



Faith Matters

Simple reflections on our faith

by Marilyn Bergeron

Why We Go to Mass: A Journey from Routine to Relationship

What draws us to Church every weekend? A sense of duty? A habit? A chance to catch up with friends? Or is it because we know that Jesus died on the cross for our salvation and offers us His Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist?

For many years, we went faithfully to Mass every Sunday to obey God's rules and not for the love of God. We went through the motions, listened to readings, heard the homily, received Communion. Then we went back home...unchanged.

Thirty years ago, as a leader at a youth conference in Ohio, I experienced something different! I wanted to attend Mass, to learn more about my faith and to follow Jesus. I continue to grow in my understanding of the Mass. I'd like to share some of what I have learned with you.

The Mass is an amazing act of love

Consider just the beginning of Mass. We stand as the priest and altar servers approach the front. Nearing the altar, the

priest bows low to show God love and respect. They all genuflect to the Tabernacle to recognize Jesus' presence there. Father then walks up and kisses the altar. It's not an ordinary table; it's where the sacrifice of the Calvary takes place anew. Father is greeting his friend to who he has given his life.

Father then faces us and makes the sign of the cross. Catholics begin prayer with this simple act of faith in the Trinity. Father then opens his arms wide to greet us all with the grace and peace of Jesus Christ. This greeting begins our conversation with God.

Stand, Sit, Kneel

We do a lot of standing, sitting and kneeling during Mass. Why? Standing is a sign of attention and readiness to go and follow Jesus. Sitting is how we hear and process the Word of God. We kneel in adoration and worship when God comes down to us in the Holy Eucharist.

The Pinnacle

Jesus said to His followers, including us:

Amen, Amen I say to you. Unless you eat the bread of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you do not have life within you.”

This is the Consecration, the pinnacle and purpose of the Mass.

After we receive Jesus in the Eucharist, and walk back to our pew, we should be thanking God for His presence in us. We can thank Him for the priest celebrating Mass or ask Him to bless some needy person. His presence is still with us.

Go Deeper

If you want to go deeper, it's important to prepare for Mass. Pick up a “Living with Christ”

missal and go through the readings prior to Mass. Think about the messages in them. Then, when you hear the readings proclaimed at Mass, it's much easier to follow.

Listen carefully to the homily which is part of God's message to you.

There is so much more to learn and share about the celebration of the Mass. Father Mike Schmitz has some wonderful YouTube videos explaining the Mass which are well worth watching. Bishop Barron, Scott Hahn, Dr. Edward Sri, Chris Stefanick are just a few of the powerful speakers on our Catholic faith. I urge you to check them out. 🌹



*“Every Mass in which we participate
fills us with countless graces.”*

St. Alphonsus Liguori