

Liturgy of the Eucharist Bulletin Inserts

Toward a Full, Conscious and Active Participation

A process of liturgical renewal for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg

During the third phase of our Archdiocesan Liturgical Renewal we turn our attention to the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist can be identified as a four-fold movement by which bread and wine as well as the worshipping assembly are changed and transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Through an experience of *taking*, *blessing*, *breaking* and *sharing* the transforming ability of the Eucharistic celebration is made present and real.

Taking

In the action of *taking*, the community is made ready for the transforming event. As the weekly gift of our financial offering is gathered up, the very work of our hands and the fruit of our labour, is carried to the altar along with bread and wine to be the source by which all of life is made holy. These gifts become our sacrifice which, joined to the offering of Jesus' very self, are made perfect and complete.

The action of *taking* includes: the making ready of the altar for sacrifice, the gathering up of our weekly offering, the procession of the gifts to the altar, the prayer of offering as the gifts are placed upon the altar by the priest, the priest's action of purification through the washing of his hands, and the incensation of the priest and the assembly as a sign of self-offering and the prayer over the gifts being sacrificed.

If our ritual of *taking* is celebrated well, the worshipping assembly should come to the profound sense that what is being offered to God for change and transformation is not simply what has been placed upon the altar, but also those who stand around the altar joined together in the great action of self-giving.

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Blessing

In the action of *blessing*, the gifts now identified for sacrifice are blessed and made holy. Through the praying of the Eucharistic Prayer, the bread and wine as well as the entire worshipping assembly are changed and transformed into the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus. With the words “this is my body; this is my blood”, a true and substantial change occurs by which bread and wine are no longer simply bread and wine and the worshipping assembly is no longer simply a group of individuals. With the words of consecration, the Eucharistic Prayer transforms bread, wine and assembly into the presence of Jesus, one body and one cup, now food for the world.

As the priest holds high that which has been changed, he proclaims “through him, with him and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all glory and honour is yours almighty Father for ever and ever.” The worshipping assembly ascends to this overwhelming truth with the great “Amen.”

The action of blessing includes: the Preface, the singing of the Holy, Holy, the Eucharistic Prayer with the assembly’s proclamation of the Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen.

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Breaking

In the action of *breaking*, the Lord's Eucharistic Presence is broken into many in order to become food for the world. Beginning with the Lord's Prayer the worshipping community now responds to the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus by praying the prayer by which the 'in-breaking' of God's Kingdom is able to take place.

Standing in the ancient posture, the 'Orans posture', the community breaks open their lives so that Christ's presence may be revealed. The Sign of Peace breaks down the barriers between persons that prevent the full revelation of that presence. As the Lamb of God is sung and the Lord's presence, under the form of bread and wine is broken and poured, the worshipping assembly stands ready to enter into full communion with Christ and one another.

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Sharing

In the action of *sharing* the Eucharistic event reaches its destination and fulfillment. The communion process is the highest point in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As the worshipping assembly processes to the reception of the body and blood of Christ, in the very act of procession communion is occurring. How the community makes its way to eat and drink of the Eucharist reveals as much about the Eucharist as the Eucharistic food itself.

As the worshipping assembly processes together in reverence and song, the food that is shared, is changing and transforming. Standing together until the last person has been fed, the assembly is transformed from individualism into one body.

Once the communion procession is completed the entire assembly kneels or sits to share in a moment of silence and thanksgiving.

The action of *sharing* is completed with the prayer after communion. This prayer prays that all that has been experienced in the transforming action of the Eucharist may now be carried out into the world, as the worshipping assembly becomes Eucharist for the world.

Taking, *blessing*, *breaking* and *sharing* complete the fourfold movement in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Through this action of the liturgy, as bread and wine are changed and transformed upon the altar, so too, each and every person who stands in full, conscious and active participation is changed and transformed.

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