

The mass in a catholic church begins religion essay



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The Liturgy of the Word is then said. This includes the Gloria, which is a prayer of worship, thanks and praise. An Alleluia verse is sung and readings are then read from the Bible. The purpose of this is to remind people of God's promise to save his people, to provide food for the spiritual life of God's people, and, according to the Catechism, Jesus is "present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church." (Catechism Para 1088). The readings are arranged in yearly cycles so that a great proportion of the Bible is read, and all the four gospels are read throughout the year. The priest may then say a homily, which explains the meaning of the passage read and how we should reflect on it.

The Creed is then said. The creed is either the Nicene Creed, which was agreed at the Council of Nicaea, or the Apostle's Creed. The creeds are basically a summary of the main core beliefs of Christianity. This includes beliefs on God- The Father, Jesus Christ- The Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. The prayers of the Faithful are said, also known as the Bidding Prayers. These are a series of 5 prayers that ask for God's help with issues important to the community, such as peace for the world, or the sick of the Parish.

The offertory then occurs. This is a procession of the bread, wine and other things like money are brought through the congregation to the priest, who then blesses them by holding his hands over the offerings, which symbolises the Holy Spirit coming down on them. Other priests celebrating the Mass in the congregation may also hold their hands out, inviting the Holy Spirit to come down on the blessed items. The congregation then prays that their sacrifice may be acceptable to God.

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The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the next most important part of the Mass. The word Eucharistic means “ thanksgiving” and the Catechism express the belief that the sacrifice of the Eucharist and the sacrifice of Christ are one single sacrifice (Catechism Para 1367). Eucharistic Prayers begin with the preface, which is an introductory prayer that generally begins: “ Father, all powerful and ever living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord...” The Eucharistic prayers are different from each other, but the common acts are performed. The main part of the prayer centres on the consecration and transubstantiation, when the words of Jesus at the Last Supper are repeated: “ Take it; this is my body...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many.” (Mark 14: 22-24) The bread and wine are therefore turned into the body and blood of Christ. In the Catholic Church this is known as Transubstantiation. This is signified by the elevation, when the priest will raise the bread or wine, and the congregation bows their heads as a sign of respect. A bell may also be rung, which has roots in Latin Mass when the altar and the priest would not be seen by the congregation and, as the congregation would not usually understand the Latin spoken, the bell would be rung to tell the people which point in the Mass they were at. The priest will break some of the bread and place it in the cup of wine, which is known as the “ transmingling”. This is followed by the acclamation when the priest and the congregation say “ Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again”. This is followed by the memorial prayer, when God is asked to accept the sacrifice. A series of prayers about the blessing of the Church, the dead, and a prayer to honour the saints are said, as is a Eucharist prayer asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The final prayer is to praise God through the offering Jesus made, and <https://assignbuster.com/the-mass-in-a-catholic-church-begins-religion-essay/>

this is a solemn moment in the Mass. The priest will either say or sing “ Through him, with him, in him, the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours Almighty Father for ever and ever. ” And the congregation replies “ Amen”. “ Amen” means “ I agree” or “ I accept this”

The “ Our Father” prayer, also known as the “ Lord’s Prayer” is a prayer that Jesus asked his apostles to say, and is said by everyone in the mass. As everyone will be sharing the same bread, everyone in the congregation gives each other the sign of peace, which is usually a hand-shake. The people remember that Jesus was the “ Lamb of God”, and they ask him for the forgiveness won by the sacrifice he made.

The communion is the part of the Mass when everyone receives the bread or body of Christ. An individual will approach the priest, and the priest says “ The Body of Christ”, the individual replies “ Amen” as the bread is placed in their hands. The same happens with the blood of Christ is given, but the priest shall say “ Blood of Christ”. There is a prayer before and after which illustrates the meaning of what is happening. The congregation is blessed, and the priest will say “ Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”. According to the Catholic Church, this is “ the sending for the (mission) of the faithful, so that they may fulfil God’s will in their daily lives” (Catechism Para 1332), so the people are sent out to love their neighbours and to serve God in everything they do.

b) It is important for a Catholic to regularly attend Mass, because of the religious significance to a Catholic’s faith. The Catholic Church states that Jesus Christ is “ present at the Mass in the person of the minister and the

Eucharistic species.” (Catechism Para 1088). Also in Paragraph 1088, the Church state that Jesus is present in the sacrament, his Word (readings from the Bible) and when the Church prays and sings. These beliefs are crucial to the core beliefs of a Catholic, who is to love Jesus and to follow what he said; “ do this in remembrance of me”. (Luke 22: 19) If a Catholic was to not believe in the Mass and its significance, it would be tantamount to not believing in their own faith.

If a Catholic attends a Mass, they are also visiting the Church. The Christian faith says that the Church is a holy place of worship but, more than that, is an important community essential for a believing Catholic. The Church is important for the Catholic; “ My house will be called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21: 13). It is important for a Catholic to pray there, as they praise God, and they are with Jesus; “ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them”. (Matthew 18: 20)

There are many examples of Christians praying together in the Bible; “ They all joined together constantly in prayer”, and all of this emphasizes the importance of a Catholic attending the Mass.

There is extremely important significance in the Eucharist that takes place during the Mass. Catholics believe that when transubstantiation occurs, the bread and wine become the physical body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist is supposed to be a sacrifice that takes place on the altar of the Church, and this is the same occurrence of the event when Jesus was crucified, as he was sacrificed for the people as the Lamb of God. This is why the Church says in Catechism No 1367 “ The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist

are one single sacrifice.” This also means that the same event that occurred 2000 years ago is happening again and again during Mass.

When Catholics receive communion, they are receiving the body and blood of Christ, and this holds huge religious meaning for that Catholic, and this can only be received at Mass, so Catholics that want to be closer to Christ are to receive this holy gift. The importance of attending a service regularly is also in the Bible; “ Every day they continued to meet together in the Temple Courts” (Acts 2: 46).

Overall, the Bible and the Catechism continue to stress the importance of attending Mass, and how it is essential to the core beliefs of a Catholic and their spiritual health.

c) According to the Catechism it is extremely important to the faith of a Catholic to attend services at Church, especially the Mass. This is because of the importance of going to Church, listening to what is said, and taking part in the Eucharist, which is a core belief of Catholicism. The Catholic Church state that Jesus is “ Present at the sacrifice of the Mass, in the minister and the Eucharistic species, ...present in the sacrament, in his word, and when the Church prays and sings” (Catechism Para 1088). The Church stresses how important it is to be close to Jesus, and how the best way to do this is to take part in the Eucharist. The Eucharist signifies Jesus’ sacrifice for his people, and is the most important thing to the spiritual life of Catholic. The Eucharist can not be received at home.

However, if Jesus is present in the scriptures, this also means that Jesus is present while a Catholic reads passages from the Bible at home. In Matthew <https://assignbuster.com/the-mass-in-a-catholic-church-begins-religion-essay/>

18: 20 it says; “ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them”, and this means that even where a family says grace before there meal, Jesus is with them then, so it is not necessary to be at Church just to be with him. Jesus also said “ Do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men.” (Matthew 6: 5), and this means that one shouldn’t go to church to be seen praying, and that it is much better to pray alone, and you are praying with Jesus privately which is a very spiritual act. The Bible says; “ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” (Luke 5: 16). However, the Church is where a community meets, and where that community prays together in the name of Jesus and everything the community needs.

The Church is also the House of God; “ My House will be called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21: 13), and is filled with statues and other things that help a Catholic pray and remember important things that Jesus said.

However, God is also said to be everywhere, so he is at home when a Catholic prays. It is also just as possible to keep the Sabbath day holy at home, as at Church.

The Church teaches that it is important for a Catholic to attend services, especially Mass, to be a true believer in Christ, as the Catholic must receive the body and blood of Christ, and to come together as a community with God’s people. However, it is just as important for a Catholic to pray in their daily lives and on their own, as Jesus did, so the Catholic must keep a balance between the two. Ultimately private prayer and attending Church services are both important for Christians, however at the end of Mass, the priest says; “ Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”, therefore faith without
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deeds is not real faith. Receiving Christ in the Eucharist should be like spiritual food and affect the Christian positively in their endeavours to live a good Christian life.

Bibliography for Coursework

Catechism paragraphs 1088, 1367, 1332,

The Bible Matthew 18: 20

Mark 14: 22-24

Luke 22: 19

Matthew 21: 13

Acts 2: 46

Matthew 6: 5

Luke 5: 16

Sister Anne Burke SND Dimensions of Christianity, 1988, Kevin Mayhew