**Liturgy Matters Lesson #6  
 “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

Thank you for joining me as we continue our lessons on “What Happens at Mass.”

Lesson #6 reminds us of our baptism: “In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

While the assembly is still singing, the priest circles the altar with incense as a sign of reverencing the holy table around which and on all that is about to happen is concentrated. “Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold altar that was before the throne. The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel” *(Rev 8:3-4).*

After the song has ended and all are gathered in their places, the first thing the priest does is make the sign of the cross, saying the phrase “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” All of the people likewise sign themselves and answer, “Amen.” The sign expresses in one summary gesture the central event of the Christian faith. We trace it over our bodies to indicate that the event shall make its force felt on our very bodies. The phrase comes from the risen Lord himself, who commanded his 11 disciples to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He adds the promise, "And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world” *(Mt 28:19-20).* As the centuries advanced and Christians continued to reflect on the tremendous mystery hidden in this deceptively simple formula, some theologians could not help but marvel at and enjoy the paradox of the word name in the singular and the three names Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The one God has only one name, but that name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the full name of God. To place this sign and the holy name of God at the beginning of the Mass is actually the only possible way to begin.

May God continue to strengthen us as we grow closer to Him through our understanding and participation in the Holy Mass. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad Zielinski