

5. We Give Thanks

The next part of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The word Eucharist means 'thanksgiving'. It begins with the Offertory Procession, when we bring gifts of bread and wine to the altar. These gifts, made by the work of human hands, will be transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. At this time, we also give our monetary gift for the Church, so that it can continue its mission to our parish and diocesan communities.

After the Prayer over the Gifts, the priest begins to pray the Eucharistic Prayer, a long prayer of thanksgiving, during which the people pray or sing the *Sanctus* ('Holy Holy'), the *Mystery of Faith* and the great *Amen*.

As part of the Eucharistic Prayer, we recall what Jesus did at the Last Supper: He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it, saying 'This is my Body' and 'This is my Blood'. He asked us to 'Do this in memory' of him. This part of the Mass (known as the 'consecration') is the moment at which the bread and wine is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. It still looks like bread and wine but it is now no longer bread and wine.

This is a mystery of our faith and so is something that we can never fully understand ourselves, let alone explain to children. What we want to do, at this stage in their development, is to make children aware that what we receive in Holy Communion is more than just ordinary bread and/or wine.

Before reading the 'Prayer before Holy Communion' as your PJ Prayer this evening, spend some time discussing it with your child. In the beginning, it is a good idea to pray this prayer with children at Mass, rather than just telling them to do so. This will help them to understand how important it is to prepare well to receive Holy Communion.

A Prayer for Parents and Families

Loving God,
We thank you for all that you have given to us,
and especially for our children.
Help us to nurture in them a deep sense of
gratitude for all that they have.
May we give all glory and honour to you.
Amen.

During the next part of Mass, **we give thanks to God**.
Think of all the things that God has given to you:



**A family to love and
take care of you**



**Teachers to help
you to learn**



Friends to play with

The most precious gift that God gave to the world was **the gift of Jesus**. God sent Jesus into the world to show us how to live and how to love. On the night before Jesus died, he gave us his Body and Blood as our spiritual food, in the form of bread and wine.

While he was at supper with his friends, he took a piece of bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it. He said, '**Take and eat. This is my body**'.

Then, he took a cup of wine, blessed it, and gave it to his Apostles.

He said, '**Take and drink. This is my blood**'.

Then he asked his friends to do this again, after he had gone, **as a way of remembering him**. The next day, Jesus died on the cross.



Three days later, **Jesus rose to new life**, but the Risen Jesus could not stay with his friends forever because he belonged with God the Father in heaven. His friends remembered what Jesus had said, and so they gathered together, took bread and wine, blessed it in the way he had told them and shared it together. They knew that **the Risen Jesus was with them** when they did this.

We too are friends of Jesus and so, at Mass, **we gather together** as he asked us to. In memory of what Jesus did, the priest takes the bread, blesses it and breaks it. We know that when we do this, **the Risen Jesus is with us**.



Fill in the blanks to pray the
Mystery of Faith:

We proclaim your _____,
O Lord, and profess your
_____ until you come again.

PJ Prayer

Prayer before Communion

Lord Jesus, come to me,
Lord Jesus, give me your love,
Lord Jesus, come to me and give me
yourself.

Lord Jesus, friend of children, come to me.
Lord Jesus, you are my Lord and my God.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.