

A Mission Church

THE OUR FATHER

The perfect prayer.

- giving praise, glory and adoration to the God of all creation;
- the seeking of the kingdom of life;
- the acceptance of the Father's will;
- the asking for no more than what is needed to sustain us;
- the petitioning of forgiveness of sins;
- the petitioning for strength against evil and temptation.

Burger King ran its infamous commercial years ago, "Where's the beef?" The Lord's Prayer asks us, "Where's the love?"

This prayer is the perfect prayer simply because it is meant to draw us into the perfect love that is God. Seeing love being offered as we grudgingly conform our will to that of the Father, or forgive as the Father does, becomes difficult to grasp, if not impossible. *"How can I be loved this much?"*

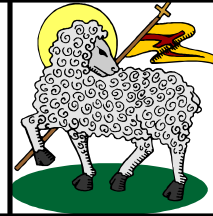
SIGN OF PEACE

"If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Peace was the final prayer of Jesus for his followers prior to his crucifixion, where as Paul says, peace was won for us by the blood of his cross. As we have offered ourselves with the gifts of bread and wine, and have allowed ourselves to

be consecrated to the holiness of God, so too must we be ready to freely and completely give over all that we hold against another, and make every effort to do so with those who may have something against us. Only in this way do we offer the true sign of peace, Jesus, to others in our lives.

THE MASS
*Our Father, Peace,
More Forgiveness,
Sharing of Eucharist*



The sign of peace at mass is a symbolic, but often times very real expression of the forgiveness we seek and offer to the whole of the Church. Ironically,

we're usually at mass with our families, where offering and seeking forgiveness is so often needed. As we join with our family of faith, we give over the hurts and the sufferings to know the gift of peace.

LAMB OF GOD

"Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us..."

Yet another acknowledgment that we simply can't do it on our own. Without the forgiveness of the cross, we lack the ability to forgive. God's grace is missing. But how awesome is the feeling of admitting sin, of knowing God's forgiveness, and of freedom to fly heavenward?

It's like returning home from a trip and having your family members joyfully greeting you at the airport. The sharing begins and lasts for a long time. As a family, the Church will soon share at the table of our Lord, the very gift of life that brings joyful anticipation of the sharing of true life. The emptiness felt will soon be changed by the fullness of our Lord and Savior's love.

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What's the priest doing during and immediately after the Lamb of God?

It's called the **Breaking of the Bread**.

The priest breaks the larger host into pieces that will be shared with members of the faithful, and takes hosts from the larger vessels and divides them into smaller patens used by the ministers of the Eucharist. He also takes a small piece of the Body of Christ and puts it into the Precious Blood. When this is done, the following prayer is said quietly.

"May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, bring eternal life to us who receive it."

The priest also says a private prayer of preparation, which some priests repeat as a communal prayer for all:

Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy I eat your body and drink your blood. Let it not bring me condemnation, but health in mind and body."

Or:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins, and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you."

COMMUNION: EUCHARIST SHARED

"This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper."

This profession of faith is followed by the immediate response of all the faithful gathered, including the priest.

"Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed."

The final humble acknowledgment that it is God's working and not ours. Only by God's desire to share his life with us are we made worthy of God coming to us.

It was St. Augustine who taught, when we share in the Eucharist:

*"We become what we receive.
We receive what we already are."*

In baptism we became members of the body of Christ, and in the Eucharist, we are strengthened or renewed as members of His body, meant to feed the world as a priestly and prophetic people building the kingdom of God — in oneness with Christ, who was anointed priest, prophet, and king. As we have joined ourselves with Christ in sacrifice, now we join in sharing his resurrected life. Now, all that has been offered, all that has been given over, all that has been removed through the changing of heart and mind in forgiveness offered and forgiveness given, can meet perfection in the sharing of the Body & Blood of Christ, it is our being restored in the likeness of God.



This is our moment of transfiguration.

This is our moment when God offers to us not just the vision of what is in store in the life to come for all believers, but the reality for all who remain faithful. At this moment:

- I can be at peace with the unforgiving relative or friend;
- I can be filled with joy knowing despite myself, I can be in complete oneness with my God;
- I can be an inspiration of hope for another of God's children;
- I can love beyond what I think possible;
- I can forgive and be at peace;
- I can find strength knowing God's will is better than any desire I may possess.
- and I can be strong in professing the gospel, and sacrificing self, of living as the person that only God knows.

The bowing before receiving the Body and again before receiving the Blood of Jesus — and a vocal "Amen" (I believe) each time says that I choose to love God above all else, and have determined to seek God as my life. Anything less amounts in ritual observance.