

Why Catholics Believe in the Eucharist

Catholics believe that during every Mass, the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is called the Real Presence. It's not just a symbol—Jesus is really here with us.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said: "This is my Body... this is my Blood." (Matthew 26:26-28)

In John 6, He told His followers, "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." From the earliest days, Christians took Him at His word.

The first Christians wrote boldly about this mystery:

- St. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 107 AD): "The Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ."
- St. Justin Martyr (c. 155 AD) described the bread and wine becoming Christ's Body and Blood through prayer.

For 2,000 years, Catholics have worshiped Jesus in the Eucharist with deep reverence, kneeling and praying before Him.



Signs from God

Throughout history, God has confirmed this truth with Eucharistic miracles:

- **Lanciano, Italy (8th Century):** A doubting priest saw the Communion Host turn into real flesh and blood. Modern studies revealed human heart tissue and AB blood type, which hasn't rotted or fallen apart after 1,200 years.
- **Buenos Aires, Argentina (1996):** A Host turned into heart muscle showing trauma; testing matched the Lanciano sample.

These miracles remind us that Jesus' words are true: He is fully present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Go to POPHouston.org/eucharisticmiracles to learn more!



Mass Times

SUNDAY

Main Church
7:30 am, 9 am, 11 am, 5 pm (English)
1 pm, 3 pm, 7 pm (Spanish)

MONDAY

9 am (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)

TUESDAY

9 am (English)

WEDNESDAY

9 am (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)

THURSDAY

9 am (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)

FRIDAY

9 am & 12:10 pm (English)

SATURDAY

9 am Daily Mass (English)
5 pm Vigil Mass (English)
7 pm Vigil Mass (Spanish)



Welcome to the Catholic Mass!

We're so happy you're here!

This guide is for visitors to help you feel comfortable and follow along at Mass.

Whether you're Catholic or not, you are always welcome.

WHAT IS THE MASS?

Mass is the main way Catholics worship God. We gather as a community to pray, listen to readings from the Bible, and receive Jesus in the Eucharist.



HELPFUL TIPS FOR VISITORS

- Join in as you like:** You can pray, sing, or just listen.
- Sit, stand, kneel:** Don't stress about this. Just follow the people around you.
- Sign of Peace:** Shake hands or smile when the priest invites us to share peace.
- Communion:** If you're not Catholic, you can go up for a blessing or stay in your seat.
- Quiet time:** Many people pray before and after Mass, so it's a time to be still and respectful.

WHAT HAPPENS AT MASS

Mass has two main parts: Liturgy of the Word (focused on Scripture) and Liturgy of the Eucharist (focused on the Lord's Supper).

Here's what you'll experience:

1. Gathering

- Entrance Song & Procession:** The priest and servers enter. We stand and sing a hymn.
- Sign of the Cross:** Everyone begins by making the Sign of the Cross: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- Greeting:** The priest says: "The Lord be with you." We respond: "And with your spirit."

2. Penitential Rite

We pause to remember that we are sinners in need of God's mercy. The priest leads a prayer like:

- "Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy."
- This is followed by the Gloria, a joyful hymn of praise (except during Advent and Lent).

3. Liturgy of the Word

This part focuses on Scripture readings:

- First Reading** – Usually from the Old Testament.
- Responsorial Psalm** – A sung or spoken prayer from the Book of Psalms.
- Second Reading** – Usually from the New Testament letters.
- Gospel Acclamation** – We stand and sing "Alleluia" (except during Lent).
- Gospel Reading** – A reading from one of the four Gospels. We stand to show respect for Jesus' words.
- Homily** – A short reflection by the priest or deacon.
- Profession of Faith** (Nicene Creed) – A summary of what Catholics believe. Starts with "I believe."
- Prayers of the Faithful** – We pray for the Church, the world, those in need, and the local community.

4. Liturgy of the Eucharist

This part focuses on the Last Supper and the Eucharist.

- Presentation of the Gifts:** Bread, wine, and donations are brought forward.
- Eucharistic Prayer:**
 - Priest: "Lift up your hearts."
 - People: "We lift them up to the Lord."
 - Priest: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."
 - People: "It is right and just."
 - We join in a song of praise: "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."
 - The priest prays over the bread and wine. Catholics believe they truly become Jesus.
- Memorial Acclamation:** After the consecration, the priest says, "The mystery of faith," and everyone responds with one of the acclamations, such as: "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again."
- The Lord's Prayer:** Everyone prays together: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
- Sign of Peace:** We may share a handshake or smile, saying "Peace be with you."
- Lamb of God:** We sing "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us..."

5. Communion

Catholics who are not aware of any serious sin can come forward to receive the Eucharist. Guests may come forward with arms crossed for a blessing. After Communion, there is a moment of silent prayer.

6. Concluding Rites

- Blessing:** The priest prays over everyone.
- Dismissal:** The priest or deacon says, "Go in peace" and people respond with "Thanks be to God."
- Recessional:** We sing as the priest and ministers leave.

WHAT YOU'LL SEE

- Sign of the Cross** – A short prayer asking for God's blessing.
- Holy Water** – Reminds us of Baptism; people often dip their fingers and make the Sign of the Cross.
- Altar** – The table where bread and wine are blessed.
- Tabernacle** – The place where the Eucharist is kept.
- Genuflecting** – Kneeling briefly as a sign of respect.
- Crucifix** – A cross with Jesus on it, showing His love for us.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We'd love to help you learn about the Catholic faith!

Interested in Alpha, the ACTS Retreat, Pathways, or becoming Catholic? Stop by our welcome table after Mass!



JOIN A GROUP

Are you looking to grow in your relationship with God? Look no further! Check out the different opportunities to grow spiritually with others! View our groups at POPHouston.org/growth. You belong here!

