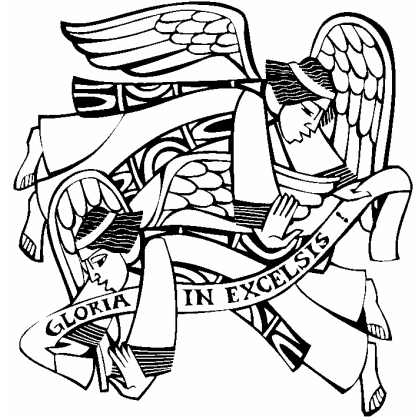


# LITURGY LESSON

## Private Prayer and Communal Prayer - lesson 3

A teacher once offered to his class this definition on the meaning of liturgy: “Liturgy,” he said, “is a prayer sooo big, it takes **all of us** to lift it to God!” The idea that liturgy is PRAYER or that it is directed TOWARD GOD is easy for us to understand. But the other idea contained in the definition – that liturgy is the work of **all the Assembled** “lifting” it to God – sometimes is. Many of us grew up experiencing Mass as a private, personal prayer. It was my hour to spend with God.



There are times during Sunday mass when private, personal prayer is appropriate: when we gather before Mass; following the reading of the Scripture text; during the silence following Communion.

It is important that we begin to expand and adjust our point of reference concerning Mass. Liturgy, in most regards, is “OUR” prayer more than it is “MY” prayer. It is not by accident that we say, “Our Father,” “We believe...”, “Let US pray” or “Lord hear OUR prayer.” “Let us bow our heads...”

In 1963 the Vatican II Council of the Church published its watershed document on Liturgy. Among the many powerful images comes the oft quoted phrase that the goal for the Church’s liturgical renewal is “to promote the **full, conscious and active participation** of the Assembly.”

At Mass our liturgy is a blend of many activities.

- We gather. The “many” come to the table of the Lord to share in the one bread and to become ONE.
- We listen. The Word of God is proclaimed. We strive to be actively attentive so that God’s Word may enter into our lives and shape us, change us.
- We worship. The Church, the people of God, offers forth a voice of thanksgiving for the eternal and wondrous gift(s) that shower us in the grace of God.
- We sing. In song the community joins its hearts and spirits and bodies into one, to raise one voice in supplication and praise. The scriptures tell us that heaven will be an eternity of song before God our creator and Lord.

At Mass, it is important to know that we need YOU. We need your voice, my voice , all of our voices as we lift our prayer to God!

