity with Christ through participation in the sacred meal... “*Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them*” (John 6:56). This indwelling of Christ through eating his flesh and drinking his blood was understood to be an invitation as well as a pouring out of grace to live in community, or in communion, with Christ. So “communion” was not only received, it was understood that communion was to be lived. Receiving Christ in communion helped Christians to live in communion with Christ and with one another. It is the same today.



#### The Our Father

The Communion Rite begins with the priest’s invitation to the assembly to pray in the *words our Savior taught us...* The Lord’s Prayer was included in the Roman liturgies as early as the fourth century. It was seen as an ending to the sacrificial nature of the Eucharistic Prayer and as a preparation for our sharing in the earthly banquet of the Lord. We pray the *Our Father* to prepare ourselves to receive Christ in Holy Communion and then to go forth to live in holy communion with one another. In this prayer we praise God – *Hallowed be thy name* – and we petition God for that which is most important: that God’s kingdom will come, that God’s will be done, that we will receive not only our daily physical needs – *Give us this day our daily bread* – but our spiritual need for the bread that comes from heaven. We pray for forgiveness and for grace to forgive, for protection from temptation and deliverance from evil.

When we pray the Our Father, we do not pray for ourselves alone, but for all those who do not have daily bread, nor do they live with the hope of living in peace and being delivered from the evil done to them by the violent acts of others. To pray for our daily bread is to open ourselves to hearing God’s invitation to share what we have with those who have little or nothing.

The Our Father is to be recited or sung BY ALL during the celebration of the Eucharist. If sung, a musical arrangement that can easily be sung by the entire assembly must be used. This is not a place for solo singing or for a choir anthem. Yes, that’s true even at a wedding or a funeral. Additionally, the musical arrangement must allow for the priest’s *embolism*, the prayer which seems to interrupt the Our Father. The priest prays, “*Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace in our day...*” This prayer is a continuation of the prayer for the coming of God’s kingdom when we will all be freed from sin and anxiety and live in peace. Only after the embolism, does the entire assembly continue, “*For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever.*”

#### THE COMMUNION RITE

The Our Father

The Rite of Peace

The Breaking of the Bread

Distribution and Reception of  
Holy Communion

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