

## The Meaning of Mass

### The coming together of the Church



## TARGET AUDIENCE

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### Overview

This Object develops the themes of *gather, listen, respond* and *go* as they relate to the parts of the Eucharist. As such, it is an introduction to the theological underpinnings of the Mass.

The multimedia element is a graphic depiction of the four themes of the celebration of the Eucharist. Each theme has an explanatory sentence.

### Teacher Background

Teachers are encouraged to review the 'Receiving this English Translation' and 'Celebrating the Eucharist' sections of the DVD Rom *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* to deepen their understanding of the history of translation, the principles of translation, and the changes to the text, as well as the meaning and significance of the sacrament.

In particular, the following aspects of *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* provide entry points and context for this Learning Object:

'Celebrating the Eucharist'

- Within the pathway 'Introductory Rites' watch the video 'Overview'. The content of the video is further developed in the excerpts taken from the essay *A Walk Through the Mass* by Sr. Janet Baxendale SC. The excerpts can be accessed by clicking on the 'Read More' arrow. The essay can be downloaded by clicking on the 'View Essay' button.
- Within the pathway 'Liturgy of the Word' watch the video 'Overview'. The content of the video is further developed in the excerpts taken from the essay *A Walk Through the Mass* by Sr. Janet Baxendale SC. The excerpts can be accessed by clicking on the 'Read More' arrow. The essay can be downloaded by clicking on the 'View Essay' button.
- Within the pathway 'Liturgy of the Eucharist' watch the video 'Overview'. The content of the video is further developed in the excerpts taken from the essay *A Walk Through the Mass* by Sr. Janet Baxendale SC. The excerpts can be accessed by clicking on the 'Read More' arrow. The essay can be downloaded by clicking on the 'View Essay' button.
- Within the pathway 'Concluding Rites' watch the video 'Overview'. The content of the video is further developed in the excerpts taken

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from the essay *A Walk Through the Mass* by Sr. Janet Baxendale SC.  
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### Teacher Background

*Where appropriate, use this material with the students.*

### Supporting Content

*This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.*

#### Gathering

Belonging to the Christian Church means being engaged with others who also believe in Jesus. You really can't be a Christian alone. Whilst we must make an individual decision to believe in God and accept what Christ has done for us through his Death and Resurrection, the way this is expressed is through worship and principally the Eucharist. We come together as baptised believers in Christ and we take on the identity of being 'the Body of Christ' in the world. That is why the action of coming together for Sunday Eucharist is so important. The gathering of the assembly symbolises the coming together of the Church.

#### Listening

Our familiarity with the story of salvation is critical to our understanding of who we are and what we are called to be. The readings from the Bible provide an opportunity not only to hear how God worked throughout the history of the Jewish people, but also how God was fully disclosed in the person of Jesus Christ and how his followers responded to Jesus. These readings also speak to us if we are prepared to listen and allow God's word to penetrate our hearts and minds. Often that word will be challenging and perhaps at times confronting, but Jesus reminds us this word sown in our hearts will bear abundant harvest.

#### Giving Thanks

Our response to the Word of God in the Eucharist is to bring our concerns for the world and the human family together in the Prayer of the Faithful. Here we exercise our 'priestly identity' by interceding for those who lead the Church, those responsible for governing civil society, our local community, the sick, the impoverished and all in need, and those who have died. We principally respond however by offering our own lives in union with Christ, who offers himself to the Father. We are joined then to the Eucharistic sacrifice and receive back that which has been offered – the very Body and

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Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

### Supporting Content

#### Going

Mass ends rather abruptly! We receive Holy Communion and after a brief prayer of thanks we are sent forth into the world. We go with a mission... to take Christ whom we have encountered in his word and received in the Eucharist to the people we meet in our daily lives. We want to share what we have experienced as Christian believers – that life in Christ can be and is transformative.

### For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

*Select one or more of the following activities for students to complete.*

- 1 **Provide the class with a set of hymnals to complete this task.**  
Explore the words and themes in worship hymns for gathering. Choose and justify an entrance hymn for use in an up-coming school/class celebration of Eucharist.
- 2 **Ask students to select a gathering hymn and a thanks giving hymn from the hymnal to complete this task.**  
Analyse the words and themes in worship hymns for dismissal/concluding rites. Make connections between the words and themes and the purpose of the concluding rites e.g. going out to live a Eucharistic life.
- 3 **Invite students to complete the following activity after a class celebration of the Eucharist.**  
Write a reflective piece expressing what you have experienced at the end of a class or school celebration of Eucharist, for example, a sense of community, unity, togetherness, gratefulness, peace, purposefulness etc.
- 4 **Invite students to reflect on the following:**  
Explain why the Eucharist is so important and what it means to you.

### Teacher Professional Development Resources

Fr Richstatter, Thomas, OFM, STD, [‘A Walk Through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation’](#), 1989