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THE MASS UNFOLDED

THE PARTS OF THE MASS – THE CREED, OFFERTORY AND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The **Creeds** of the Church are foundational expressions of Christian belief. The Apostles' Creed developed from early baptismal statements used in Rome during the second century. The early Church recognised it as a faithful summary of apostolic teaching. Developed between the sixth and eighth centuries. Because it presents the essentials of salvation history in a simple way, it is often used during Lent and Easter.

The Nicene Creed emerged from the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). Responding to theological controversies about the nature of Christ and the Trinity. The Creed proclaims that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father," meaning that Jesus is truly God and not a created being. It also affirms the role of the Holy Spirit.

After listening to the readings from Scripture and the homily, the Church responds by saying, "Yes, we believe." The Creed is both personal and communal. It begins with "I believe," yet it is spoken together as a sign that faith is shared within the community of the Church. In a world where belief can seem individual and fragmented, the Creed anchors Christians in the common faith of the universal Church.

The Mass moves into the **Offertory**. Bread and wine are brought to the altar. In the early Church, Christians brought these gifts along with other goods that supported the clergy and helped the poor. As the Church grew and liturgical practices changed, the Offertory became less visibly participatory and more focused on the priest's prayers.

After the Second Vatican Council, the Church restored the offertory procession and simplified the prayers to resemble ancient Jewish blessings: "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation." These prayers remind us that the gifts of bread and wine come from God's creation and from human labour. Symbolically, the faithful place their lives, work, struggles, hopes, and gratitude on the altar together with these gifts. It is a participatory activity.

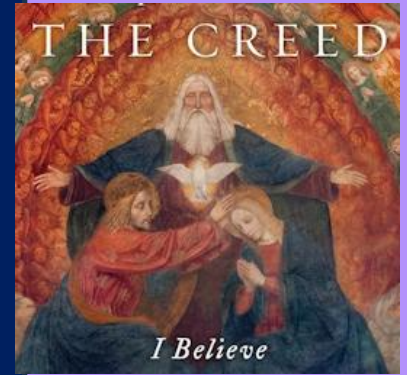
The centre of the Mass is the **Eucharistic Prayer**, in which the Church remembers Christ's saving work and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Eucharistic Prayers all follow the same structure: thanksgiving, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, remembrance of Christ's saving work, offering (oblation), and intercessions.

The Mass is both sacrifice and communion. Christ's sacrifice on the Cross happened once for all, Jesus is present substantially and in power, He is the priest and victim, offers himself to the Father out of love for humanity on the altar of the Cross.

Jesus is the Lamb slain for us, as in the Jewish Passover, once slain it is eaten. No communion without sacrifice: 'Take and eat, take and drink'. Bread and wine, separate signs indicating sacrifice: body given, blood poured.

Eucharist reveals the depth of God's love. We are called to be his bride, to prepare for the marriage with the Lamb by living the Eucharist.

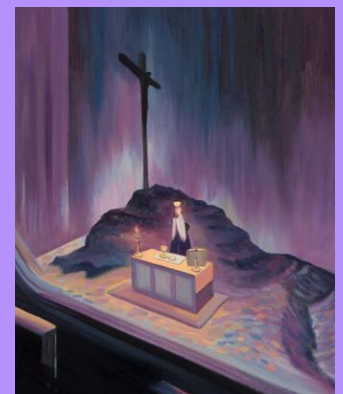
The Mass is not something we simply watch; it is something we enter into.



"The Son is consubstantial with the Father."



'Gifts of Bread and Wine: fruits of our labour.'



The Sacrifice of Calvary is re-presented at every Mass.

**The last three talks will continue to focus on parts of the Mass itself. Join us in the Conference Centre this Tuesday 24th March where we will be exploring 'communion, The Body of Christ & Living the Mass'.
7pm - 8.30pm
Speaker: Sr Marie-Christine Berg**