

# Lamb of God

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In the earliest days of the Church, the Mass was called simply “the breaking of the bread.” It is a paradoxical image: the body of Christ is broken, so that all might become one in him. The “Breaking of the Bread” still has an important place in the Mass. After the Sign of Peace comes the fraction rite, when the priest breaks the eucharistic bread, the Body of Christ. During this rite, we sing a litany: “Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, / have mercy on us. . . . / Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, / grant us peace.” This text is a prayer to Christ, the one whom John the Baptist heralded as the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29, NRSV). We address Christ directly, imploring mercy and peace. In Jesus, God heals our brokenness, and unites us in the one body of Christ. Christ comes to us in our woundedness and brokenness, and heals us, reconciles us, and brings us into communion with his very being.

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