

SEPTEMBER 17 DEACON MIKE WALSH

So, today I continue this four-part series on the Mass, the very mystery at the center of salvation, which came about from a question that Fr. Dan Donovan, one of our long-term celebrants, asked me one day when he came in after celebrating a Mass at his local parish. He said, "You know, the congregation failed to say their most important prayer, the most important prayer of the people within the Mass." Then he asked me, "Mike, do you know what that is?"

And so, we've been exploring that over the last couple of weeks, and now we arrive at the third part of this particular homily. The Mass, as I was exploring it, really occurred to me as perhaps the greatest of all the sacred stories that we have been given throughout time, and it's a four-part story in which we fully participate each time we come to Mass.

Part one is the introductory rites, where we greet each other, we come together, and we acknowledge that we are not perfect people; that we have failed through our fault, through our fault, through our most grievous fault, and we ask for mercy. Mercy being one of the key themes of the Mass.

Last week, we talked about the liturgy of the word. After we sit, we listen to our stories within the story of the Mass. This is the part of the Mass where we listen more than we speak. Although in many of the Masses, not all of them, we end with the profession of our faith in one of the two great creeds. Then we have the prayer of the faithful, followed by someone delivering the homily.

And then we arrive at part three, which we will be at in just a moment here after the homily, and we call that part the liturgy of the Eucharist. The liturgy of the word is followed by the liturgy of the Eucharist. The Catechism states that the Eucharist is the source and the summit of

Christian life. Many of you have heard that before, but the next line really got me: it states that the other sacraments and, indeed, all other works are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented towards it. As Pope Francis said, it is the very mystery at the center of our salvation.

So this week, I want to explore the Eucharistic prayer, and next week we will conclude as we look at the communion rite, which is still part of the liturgy of the Eucharist, and then the dismissal, part four. This is a part of the Mass that often gets overlooked but is extremely important.

If you look at our readings today, you can see how they both tie to the Eucharist. In Paul, we hear this great teaching of his where he says, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." And if you look at the Daily TV Mass community—all of you here today, whether you are watching on TV, on the Internet, on our website, or on an app—wherever you may be from all over the world, there are many members of the Daily TV Mass community, but we are all gathered together as one body in Christ and the Eucharist.

In the story in Luke's gospel, where he raises the young man from the dead and gives him back to his mother, it is a story of new life. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist together, it is a story of this new life.

So, the liturgy of the Eucharist, part three, starts with the preparation of the gifts. I don't have time to go into that, but it's a very unique part; it actually dates back to the very beginning of the Church when they met in small homes, and people would bring the gifts, which would then be prepared. We do that here today with great care, and Father will say, "Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father."

Here's one response: "May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church." This one body, made up of many members.

In the liturgy of the Eucharist, there are these three doxologies, which are really just prayers of praise. The first is the Sanctus, "Holy, holy, holy." Beautifully sung by our cantors here, but it is a prayer of the people. When you look at it, you can see that part one comes right from the Jewish scriptures, where Isaiah says, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole Earth is full of Your glory." Part two comes from Matthew's gospel during Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where we hear in the gospel, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

So, we will pray that prayer. Then there will be, as I said in the first homily, the most important prayer of the Mass—the Consecration—where the words right from the gospel will come, where Jesus said, "This is My Body, this is My Blood," and the priest, in the person of Jesus, will offer that in remembrance. Then He will say a simple line right after that: "It is the mystery of faith," and we will all pray the mystery of faith.

Now, there are three different forms of this that could be used in each Mass, but they all have the same sentiment: that Jesus has died, He has risen from the dead, and He will come again to be with us.

Now, we arrive at the third doxology, the final one, which is called The Great Doxology or The Great Acclamation. This might be a hint that it is the answer to Fr. Dan's question—the Great Amen. The instructions in the Mass state that the priest takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, raising both, says these words: "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, O God, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is Yours forever and ever."

I will bet you know the prayer that comes right after this. This is the prayer of the people, the greatest prayer, and we say, "Amen." "Amen," which in one commentary I wrote on this signifies that the priest needs to hold the paten and the chalice up until the people say "Amen," which means "So be it." This is why Fr. Donovan, I'm sure, when he was up there and didn't hear the "Amen," wondered, "What do I do now? This is the great prayer of the people."

"So be it." We believe everything that has come before that, right? This is truly the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so now, you have the answer that Fr. Donovan was looking for, but next week, when I'm here with you, we're going to conclude as we look at the communion rite and part four of the Mass—the dismissal.

In this part, I would argue, is the most important personal prayer of the Mass. So, I don't know if you know what that is. Think about it as we come together next week: What is the most important personal prayer? This is really not a time of personal prayer, but there is this one prayer that each of us makes during the Mass, and then we get to the dismissal, as I mentioned—the often forgotten part of the Mass.

"Do I have to stay for that?" you might ask. Well, it's so important because it is in the dismissal that we are told the second important theme of the Mass. After we have been fed at the altar, what can we do now? We can go in peace. We are at peace; we can go in peace. But where do we go? We need to go out into the world and glorify the Lord by our lives.

You see, we need to go out and be the proof in a secular world to the power of our God's story when it is fully lived.

God bless!