



# Handbook of the MASS

Revised Edition



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## Introduction

### *Mass: A Treasure to Rediscover Continuously*

**T**HE Mass is a marvelous heritage that Jesus left to His disciples on the night of the Last Supper when He said to them: “Do this in memory of Me.” His disciples were faithful to Him. From the first days after the Resurrection, they met every first day of the week—every Sunday—and have continued to do so for more than two thousand years.

The Mass is so rich that it is limiting to use only one word to name it. Throughout history, it has been called the *Lord’s Supper*, *Last Supper*, *Breaking of the Bread*. Today we like to call it *Eucharist*. This word means thanksgiving. At the Mass celebrating the Eucharist, we give thanks to God for His countless blessings: those He gave before and during the time of Christ, and those since the moment of His Resurrection. We also give thanks for all that God will accomplish for humanity up to the end of time.

At the Eucharist we celebrate especially the Word of God, which is always living and fertile, Christ Who becomes present in our midst, the bread and wine that are given to us for the present life and in token of eternal life. We celebrate the Eucharist in church and in a place where



# The Introductory Rites

## *The Mass Takes Flight*

### 1. When bells ring

**B**LESSED are the parishes that have beautiful bells resounding on Sunday morning. Bells are the voice of God the Father Who calls His own to come to meet Him and to sit down at the table with Him. All are invited, whether they be happy or poor, enthusiastic or depressed. Our Father is Father forever. He does not close the door to any of His children. He pays special attention to His sons and daughters who feel sad at heart. Let us prick up our ears, on Sunday morning, when bells ring. They sing out the love that God has for us.

### 2. Grace and thanksgiving

**T**HE Word “Eucharist” comes from the Greek and means thanksgiving. To come to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays is to come to stand in front of God to give Him thanks. In order to give Him thanks, we must realize that God showers us with graces. We must be aware that His love, His tenderness, His mercy . . . continuously reach us. We



## The Liturgy of the Eucharist

*We Present to God Our Bread . . . He Gives Us His Own.*

### 38. About bread and wine

**T**O celebrate His Eucharist, Jesus has chosen bread and wine. It is not by chance. He had an idea in mind. Bread is a solid food; wine is a liquid. Usually, to live, we need both of them. We can live long enough with bread and wine, but not very long with only bread or only wine. We need both of them. By His choice, Jesus has clearly revealed His will to give us all we need to live. He really desires that we miss nothing essential.

### 39. Our bread and our wine

**I**N the fourth century, when people were coming to Mass on Sunday, they would bring from home the bread and wine that the bishop would consecrate. So it was easy for them to understand that this bread and wine was representing their work, their joy, their sorrows, and . . . their whole life. The Church suggests that some members of the assembly should bring the bread and wine to be given to the priest. When the priest holds them in his hands above the altar, it is the whole