

# LITURGY BYTES

## The Mass – Why We Do What We Do – Part 2

Last week we began taking another look at the Mass emphasizing the idea of ritual and how rituals are a big part of our everyday lives. This week we will begin with the gathering. The purpose of this rite is to bring us together into one body, ready to listen and break bread together. Most parishes have people at the entranceway welcoming or greeting you each week. In some parishes, this ministry is referred to as *Greeters*. Don't we do the same thing when guests arrive at our homes for dinner or a party? We greet them and welcome them at the door into our homes. It is the same here at the church. In fact, here at Holy Cross, the greeters are also our ushers who take up the collection at Mass.

One of the **first** things we do when entering the church is to bless ourselves with holy water. This ritual is a reminder of our baptisms when we were baptized with water and signed with the cross.

**Second**, before taking a seat, we genuflect on one knee to acknowledge the presence of Christ in the tabernacle. New to us here at Holy Cross is the tabernacle in a very visible place in the sanctuary.

**Third**, we take the posture of standing when Mass begins. Standing is the traditional posture of a Christian at prayer. It expresses our attentiveness to the Word of God and our readiness to carry it out. At most weekend Masses, we also sing together. What better way to gather than to unite our thoughts and our voices in common word, rhythm, and melody.

**Fourth**, the priest or presider reminds us again of our baptism with the sign of the cross and the greeting: "The Lord be with you." It is a warm, friendly greeting wishing us a good day or a goodbye. It is also a profound statement of faith. It is an ancient biblical greeting found in the Hebrew scriptures.



**Fifth**, we are asked to pause and recall our need for salvation in the Penitential Rite, followed by the Gloria, which is either recited or sung. The Gloria is omitted during the Advent and Lenten seasons. At the close of this first part of the Mass is the Opening Prayer, when we join our minds and hearts in prayer together, responding "Amen" at the conclusion.

Next week, we shall move into the storytelling part of Liturgy of the Word.

Have a blessed, healthy and safe week ahead! ~~~~ *Michele Hall*