



## Drawing Deeper Faith from the New Words of Mass

How personal is your relationship with Jesus during the Catholic Mass? The entire Mass is an encounter with the True Presence of Christ, and it should change us: We should be healed by it. We should feel loved and become more fully loving as a result of it. Our hearts should become more peaceful. Our tendencies to sin should be transformed into greater strength to resist sin. A true encounter with Christ makes a difference.



This is what Mass is designed to do. It begins with the gathering song as the priest and other liturgical ministers process down the aisle. From the start, Jesus becomes present to us in the people who surround us, but recognizing this is not easy.

That's because many of us think of Mass as a private experience. But it's not! It's a communion – a coming together to become one in community by increasing our personal *and* communal union with Christ.

We enter the church as individuals and leave as the earthly Body of Christ. Every part of Mass builds up to this communion, and the changes in the Mass help make this more real.

We enter the church as sinners; sin – because it's unloving – separates us from one another and from God. So, early in the Mass we experience Jesus as we seek forgiveness in the Penance Rite.

The restoration of unity grows in the Liturgy of the Word if we actively listen to Christ's Holy Spirit speak to us in the scriptures and during the homily. And then the process reaches its source and summit in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In the communion line, we walk up to Jesus to receive him fully in the Eucharist. We take this action as individuals, responsible for our own conversions, saying, "I am not worthy...", and we return to our pews as a community united to Christ.

In John 6:51-58, Jesus says: "Those who feed on me will have life because of me." What kind of life? Jesus gives us his body and blood so that we become one with him in his entirety – all of his humanity and all of his divinity. He wants us to be healed by his love. He wants us to receive his strength when we endure trials. He wants to give us his *life*.

Participating in Mass should transform our life into his. The changes in the words of Mass can help with this.

Conscious involvement in all parts of the Mass is an encounter with the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, which transforms *us* into the Eucharist. We can leave church more able to be Christ for others, giving everyone we encounter the opportunity to be nourished by the True Presence of Jesus within us.