

Mass Series #1 - Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites help the assembly become a worshipping community. They also prepare us to hear God's word and celebrate the Eucharist. There are several elements to the Introductory Rites of Mass.

We sing the Entrance Song which sets the tone of the celebration. "Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time.

We make the Sign of the Cross which verbally proclaims our faith in the Holy Trinity as it announces our intentions to do and say all things in the name of God.

The presider greets us, "The Lord be with you". These words express a wish, but the wish is already happening. The Lord is present with those who gather in his name. When the people respond, they say essentially the same thing. They wish that the Lord will be with the spirit—the innermost being—of the priest or deacon. Indeed, the Lord is present because of the sacredness of the minister and of the liturgical action underway.

The Penitential Act symbolizes our desire to enter this celebration in purity of heart. When we say "I confess", we participate consciously and acknowledge to one another and to God that we have sinned.

On most Sundays, we sing or recite the Glory to God in praise of the Trinity. This hymn comes immediately after the Penitential Act, causing us to shift moods rather quickly.

The Introductory Rites all lead to the Collect. Although it is sometimes called the "Opening Prayer" of the Mass, it is more properly and traditionally called the Collect. When the presider says, "Let us pray," we pause in silence to pray. As the priest offers the prayer, he is "collect-ing" the thoughts of the people, who themselves have been "collected" together from their homes for this celebration at church. This prayer explains why we come for this Mass and gives God praise. It brings the Introductory Rites to a fitting close.

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Want to learn more about the Mass? Join Fr. Mike Schmitz for a "teaching Mass" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCtZmLrFkqk>