How is Holy Communion received?

Holy Communion is always received on the tongue, and (unless you have a physical constraint) while kneeling. Acquaint yourself with the extraordinarily beautiful blessing the priest gives to you as he makes the sign of the cross and places the sacred Host on your tongue: Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen. (May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen.) Note that you don’t answer Amen before receiving the sacred Host, as the priest says this for you.

What are the prayers after Mass?

After Mass is over, the priest (at Low Masses only) may lead the congregation in the Leonar prayers prescribed by Pope Leo XIII in 1884. These are normally said in the vernacular, but may sometimes be said in Latin, depending on local custom.

What are the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘propers’ of the Mass?

The ordinary (or common) of the Mass is what is prayed at every Mass: the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Offertory, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and the Canon of the Mass. The propers are the prayers and readings proper to that Sunday or feast day: (Introit, Collect, Gradual, Tract, Offertory, Communion and Postcommunion prayers).

Do I need to get a 1962 Missal?

Not immediately, but eventually yes, as it will help you get the most out of assisting at Mass. Baronius Press, Angelus Press, and the FSSP all publish 1962 missals.

What’s the most important thing in attending this Mass?

The most important thing is to open our hearts to Almighty God, fully trusting that He will show us what we need in order to be closer to Him through this venerable liturgy, what Fr. Faber called the most beautiful thing this side of heaven.

Picture then the High Priest Christ leaving the sacristy of heaven for the altar of Calvary. He has already put on the vestment of our human nature, the maniple of our suffering, the stole of priesthood, the chasuble of the Cross. Calvary is his cathedral; the rock of Calvary is the altar stone; the sun turning to red is the sanctuary lamp; Mary and John are the living side altars; the Host is His Body; the wine is His Blood. He is upright as Priest, yet He is prostrate as Victim. His Mass is about to begin.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

New to the Traditional Latin Mass?

This leaflet is for you!

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass always is and will be the perfect offering to the Father by the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Traditional Latin Mass is making a return throughout the world, and more and more of the Faithful are curious about it. Many wish to find out more about how to participate in the Mass that sustained and nourished our forefathers over so many centuries.

If you are new to the Traditional Latin Mass, understand that you have been invited by Almighty God Himself through a particular grace to be motivated to attend it. He has much to reveal to you by your attending this Mass, even if you at first find it somewhat confusing.

What is the origin of the Traditional Latin Mass?

Our divinely inspired liturgical heritage which is manifest in the Traditional Latin Mass has been guarded with great love and care by Holy Church, having been received from Christ Himself, and from the religious practices He followed in the synagogue and the temple, which in turn stretch far back to the practices handed down to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And while the bloody sacrifices of the Old Covenant were replaced with Christ’s own death on the cross, the Apostles changed little of the ancient practices of their faith in celebrating the early Mass, except to add the rite instituted by our Saviour at the Last Supper.

Developments in the Traditional Latin Mass since Apostolic times have been the culmination of a slow and gentle process of organic and incremental growth through the centuries certainly dating back to the reigns of Pope Saint Gelasius I (AD 492-6) and Pope Saint Gregory the Great (AD 590-604).
Why so much silence?

The language of love is not merely a spoken one, nor does it require a great deal of activity to convey its meaning. Silence has always been associated with profound reverence. Much of the Traditional Latin Mass is said in a low voice by the priest, because our liturgical heritage involves sacred mysteries which are prayed inaudibly by the priest. The silent parts of the Mass are opportunities for contemplation of the great mystery of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The richness of the Extraordinary Form consists of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic experiences which are meant to bring us to the highest possible level of unity with Almighty God.

Do I have to learn Latin?

No, not at all. The altar boys make the responses on behalf of the whole congregation so that we may concentrate all of our attention on uniting ourselves wholly with the sacrifice on the altar. After you have attended this Mass for a while, you will find it easier to follow. Take some time before Mass to read the excellent English translations opposite the Latin text in the missal of your choice, and meditate on them. It can be good to simply watch the sacred actions of the priest while contemplating their meaning.

What is the significance of Latin?

Latin is the official language of Holy Church, and her sacred language as well, and this was firmly reinforced by Vatican II (Sacrosanctum Concilium). Latin was introduced into the Mass very early on. For a brief period before that, Greek was used, and this is preserved in the Kyrie. And Hebrew words are also present, such as Amen, Alleluia, Hosanna and Sabaoth. These are the three languages used for the inscription on the Cross (John 19:20). Theological meanings are very precise when expressed in Latin, which is an unchanging language. Praying in Latin helps prevent the secular from invading the sanctuary, and helps protect sacred rites from political agendas which might rob them of their true meaning through the vernacular.

Isn't it divisive to use a different language?

No, in fact the opposite is true, it unites. The vernacular divides the Faithful, but the Latin language of Holy Church unites them across the earth. The Catholic Faithful of all races, languages and cultures can worship side by side. When the sacred liturgy is offered in Latin, there is no need for English Masses, Irish Masses, Polish Masses, Spanish Masses, French, Mandarin, Russian or other Masses. Any Catholic from anywhere in the world can walk into the Extraordinary Form and not only immediately know and understand what is going on, but also connect into the liturgical heritage that we share with all the generations that have gone before us.