

What may have changed since you left

The same yesterday, today and for ever.

In short. The Church teaches that the liturgy has an immutable part, divinely instituted, and parts that can be changed.¹ The mystery celebrated in the liturgy is one, but the forms of its celebration are diverse.²

Key points

- The same Paschal mystery is celebrated in every place, from the first community of Jerusalem onward.²
- The liturgy has an immutable part, and parts that can be changed.¹
- No sacramental rite may be modified at the will of the minister or the community.³
- The deposit of faith was entrusted by the apostles to the whole Church.⁴

Try this, this week

1. **Read Hebrews 13:1–9.** Notice the practical advice around verse 8.
2. **Look at the parish website.** Note Mass and confession times.
3. **Arrive ten minutes early.** Pick up a booklet and look over the responses.
4. **Ask someone after Mass** what has changed in the parish. Most people enjoy being asked.

“Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today: and the same for ever.”

Hebrews 13:8, Douay–Rheims

Watch out: what this does not mean

- Not everything is open to change: the liturgy has a part that is divinely instituted, of which the Church is the guardian.¹
- Even the supreme authority in the Church may not change the liturgy arbitrarily.³

Common questions

Why do some prayers sound different?

The Church teaches that some parts of the liturgy can be changed, and that she has the power and on occasion the duty to adapt them.¹ The divinely instituted part is immutable, and the Church is its guardian.¹

Is it still the same Mass?

From the first community of Jerusalem until the parousia, the Churches faithful to the apostolic faith celebrate the same Paschal mystery in every place.²

Remember: The forms may change; Christ does not.

Sources

1. CCC 1205
2. CCC 1200

3. CCC 1125
4. CCC 84

Quotation above: Hebrews 13:8, Douay–Rheims. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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