

The Communion Rite: Introduction

With the *Great Doxology* and our resounding *Great Amen!* proclaimed, we now come to the third major part of the Mass, the *Communion Rite*. (Recall the other parts we've already looked at: the *Introductory Rites*, the *Liturgy of the Word*, and the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*.) As with all the other parts of the Mass, there are several parts to this part: the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Exchange of Peace*, the *Breaking of Bread*, the *Lamb of God*, the *Sharing of Communion*, the *Prayer after Communion*.

In the earliest celebration of the Mass, the reception of communion followed the *Great Amen!* immediately, without the several other things we now do first. But communicants developed the desire to express their faith and feelings of love, unity, and forgiveness in connection with sharing in the body and blood of Christ, praying the Lord's Prayer and exchanging a sign of peace were introduced. Different ways of doing these were practiced in different churches over several centuries, which at times became rather complex and confusing. The revision of the Liturgy introduced after Vatican II organized and simplified these previously diverse and sometimes disparate communion preparation practices. We'll consider each of the different parts of the *Communion Rite* over the next few weeks.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about. Contact our Council for Catechesis at tkautza@saintmaryhc.org.