

HUMANISTIC CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE HUMANISTIC CATHOLIC MASS

Altar Book Edition with Rubrics

An adapted Catholic-form Mass for a non-theistic Humanistic Catholic community

Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance

This altar book preserves the familiar order of the Catholic Mass - entrance, greeting, penitential act, collect, readings, homily, profession, intercessions, preparation of the table, eucharistic memory, communion, blessing, and dismissal - while removing deity-language and supernatural claims.

The Mass is celebrated as a rite of human dignity, memory, shared table, ethical repair, compassion, and service.

Use	For altar, presider, deacon, lector, and formation use.
Text	All liturgical texts are original and non-theistic.
Rubrics	Rubrics are printed in red italics and govern the ceremonial action.
Authority	For use by authorization of the Presiding Bishop.

Primaatial See: Ketchikan, Alaska
Presiding Bishop: Bishop Robert Horwath

General Rubrics and Ceremonial Principles

Rubrics are binding ceremonial instructions. They should be followed unless genuine pastoral necessity requires adaptation.

1. Nature of the Rite

The Humanistic Catholic Mass is Catholic in external form and humanistic in meaning. It is not addressed to a supernatural being. Its action forms the community in dignity, memory, compassion, truth, repair, and service.

2. Ministers

The ordinary presider is a priest or bishop. A deacon assists, proclaims the Gospel-style ethical reading, prepares the table, invites the peace, and dismisses the people. Lectors, servers, musicians, and extraordinary ministers may assist as appointed.

3. Vesture

The priest wears alb, stole, and chasuble. The deacon wears alb, stole, and dalmatic if available. A bishop may wear mitre, pectoral cross, ring, and carry the crozier.

4. The Altar and Vessels

The altar is covered with a clean cloth. Place the missal, chalice, paten, corporal, purificator, bread, and wine or grape juice as appropriate. Two candles are recommended. Incense may be used as a sign of solemn attention and memory.

5. Language Discipline

No minister may add deity-language, supernatural invocation, divine command language, angelic or demonic references, or claims of supernatural transformation. The rite remains non-theistic throughout.

6. Posture

The local community may stand, sit, kneel, bow, or remain seated according to physical ability. No one is to be shamed for disability, age, size, illness, trauma, or conscience.

The Introductory Rites

The ministers process to the altar. A hymn, instrumental music, or silence may accompany the entrance. The presider bows to the altar and may kiss it as the table of the community.

Entrance Antiphon or Sentence

We gather at the table of memory, dignity, and peace. We come as one human family, seeking compassion, courage, and repair.

Opening Acclamation

Presider: In the name of human dignity, shared memory, and the communion of the human family.

People: We gather in peace, conscience, and compassion.

Presider: The Mass is our central table rite: Catholic in form, humanistic in meaning.

People: Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance.

The presider faces the people from the chair. Hands may be extended in greeting.

Greeting

Presider: Peace be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Presider: Beloved friends, we gather around word, table, bread, and cup. We come with gratitude, grief, hope, failure, longing, and the desire to live with greater compassion.

Optional Introduction

The presider, deacon, or another minister may briefly introduce the day, feast, memorial, season, or intention. The introduction should be brief and must remain non-theistic.

Rite of Moral Honesty

All stand or sit. A brief silence is kept. The presider may bow the head. The tone should be sober, not shaming.

Presider: Let us pause in honesty. Let us remember where we have failed in truth, compassion, justice, care, and responsibility.

Silence is kept.

Presider: For the harm we have done by word, action, neglect, or indifference:

People: We acknowledge our failure and seek repair.

Presider: For the truth we have avoided and the responsibility we have delayed:

People: We acknowledge our failure and seek courage.

Presider: For the people we have wounded, ignored, excluded, or used:

People: We acknowledge our failure and seek reconciliation.

Absolution Reinterpreted

The presider extends hands over the people. This is not supernatural absolution; it is a solemn communal declaration of moral responsibility and renewed belonging.

Presider: May this gathering strengthen us in honesty, moral repair, and renewed belonging. May we rise from shame into responsibility and from isolation into community.

People: Amen.

Kyrie Alternative

Memory of compassion, teach us mercy.
Teacher of table fellowship, teach us hospitality.
Witness of courage, teach us solidarity and peace.

Hymn of Human Dignity and Collect

On Sundays and solemnities, the following hymn may be sung or said. It may be omitted in penitential seasons or at weekday Masses.

Hymn of Human Dignity

Glory to the dignity of life,
peace to the human family,
honor to the earth that sustains us.

We praise the beauty of compassion.
We bless the courage of truth.
We honor the memory of those who served before us.

For the hungry, let there be bread.
For the grieving, let there be comfort.
For the wounded, let there be repair.
For the stranger, let there be welcome.

In wisdom, courage, and compassion,
let us become a people of peace.

Collect of the Day

The presider says "Let us collect our thoughts" and all keep a brief silence. The collect should gather the purpose of the day in one unified prayer-like reflection.

Presider: Let us collect our thoughts, our griefs, our hopes, and our responsibilities.

Silence is kept.

Presider: May this assembly be formed in dignity and compassion. May our words become honest, our table become open, our memory become wise, and our lives become instruments of care. Strengthen in us the will to repair what is broken, to welcome those who are excluded, and to serve the human family with courage.

People: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

The readings are proclaimed from the ambo. The sequence may be: First Reading, Responsorial Reflection, Second Reading, Gospel-style Ethical Reading. On weekdays, one reading and a Gospel-style Ethical Reading may suffice.

Principle for Readings

Readings should be non-theistic or ethically focused. Suitable sources include the Humanistic Catholic Catechism, wisdom literature, poetry, human rights texts, public moral witness, ecological reflections, and selected Gospel memories that emphasize compassion, mercy, table fellowship, repair, and justice without deity-language.

Reader Acclamations

After First or Second Reading	Reader: Hear the wisdom of human dignity. People: May we receive it with courage.
After Catechism Reading	Reader: Hear the wisdom of embodied ritual. People: May we live what we celebrate.
After Gospel-style Ethical Reading	Deacon/Priest: This is the memory of compassion. People: May we go and do likewise.

Responsorial Reflection

Leader: The table is open.

People: Let all who hunger for dignity come.

Leader: The work of repair is before us.

People: Let all who seek courage come.

Leader: The human family is wounded.

People: Let us answer with compassion.

The homily follows the Gospel-style Ethical Reading. The homily should be brief, ethical, pastoral, and practical.

Reading Set A: Human Dignity

First Reading

A lector proclaims the reading. The people sit.

A reading from the witness of the human family. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of fellowship. The dignity of each person is the foundation of justice, peace, and community.

Reader: Hear the wisdom of human dignity.

People: May we receive it with courage.

Second Reading

A reading from the Humanistic Catholic Catechism. Human dignity is not earned by belief, moral purity, church membership, baptism, ordination, social status, wealth, education, gender, orientation, race, nationality, or background. It belongs to each person as a member of the human family.

Reader: Hear the wisdom of embodied ritual.

People: May we live what we celebrate.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading

The deacon, or the priest if there is no deacon, proclaims this reading. All may stand if able.

A reading from the memory of Jesus. When Jesus ate with those judged by others, he taught that the table is wider than respectability. Those who are excluded must not be forgotten, and those who are wounded must not be left outside the feast.

Deacon or Priest: This is the memory of compassion.

People: May we go and do likewise.

Reading Set B: Compassion and Neighbor-Love

First Reading

Compassion is not sentiment alone. It is the decision to notice suffering, to draw near, to bear cost, and to respond with care. A merciful person does not ask first whether the wounded deserve help, but whether help can be given.

Second Reading

The Church calls people to truthfulness, compassion, accountability, justice, hospitality, reconciliation, and service. Wrongdoing is harm done to self, neighbor, community, creation, or the vulnerable.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading: The Good Samaritan

This reading is adapted for non-theistic proclamation and may be used frequently as the primary ethical Gospel memory.

A man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. They stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead. A religious official came down that road, saw him, and passed by on the other side. Another religious worker also came, saw him, and passed by. But a Samaritan, a stranger to him, came near. When he saw the wounded man, he was moved with compassion. He treated his wounds, brought him to shelter, and took care of him. The question was asked: Which of these was neighbor to the one who fell among robbers? The answer was given: The one who showed mercy. And the word was spoken: Go and do likewise.

Deacon or Priest: This is the memory of compassion.

People: May we go and do likewise.

Reading Set C: Truth, Confession, and Moral Repair

First Reading

Truth is the beginning of repair. No community can heal where harm is hidden, denied, excused, or made invisible. To confess is to come into the light of responsibility and to begin the work of restoration.

Second Reading

Reconciliation is the rite of truth-telling, accountability, moral repair, amends, and restoration to community. Penance is an act of repair, restitution, service, apology, discipline, or renewed ethical practice.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading: Repair Before Ritual

A reading from the memory of Jesus. If you come to the altar and remember that another has something against you, leave your gift there. First seek repair with the one you have harmed. Then return to the table with a clearer heart.

Deacon or Priest: This is the memory of moral courage.

People: May we repair what we can.

Optional Responsorial Reflection

Leader: Where there is denial,

People: let there be truth.

Leader: Where there is harm,

People: let there be repair.

Leader: Where there is shame,

People: let there be responsibility and hope.

Reading Set D: Table Fellowship and Creation

First Reading: Shared Bread

Bread is never only bread. It carries the work of hands, the patience of fields, the hunger of bodies, and the possibility of welcome. A table becomes holy in the human sense when it refuses contempt and makes room for the stranger.

Second Reading: Creation and Embodiment

The Church uses the language of creation to refer to the natural world, the earth, life, embodiment, and the shared environment that sustains human life. Ritual uses material things to express moral and communal truths.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading: The Open Banquet

A reading from the memory of Jesus. When the meal was prepared, the invited guests did not come. Then the host said: Go into the streets and bring in the poor, the wounded, the forgotten, and the overlooked, so that the house may be filled.

Gospel-style Ethical Reading: Learn from the Earth

Consider the birds, the fields, the seed, the harvest, the bread, the cup, and the laborers. Learn from the earth. Life is fragile, generous, and shared. Where there is abundance, let no one be abandoned.

Choose only one Gospel-style Ethical Reading at a given Mass unless a longer vigil service is being celebrated.

Profession and Intercessions

Profession of Humanistic Catholic Identity

On Sundays and solemnities, all stand if able. This may replace a creed. It must not be altered into a supernatural profession.

We affirm the dignity of every person. We affirm the worth of the human family. We affirm the beauty of creation and embodied life. We affirm the need for ritual, memory, and community. We affirm truthfulness, compassion, accountability, and moral repair. We affirm the seven sacraments as central rites of life and belonging. We affirm the Mass as the table rite of memory, solidarity, and shared humanity. We affirm Jesus in memory as a historical model of compassion, courage, table fellowship, and care for the excluded. We affirm the Humanistic Catholic Church as Catholic in external form and humanistic in meaning. Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance.

Universal Intercessions

The deacon or lector announces the intentions from the ambo. The response should be sung or said by all.

Presider: Let us hold before this community the needs of the human family.

Leader: For the hungry, unhoused, abandoned, and afraid: may they find shelter, bread, safety, and human care.

People: May compassion become action.

Leader: For the sick, aging, grieving, and dying: may they be surrounded by tenderness, dignity, presence, and peace.

People: May compassion become action.

Leader: For this church, its Presiding Bishop, clergy, lay ministers, members, online community, parishes, and missions: may we preserve Catholic form with humanistic meaning and serve with humility.

People: May compassion become action.

Preparation of the Table and Gifts

The people sit. The altar is prepared. The corporal is unfolded. The chalice, paten, bread, and wine or grape juice are placed on the altar. A hymn or instrumental music may accompany the preparation.

Presentation of Bread

Presider: Blessed is this bread, fruit of the earth and work of human hands. It will become for us the sign of shared life.

People: May the table teach us compassion.

Presentation of the Cup

Presider: Blessed is this cup, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the sign of memory, joy, suffering, and solidarity.

People: May the table teach us compassion.

Washing of Hands

The presider washes hands at the side of the altar. This action signifies integrity of service, not ritual purity before a deity.

Quietly: May my hands serve with honesty, care, and peace.

Invitation to the Table

Presider: Friends, this table is not private property. It is the sign of shared humanity. Bring your hunger, gratitude, grief, longing, failure, and hope. Come not because you are perfect, but because you are human. Come not to escape responsibility, but to be strengthened for it.

Prayer Over the Gifts

Presider: May this bread and cup become for us signs of dignity, memory, solidarity, and belonging. May this table gather the scattered, restore the weary, challenge the careless, and strengthen the compassionate.

People: Amen.

The Humanistic Eucharistic Prayer I

All stand if able. The presider faces the people for the dialogue, then turns toward the altar for the prayer as local custom allows.

Preface Dialogue

Presider: The table is prepared.

People: We come with gratitude and responsibility.

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them toward compassion and courage.

Presider: Let us give thanks for life, memory, and community.

People: It is right to give thanks and to live with care.

Preface

It is right and good to give thanks for the earth that sustains us, for the hands that plant and harvest, for the workers who prepare bread and cup, for the communities that hold us, and for the memory that teaches us. We give thanks for all who practiced mercy before us: those who fed the hungry, sheltered the stranger, visited the prisoner, cared for the sick, protected the vulnerable, and taught the dignity of every person. Above all, we remember Jesus, whose table fellowship welcomed the excluded, whose courage challenged hypocrisy, whose compassion touched the wounded, and whose memory still calls communities to mercy.

Sanctus Reinterpreted

Holy is the life we share.
Holy is the earth beneath us.
Holy is the table that gathers us.

Blessed are those who come in compassion.
Blessed are those who make peace.
Blessed are those who repair what is broken.

The human family is filled with dignity.

Institution Narrative and Memorial

The presider places hands over the gifts briefly as a sign of attention and communal intention. No consecratory supernatural claim is made.

Eucharistic Memory

Presider: We gather around this table in memory. On the night before his death, Jesus gathered with his friends at table. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it, saying:

The presider takes the bread. The words are spoken clearly.

Take this, all of you, and eat of it: this is my body, given for you. Do this in memory of me.

The presider elevates the bread briefly, then places it on the paten.

Presider: In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it, saying:

The presider takes the cup. The words are spoken clearly.

Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my life poured out in love and solidarity. Do this in memory of me.

The presider elevates the cup briefly, then places it on the corporal.

Memorial Acclamation

Presider: The mystery of memory.

People: We remember the table. We remember the wounded. We remember the excluded. We commit ourselves to compassion.

Offering of the Community

As we share this bread and cup, we offer ourselves to the work of dignity and repair. May this community become welcome for the lonely, courage for the fearful, truth for the dishonest, tenderness for the sick, and bread for the hungry.

Commemoration, Doxology, and Communion Prayer

Commemoration of the Living and the Dead

The presider may name persons or groups. The names of the sick and the dead may be read by a deacon or lector.

We remember those who came before us: teachers, workers, parents, reformers, healers, artists, servants, martyrs of conscience, and all whose lives became gifts to the human family. We remember the dead, especially those known to us and those forgotten by the world. May their memory deepen our humanity.

People: May their memory be a blessing.

Doxology Reinterpreted

The presider raises the bread and cup together. The people respond Amen.

Presider: Through memory, with compassion, and in the shared life of the human family, all honor belongs to dignity, truth, service, and love, now and in every generation.

People: Amen.

Communal Prayer

The following replaces deity-directed prayer. All may extend hands or hold them folded.

Source of our memory, depth of our humanity, let dignity be honored among us. Let compassion take flesh. Let justice be practiced on earth. Give bread to the hungry, shelter to the unhoused, comfort to the grieving, and courage to the afraid. Forgive us through truth and repair, as we seek to forgive and restore. Lead us away from cruelty and indifference. Deliver us from hatred, contempt, and despair. For the work of peace, the labor of love, and the hope of the human family belong to us all. Amen.

The Communion Rite

Sign of Peace

The deacon may invite the peace. The exchange should be brief and respectful. No one is required to touch another person.

Presider: Peace is not only a word but a practice. Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

People: Peace be with you.

Breaking of the Bread

The presider breaks the bread over the paten. If a large host is used, it may be broken into visible pieces. The fraction should be deliberate and reverent.

Presider: We break this bread for the broken places of the world.

People: May we become repairers of what is broken.

Presider: We share this cup for the life of the human family.

People: May we become servants of compassion.

Lamb of God Alternative

Jesus, memory of compassion, you welcomed the excluded: teach us mercy.

Jesus, teacher of table fellowship, you shared bread with the hungry: teach us hospitality.

Jesus, witness of courage, you stood with the wounded: teach us solidarity and peace.

Invitation to Communion

The presider raises the bread and cup over the altar or before the people.

Presider: Behold the bread of shared life. Behold the cup of memory and solidarity. Behold the table of human dignity. Happy are those who come to this table in sincerity and peace.

People: We come as we are. May this table strengthen us in compassion, courage, and belonging.

Distribution of Communion and Concluding Rite

Distribution of Communion

The presider receives first, then gives communion to the deacon, ministers, and people. Communion may be given under one or both signs. Use wine or grape juice according to pastoral judgment and local discipline.

Minister	The bread of shared life.
Communicant	Amen.
Minister	The cup of memory and solidarity.
Communicant	Amen.

Communion music, silence, or a hymn may accompany the distribution. After communion, remaining elements are reverently consumed or returned according to local discipline.

Prayer After Communion

Presider: Let us reflect.

A brief silence is kept.

Presider: We have shared bread and cup. We have remembered compassion. We have received the sign of belonging. May what we have done at this table become visible in our lives. May our hands serve, our words heal, our choices repair, and our community welcome.

People: Amen.

Solemn Blessing Reinterpreted

The presider extends hands over the people. A bishop may use the crozier or make a ceremonial sign of peace.

May you leave this place with dignity. Amen.

May you practice truth with courage. Amen.

May you repair what you can, forgive where you are able, and seek peace where peace is possible. Amen.

Dismissal

Deacon or Presider: The Mass is ended. Go forth in dignity and compassion.

People: We go in peace.

Seasonal Collects and Proper Texts

Use these collects after the opening greeting. They may replace the collect on page 5.

Advent / Season of Longing

May this season awaken longing for a more compassionate world. May we prepare room for courage, hospitality, and truth. May our waiting become service.

Christmas / Season of Birth and Tenderness

May this season honor birth, vulnerability, family, shelter, and tenderness. May every child be welcomed, every household strengthened, and every stranger received with dignity.

Lent / Season of Moral Repair

May this season lead us into honesty, simplicity, discipline, and repair. May we confess harm without excuse and seek reconciliation where reconciliation is possible.

Holy Week / Season of Courage and Grief

May this week teach us courage in the face of betrayal, tenderness in the presence of suffering, and solidarity with all who are condemned, abandoned, or afraid.

Easter / Season of Renewal

May this season renew courage after despair, hope after grief, and service after failure. May life rise again in compassion, justice, and community.

Ordinary Time / Daily Faithfulness

May ordinary days become the place of extraordinary care. May we practice patience, truth, hospitality, and compassion in the daily work of human life.

Masses for Special Needs

These proper texts may be inserted at the collect, intercessions, homily theme, and prayer after communion.

Mass for the Sick

May this gathering surround the sick and suffering with dignity, tenderness, and care. May fear be met with presence, pain with compassion, and loneliness with faithful companionship.

Mass for the Dead

We gather in grief and gratitude. We remember the life of one who has died. May memory become blessing, sorrow become tenderness, and love remain active among those who mourn.

Mass for Reconciliation

May this community have courage for truth, humility for confession, strength for repair, and patience for the long work of reconciliation.

Mass for Marriage

May this covenant be marked by love, fidelity, equality, patience, forgiveness, and shared responsibility. May this household become a place of safety, joy, and mutual care.

Mass for Ordination

May those set apart for ministry serve with humility, teach with clarity, preside with dignity, govern with justice, and care for the human family with compassion.

Mass for the Earth

May our table remind us that bread, cup, water, oil, fire, and breath are gifts of embodied life. May we care for the earth with restraint, gratitude, and responsibility.

Rubrical Appendix and Authorization

Summary Order of Mass

1	Entrance, reverence to altar, greeting
2	Rite of Moral Honesty
3	Hymn of Human Dignity or omission
4	Collect of the day
5	Readings and Responsorial Reflection
6	Gospel-style Ethical Reading and homily
7	Profession and intercessions
8	Preparation of the table and gifts
9	Humanistic Eucharistic Prayer
10	Communion Rite, blessing, dismissal

Forbidden Additions

No minister may insert deity-language, supernatural invocation, supernatural salvation language, angelic or demonic references, divine command language, or claims of supernatural transformation into this Mass.

Permitted Adaptations

Music, posture, incense, bells, vesture, ceremonial movement, number of readings, local intentions, and seasonal texts may be adapted to the pastoral situation, provided the rite remains Catholic in external form and humanistic in meaning.

Altar Book Note

This 20-page Rubrical Edition is a working altar book for the Humanistic Catholic Church. It may be used for public Mass, online Mass, formation of clergy, and ceremonial planning. Future editions may expand the calendar, lectionary, prefaces, blessings, and proper texts.

Final Identity

Catholic in external form. Humanistic in meaning. Traditional Form, Humanistic Substance.

Prepared for the Humanistic Catholic Church
 Primatial See: Ketchikan, Alaska
 Presiding Bishop: Bishop Robert Horwath