

MORE THAN SUNDAY

A 28-Day Devotional & Study Guide

Discovering the Mass as our spiritual worship

Based on:

The Sunday and Daily Mass Readings

Thomas Howard, *If Your Mind Wanders at Mass*

Romans 12:1

Invitation to Prayer at Mass: “Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.”

THE JOURNEY

What if Mass is more than something we **attend**?

What if it is something we **enter**?

What if the Mass is where Christ invites us to unite our lives with his perfect offering to the Father?

Over these 28 days, we will follow four movements:

WEEK ONE — WHY WORSHIP?

God has given me everything.

I learn to enter.

WEEK TWO — YOU'RE INVITED

God calls me to his table.

I learn to listen.

WEEK THREE — THERE'S MORE GOING ON

Christ offers himself, and invites me to offer myself with him.

I learn to offer.

WEEK FOUR — NOW GO LIVE IT

The sacrifice continues in my daily life.

I learn to go.

OUR TWO ANCHOR PASSAGES

Romans 12:1

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.”

The Invitation to Prayer at Mass

“Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.”

These two passages give us the heart of the entire journey.

At Mass, **Christ offers himself to the Father.**

And Christ invites us to **unite our lives with his offering.**

We do not add anything to Christ's perfect sacrifice. Rather, we are invited to participate in it by offering ourselves with him.

So throughout these 28 days, keep asking:

What am I bringing to the altar?

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each day has four simple movements:

READ

Read the day's USCCB Mass readings: www.usccb.org/readings or free *IBreviary* app

DISCOVER

Read the assigned portion of Thomas Howard's book.

REFLECT

Consider how the Scripture and Mass connect to your life.

OFFER

Pray and make one concrete response.

WEEK ONE: WHY WORSHIP?

Why would God want my worship?

The first week begins with the vineyard, gratitude, prayer and the question of what belongs at the center of our lives. The October 4 readings use the vineyard as an image of God's care and our responsibility to bear fruit.

DAY 1 — OCTOBER 4

THE VINEYARD

USCCB Readings:

Isaiah 5:1–7 / Philippians 4:6–9 / Matthew 21:33–43

Thomas Howard:

Begin the book. Read Howard's opening discussion about why our minds wander at Mass and why understanding what is happening changes the way we participate.

DISCOVER

Isaiah and Jesus both give us the image of a vineyard.

God plants. God cultivates. God protects. God provides. Then God looks for fruit.

The question is not simply, “**What has God asked me to do?**”

The deeper question is: “**What am I doing with everything God has given me?**”

Your life is a gift. Your time is a gift. Your abilities are a gift. Your relationships are a gift.

Your faith is a gift. Worship begins when we recognize the Giver.

REFLECT

What gifts from God have I begun to take for granted?

OFFER

Today, name three gifts and thank God for each one.

PRAY

Lord, everything I have comes from you. Teach me to receive your gifts with gratitude and return my life to you in love. Amen.

DAY 2 — OCTOBER 5

THE ONE WHO CALLS ME

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 1:6–12

Luke 10:25–37

Thomas Howard:

Continue the opening section. Consider his challenge to move from merely "going to Mass" to understanding the Mass as an action in which we participate.

DISCOVER

The Good Samaritan reminds us that love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor.

Worship is not merely what happens inside church.

If we truly offer ourselves to God, our worship becomes visible in our lives.

REFLECT

If someone watched my life for one week, would they see evidence that I worship God?

OFFER

Do one act of love today that costs you something.

PRAY

Jesus, let my worship become visible in the way I love others.

DAY 3 — OCTOBER 6

STOP AND LISTEN

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 1:13–24

Luke 10:38–42

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of entering into the Mass rather than simply observing it.

DISCOVER

Martha is busy serving.

Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet listening.

Jesus doesn't condemn service. He reminds Martha that something comes first:

Receiving Jesus.

The Mass begins with God speaking.

We must learn to listen.

REFLECT

When I come to Mass, am I primarily thinking about what I am doing—or listening for what God is saying?

OFFER

Spend five minutes in silence today.

Simply say:

“Jesus, I am listening.”

DAY 4 — OCTOBER 7

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 2:1–2, 7–14

Luke 11:1–4

Thomas Howard:

Read the section dealing with the opening and prayer of the Mass.

DISCOVER

The disciples ask:

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

Jesus gives them the Our Father.

Mass is not our attempt to get God's attention.

God has already called us.

Prayer is our response.

REFLECT

Do I approach Mass as an obligation or as an invitation into relationship with God?

OFFER

Before your next Mass, pray:

“Father, I am here.”

DAY 5 — OCTOBER 8

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 3:1–5

Luke 11:5–13

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the Church's prayer and participation.

DISCOVER

Jesus tells us to ask, seek and knock.

We come to Mass not because we have everything together.

We come because we need God.

We bring our hunger.

Our worries.

Our failures.

Our hopes.

REFLECT

What do I most need to bring to God right now?

OFFER

Bring that need to God today.

Then say:

“Father, I trust you.”

DAY 6 — OCTOBER 9

WHAT IS AT THE CENTER?

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 3:7–14

Luke 11:15–26

Thomas Howard:

Continue reading Howard's introductory material.

DISCOVER

Everyone has something at the center.

Money.

Success.

Comfort.

Family.

Security.

Control.

God.

Worship asks:

Who deserves the center of my life?

REFLECT

What competes with God for the center of my life?

OFFER

Give God one area of your life that you have been trying to control.

DAY 7 — OCTOBER 10

HEAR AND DO

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 3:22–29

Luke 11:27–28

Thomas Howard:

Review this week's reading.

DISCOVER

Jesus says the blessed are those who **hear the Word of God and observe it.**

That is the pattern of Catholic worship:

Hear. Receive. Respond.

SUNDAY PRACTICE

At Mass tomorrow, listen for one sentence that seems meant especially for you.

Write it down.

Then ask:

“What does God want me to do with this?”

WEEK TWO: YOU'RE INVITED

The God who sets a table for you.

The October 11 readings shift from the vineyard to the banquet. Isaiah speaks of God's feast, Psalm 23 speaks of a table prepared by the Lord, and Jesus tells of a wedding feast.

This week we begin walking through the Mass itself with Howard.

DAY 8 — OCTOBER 11

YOU'RE INVITED

USCCB Readings:

Isaiah 25:6–10a / Psalm 23 / Philippians 4:12–14, 19–20 / Matthew 22:1–14

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the Mass as Christian worship and our participation in it.

DISCOVER

God prepares the feast.

Then he invites us:

Come.

The Mass is not simply something we decided to do.

It is God's invitation into communion with him.

REFLECT

How would I approach Mass differently if I truly believed I was being invited to a divine banquet?

OFFER

When you enter church, pray: **“Jesus, I accept your invitation.”**

DAY 9 — OCTOBER 12

FOR FREEDOM

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 4:22–24, 26–27, 31–5:1

Luke 11:29–32

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of entering into the liturgy.

DISCOVER

Paul says:

“For freedom Christ set us free.”

The Mass isn't slavery.

It is an invitation into freedom.

We are freed from making ourselves the center.

REFLECT

What controls me that Christ wants to free me from?

OFFER

Place that struggle before Christ today.

DAY 10 — OCTOBER 13

INSIDE OUT

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 5:1–6

Luke 11:37–41

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's treatment of the opening rites and preparation for worship.

DISCOVER

Jesus challenges the Pharisees because their outward religious behavior did not match their hearts.

The Mass isn't religious theater.

God wants the real person.

REFLECT

What is happening inside my heart when I come to Mass?

OFFER

Before Mass, pray:

“Lord, make my heart ready for you.”

DAY 11 — OCTOBER 14

THE FRUIT OF WORSHIP

USCCB Readings:

Galatians 5:18–25

Psalms 1

Luke 11:42–46

Thomas Howard:

Continue Howard's discussion of participating consciously in the liturgy.

DISCOVER

Paul gives us the fruit of the Spirit:

Love.

Joy.

Peace.

Patience.

Kindness.

Generosity.

Faithfulness.

Gentleness.

Self-control.

Worship should produce fruit.

REFLECT

Which fruit of the Spirit most needs to grow in me?

OFFER

Practice that virtue intentionally today.

DAY 12 — OCTOBER 15

BLESSED AND CHOSEN

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 1:1–10

Luke 11:47–54

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the gathering and entrance into worship.

DISCOVER

Paul reminds us that God has blessed us, chosen us and adopted us in Christ.

Christian worship begins with God's action.

Not:

“Look what I've done for God.”

But:

“Look what God has done for me.”

REFLECT

Do I come to Mass primarily as someone trying to earn God's love—or someone responding to God's love?

OFFER

Thank God for five blessings.

DAY 13 — OCTOBER 16

YOU ARE KNOWN

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 1:11–14

Luke 12:1–7

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's section on the Church's worship and our participation.

DISCOVER

Jesus reminds us that the Father knows us completely.

We are not anonymous.

We are known.

We are loved.

We are invited.

REFLECT

What would change if I truly believed God sees and loves me?

OFFER

At Mass, consciously make eye contact with the crucifix and pray:

“Jesus, you know me and you love me.”

DAY 14 — OCTOBER 17

THE EYES OF YOUR HEART

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 1:15–23

Psalms 8

Luke 12:8–12

Thomas Howard:

Review Howard's teaching on the introductory rites and the Liturgy of the Word.

DISCOVER

Paul prays that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened.

That is exactly what we need at Mass.

We need to see beyond what our eyes can see.

SUNDAY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, enter church praying:

“Lord, help me see what I normally don't see.”

WEEK THREE: THERE'S MORE GOING ON

Discovering the sacrifice at the heart of Mass.

This is the heart of the series.

The October 18 Gospel asks what belongs to God. The daily readings then move through themes of grace, belonging, stewardship, sacrifice and the Body of Christ.

This week connects Howard's explanation of the Offertory and Eucharistic Prayer with Romans 12:1 and the words:

“My sacrifice and yours.”

DAY 15 — OCTOBER 18

WHAT BELONGS TO GOD?

USCCB Readings:

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6 / Psalm 96 / 1 Thessalonians 1:1–5 / Matthew 22:15–21

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the Preparation of the Gifts and the Eucharistic offering.

DISCOVER

Jesus asks: “Whose image is this?”

The coin bears Caesar's image.

But **you bear God's image.**

So the deeper question is: **“Do I belong to God?”**

Romans 12:1 gives us the answer: **Offer yourself.**

OFFER

Place your hand over your heart and pray: **“Lord, I am yours.”**

DAY 16 — OCTOBER 19

RICH TOWARD GOD

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 2:1–10

Psalms 100

Luke 12:13–21

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the offering at Mass.

DISCOVER

The rich man asks:

“What shall I do?”

His answer is to build bigger barns.

He never asks:

“What can I give?”

Worship changes that question.

From:

“How much can I get?”

to:

“How much can I give?”

OFFER

Give someone your time, attention, money or service today.

DAY 17 — OCTOBER 20

BROUGHT NEAR

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 2:12–22

Psalm 85

Luke 12:35–38

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's treatment of the Preparation of the Gifts.

DISCOVER

Paul says that those who were once far away have been brought near through Christ.

The Mass is about communion.

God draws us near.

REFLECT

What do I need to bring closer to God?

OFFER

Spend five minutes today simply resting in God's presence.

DAY 18 — OCTOBER 21

ENTRUSTED

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 3:2–12

Isaiah 12

Luke 12:39–48

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's section on the Eucharistic Prayer.

DISCOVER

Jesus says:

“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much.”

God has entrusted you with a life.

What will you do with it?

REFLECT

What has God entrusted to me?

OFFER

At the Offertory this Sunday, consciously offer those responsibilities to God.

DAY 19 — OCTOBER 22

LOVE THAT GIVES ITSELF

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 3:14–21

Psalms 33

Luke 12:49–53

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of Christ's Eucharistic sacrifice.

DISCOVER

Paul prays that we might know the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love.

Christ's love is not merely a feeling.

He gives himself.

This is the pattern of Christian worship.

REFLECT

Where is Christ asking me to love sacrificially?

OFFER

Make one sacrificial choice today for someone you love.

DAY 20 — OCTOBER 23

ONE BODY

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 4:1–6

Psalm 24

Luke 12:54–59

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the Eucharistic Prayer and the Church's communal worship.

DISCOVER

Paul says:

One Body. One Spirit. One Lord. One faith. One baptism.

Mass isn't an individual spiritual experience.

We come as a people.

REFLECT

Do I see the people at Mass as my brothers and sisters?

OFFER

Pray for three people in your parish today.

DAY 21 — OCTOBER 24

BRING YOUR GIFT

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 4:7–16

Psalm 122

Luke 13:1–9

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's treatment of the Preparation of the Gifts and Eucharistic Prayer.

DISCOVER

Tomorrow at Mass, listen carefully when the priest says:

“Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.”

Notice the word:

YOURS.

The priest does not say only **“my sacrifice.”**

He says: **“my sacrifice and yours.”**

You are invited to bring your life to the altar.

REFLECT

What sacrifice am I bringing to Mass tomorrow?

Write it down:

My sacrifice:

PRAY

Jesus, I offer myself with you.

WEEK FOUR: NOW GO LIVE IT

Sunday changes Monday.

The final week turns worship outward. The October 25 readings connect love of God with love of neighbor, and the following daily readings repeatedly connect Christ's self-giving with the way Christians are called to live.

DAY 22 — OCTOBER 25

LOVE GOD. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.

USCCB Readings:

Exodus 22:20–26

Psalms 18

1 Thessalonians 1:5c–10

Matthew 22:34–40

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of the Communion Rite.

DISCOVER

Jesus makes it simple:

Love God.

Love your neighbor.

Everything else flows from these two commandments.

If worship doesn't make us more loving, something is missing.

OFFER

Ask tonight:

“Who did I love today?”

DAY 23 — OCTOBER 26

A LIVING SACRIFICE

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 4:32–5:8

Psalms 1

Luke 13:10–17

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of Communion and the Concluding Rite.

DISCOVER

Paul gives us a direct connection:

Christ “**handed himself over for us**” as a sacrificial offering.

This is Romans 12:1 lived out.

Christ gives himself.

We receive Christ.

We become people who give ourselves.

REFLECT

What ordinary part of my life could become an offering?

OFFER

Choose one ordinary task and consciously offer it to God.

DAY 24 — OCTOBER 27

LOVE LIKE CHRIST

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 5:21–33

Psalm 128

Luke 13:18–21

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of Communion.

DISCOVER

Paul says Christ loved the Church and **handed himself over** for her.

That is sacrificial love.

The Eucharist teaches us not simply to receive love, but to become people who give ourselves in love.

OFFER

Do something today that makes someone else's life better without expecting anything in return.

DAY 25 — OCTOBER 28

YOU BELONG

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 2:19–22

Psalm 19

Luke 6:12–16

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's discussion of Communion and the Church as the worshipping Body of Christ.

DISCOVER

You are no longer a stranger.

You are part of God's household.

Christianity isn't simply:

“Me and Jesus.”

Christ calls us into a people.

A family.

A Body.

REFLECT

What role is God calling me to play in the life of his Church?

OFFER

Reach out to someone in your parish whom you don't normally speak with.

DAY 26 — OCTOBER 29

SENT INTO THE WORLD

USCCB Readings:

Ephesians 6:10–20

Psalms 144

Luke 13:31–35

Thomas Howard:

Read Howard's section on the dismissal and going forth from Mass.

DISCOVER

Mass doesn't end with:

“Now go home.”

It ends with a mission.

We have received Christ.

Now we take Christ into the world.

The Eucharist sends us.

REFLECT

Where is God sending me?

OFFER

Pray:

“Lord, send me.”

Then be attentive to the person God puts in your path.

DAY 27 — OCTOBER 30

CHRIST IN THE ORDINARY

USCCB Readings:

Philippians 1:1–11

Psalms 111

Luke 14:1–6

Thomas Howard:

Review Howard's treatment of the Mass from beginning to end.

DISCOVER

Paul gives thanks for ordinary people who have become partners in the Gospel.

Jesus performs an act of mercy during an ordinary meal.

God doesn't need you to do something spectacular.

He wants you to become holy where you already are.

Your home can be a place of worship.

Your workplace can be a mission field.

Your family can be your apostolate.

Your daily responsibilities can become spiritual sacrifices.

OFFER

Choose one ordinary responsibility today and perform it with extraordinary love.

DAY 28 — OCTOBER 31

FOR ME, LIFE IS CHRIST

USCCB Readings:

Philippians 1:18b–26

Psalms 42

Luke 14:1, 7–11

Thomas Howard:

Complete the book and review the entire journey through the Mass.

DISCOVER

Paul says:

“For to me life is Christ.”

That is where these 28 days have been leading.

We began by asking:

Why worship?

We discovered:

You're invited.

Then:

There's more going on.

And finally:

Now go live it.

The Mass is not something we watch.

It is something we enter.

And what we enter on Sunday becomes the life we live Monday through Saturday.

THE FIVE MOVEMENTS OF MASS

1. GATHER

God calls me.

2. WORD

God speaks to me.

3. OFFER

I unite my life with Christ's offering.

4. RECEIVE

Christ gives himself to me.

5. GO

I take what I have received into the world.

THE MOMENT THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

At Mass we hear:

“Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.”

And we respond:

“May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.”

And Romans 12:1 tells us what this means for our lives:

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.”

The question is no longer:

“What do I get out of Mass?”

The question becomes:

“What am I bringing to the altar?”

My gratitude.

My family.

My work.

My suffering.

My hopes.

My failures.

My relationships.

My gifts.

My future.

My whole self.

MY SACRIFICE

Before Mass, complete these:

Today I bring my gratitude:

Today I bring my struggles:

Today I bring my relationships:

Today I bring my responsibilities:

Today I bring my hopes:

Today I bring my suffering:

Today I bring myself:

Then pray:

Jesus, you offered yourself completely for me. Help me unite my life with your perfect offering. Take everything I bring to the altar and unite it to your sacrifice. Teach me to hear the words “my sacrifice and yours” as an invitation to give myself to you. May my worship not end when Mass ends. May the sacrifice I offer at the altar become the life I live in the world. Jesus, I offer myself with you. Amen.

THE 28-DAY CHALLENGE

From now on, come to Mass with four simple questions:

BEFORE MASS

What am I bringing?

DURING THE WORD

What is God saying?

AT THE ALTAR

What am I offering with Christ?

AFTER MASS

Where am I being sent?

MORE THAN SUNDAY

ENTER. God gathers us.

HEAR. God speaks to us.

OFFER. We unite our lives with Christ.

RECEIVE. Christ gives himself to us.

GO. We live what we have received.

The Mass is not something we watch.

It is something we enter.

And when we enter into Christ's sacrifice, we discover what Romans 12:1 means:

Our whole lives can become an offering of love.