

Reflection

Do I find time to 'count my blessings'. It's right to reflect on our lives to see what might have gone wrong, and where we might have messed things up. But also to reflect on where God is blessing me: sometimes by obvious goods, e.g. health, friendship; some times by things less easy to describe, the willingness to keep on trying, to be a person who loves others.

Do I find time to recognise God's action in the world more broadly? To acknowledge and rejoice in God's grace active in others – in their work for justice and peace, in their love and care for others? Do I look out for these things on the TV news, in the newspapers?

Why don't you?

- Reflect on phrases from the Eucharistic Prayer in your personal prayer.
- Consider how we might better share what we have with those who have less?

**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

This leaflet is one a series of resources produced by the Liturgy Office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to assist parishes reflect on their celebration of the Eucharist in the light of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Excerpt from *Roman Missal* ©1973; GIRM © 2004 ICEL, Inc. All rights reserved. Leaflet & *Celebrating the Mass* © 2005 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
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Prayer

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

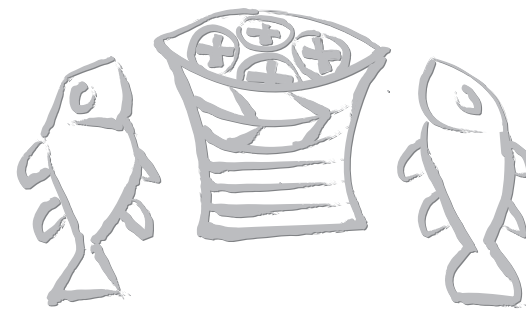
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church!
Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song
of all God's people!

It is truly right
that with full hearts and minds
and voices
we should praise the unseen God,
the all-powerful Father,
and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Christ has ransomed us
with his blood,
and paid for us the price of Adam's sin
to our eternal Father!

In Communion with Christ 4. Thanksgiving



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The Church gives praise and thanks for God's holiness and justice and for all God's mighty deeds in creating and redeeming the human race, deeds which reached their climax in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the Eucharistic Prayer the mystery of Christ's saving death and resurrection is recalled; the Last Supper is recounted; the memorial Sacrifice of his Body and Blood is presented to the Father; and the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the gifts and transform those who partake of them into the body of Christ, uniting the assembly and the whole Church and family of God, living and dead, into one communion of love, service, and praise to the glory of the Father.

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*One communion
of love, service
and praise to the
glory of the Father.*

Looking at the Mass

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Rite

Concluding Rite

From the days of the Apostles the Church has celebrated the saving life, death and resurrection of Jesus by carrying out what the Lord did and handed over to his disciples to do in his memory. Like him, the Church has taken bread and wine, given thanks to God over them, broken the bread, and shared the bread and cup of blessing as the Body and Blood of Christ. The Church's Eucharist, in all its rich variety of forms and traditions, has always retained this basic shape: the taking of the elements of bread and wine in the preparation of the gifts, the act of thanksgiving in the Eucharistic Prayer, the Breaking of the Bread, the giving and sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion.

The Procession with the Gifts is a powerful expression of the assembly's participation in the Eucharist and in the social mission of the Church. It is an expression of the humble and contrite heart, the dispossession of self that is a necessary prerequisite for making the true offering which the Lord Jesus gave his people to make with him.

In Communion with Christ

Many people recognise things in life that they are thankful for – success, love, life.

But as Christians we not only know we have things to be thankful *for*, but also that we have someone to be thankful *to*: namely God – Father, Son and Spirit.

The word 'Eucharist' comes from the Greek for thanksgiving. Eucharist then is not only something we do at Mass, but is in a sense how we ourselves are to be. There is a phrase which often appears in the Eucharistic Prayer: 'We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks' (e.g. Prefaces for Sundays). And however hard it might sometimes be to recognise this, *'Eucharist' comes from the Greek for thanksgiving* it is absolutely true. Christians are called to be eucharistic people, always – thanking God for the gift of creation and life, and for the salvation won for us in Christ.

The liturgy helps us: it puts words on our lips, doing it we make a offering of thanksgiving. But to participate fruitfully in the Mass we need to let these words be not just words we say but truly *our* words, and for this offering to be indeed *our* offering. And, again, to let this liturgi-

cal thanksgiving flow from the Mass into the rest of our lives too. For this reason it is sometimes said that the liturgy is a rehearsal for right living.

The liturgy names the general goods in our lives – only we ourselves can be more specific: giving thanks for example for my health, my opportunity to work creatively in this or that way' Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult circumstances – bereavement or sickness, or situations of discrimination. Even there, with effort, we can come to see things to give thanks for – the gift of friendship enjoyed; the sense that there is more to us than our illness; our recognition that we can work against injustice and live in hope of something better.

Giving thanks not only helps us to acknowledge what is good, but opens us up to receive more deeply and fruitfully the goodness of God's gift to us.

'Through your goodness, you give us all these gifts, you fill them with life and goodness, you bless them and make them holy.' (Eucharistic Prayer I)

*The liturgy
is a rehearsal
for right living*

The Eucharistic Prayer, the centre and summit of the entire celebration, sums up what it means for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist. It is a memorial proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for God's work of salvation, a proclamation in which the Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and the people are joined to Christ in offering his Sacrifice to the Father.

At the heart of the Eucharistic Prayer, the account of the Last Supper is recited. The words of Jesus, in which he gave himself to his disciples as their food and drink, are now repeated in the context of this prayer of praise. In the power of the Spirit, these words achieve what they promise and express: the presence of Christ and his Sacrifice among his people assembled. Everything for which God has been thanked and praised, all that was accomplished in the history of salvation, is summed up and made present in the person of the crucified and risen Lord.

The Eucharistic Prayer is proclaimed by the priest celebrant in the name of Christ and on behalf of the whole assembly, which professes its faith and gives its assent through dialogue, acclamations, and the Amen.

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