Our most important prayer

The Mass is our most important prayer as Catholic Christians. The Church tells us that celebrating the Mass is the “source and summit” of our Christian life. That means that our prayer at Mass on Sunday gives us strength to do good things the rest of the week! It also means that our prayer at Mass is so important that everything else we do should help us to prepare for it.

The word “Mass” is kind of funny. It came about because in the old days, when all the prayers were in Latin, the last words the priest or deacon said were “Ite, missa est.” It meant, “go, you are sent.” (We still hear these words today – “go in peace.”) The word “missa” came to be used to describe the entire prayer!

There are two other words we use at Mass that are good to know. One is “Eucharist.” The word “Eucharist” in Greek means “thanksgiving.” For us, “Eucharist” means the holy meal of Jesus’ body and blood we receive during the Mass.

Another important word is “liturgy.” The word “liturgy” is also from the Greek language. It means “the work of the people.” Work? Yes, work! Because by participating in the Mass, and understanding it more and more, we can truly “work” for all the good things our world needs: peace, joy, and love.

In the Catholic Church, the Mass is said not only every Sunday, but every single day—many times a day! All over the world, all the time, Christians are gathering to remember Jesus’ gift of himself on the Cross, and to renew that gift by receiving his body and blood in the Eucharist. Why do we repeat these same words over and over, so many times? Why not just once and for all? Think for a minute about some of the words you say over and over each day. Do you ever get tired of hearing your family say, “I love you”? Of course not! Saying “I love you” helps the love to grow. Mass is like that. The more we tell God how we feel, the more our love for God will grow.

The Mass is one great prayer, the greatest prayer the Church can offer to God.

“Our Most Important Prayer.” Retrieved from the St. James’ Cathedral website: <https://www.stjames-cathedral.org/kids/mass/themass.htm>

**Questions:**

1. Why is mass the most important prayer for Catholics?
2. What do Christians remember and renew during mass?
3. Define the following words:

**Mass:**

**Eucharist:**

**Liturgy:**