



From the Pastor
25th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
September 24, 2023

EXCUSES FOR NOT GOING TO MASS.

Having finished my 13-part miniseries on the **Apostolic Letter,**

'Desiderio Desideravi,' during my years-long reflection on the **2022-2025 National Eucharistic Revival** or **NER** [our **Parish** website has the past articles], I now start a 5-part miniseries on the 15 most common excuses some people use for not fulfilling the obligation to attend weekly **Mass**. I gleaned these from the www.catholiclink.org website, which offers timely insight into the challenges faced by the **Catholic Church** these days. I begin with this quote from the **NER #55**:

"In recent years, increasing numbers of Christians ... have left their churches and become religiously unaffiliated. We invite Catholics who have left the Church or who no longer practice the faith to come home. We miss you and we love you. We pray that Jesus will draw you back to your Catholic family, his Mystical Body, through his Eucharistic Body. We repeat words attributed to St. Teresa of Calcutta: 'Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the Church. Not because the Church won't let you but because your heart won't let you.'" Here are the excuses ranked by www.catholiclink.org from the most common excuse to the least.

Reason #1: The Church is full of judgmental hypocrites. As **Pope Francis** and others often note, the **Church** is not a museum for **Saints**, but a **hospital** for **sinners**. And no one has the right to **judge anyone else** - for as **Jesus** warned us: **"Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you."** [Matthew 7:1-2] So, those who judge others as hypocrites may just find themselves without forgiveness or mercy since they denied these spiritual gifts to others. This does not excuse **Mass**-goers from striving to be as perfect as **Jesus** ... although no one [except His **Mother!**] will ever be perfect! One good reason for going to **holy Mass** is to hear the **Word** that guides us to become more perfect, to be fed with the **Food** that can help us become better, and to support and - dare I say - **challenge** each other - to become more perfect, day after day.

Reason #2: If God is everywhere, why do I need to go to a Church to be with Him? Yes, **God IS everywhere** - but so is air for the most part. But to be in a place free from pollution or any manmade odors, in a relaxed setting, where we can enjoy a blast of fresh air ... isn't that a better place to be than in a smog-infested, congested, city? While all analogies limp or fail to perfectly make a point, the gist of this example is: the **Church** is to be an oasis that strives to proclaim and make visible what is hidden in all created things: **God's** presence and the saving law of the **Lord**. Just as stargazing can open our eyes to the wonders of creation, **Sacred Scripture** can reveal to us the **Creator**. And just as a day at the beach or a forest can reveal **God's** majesty, the **Eucharist** can enable His awesome power to enter into and change us! As **Saint Maximilian Kolbe** said, **"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion."** For we can be no closer to **God**, or **God** to us, than through the **Gift of Eucharist!**

Reason #3: The Mass is so boring. Let me be blunt: those who go to a sporting event or an opera - without first doing all they can to understand the game or the storyline behind the play - whose fault is it that the game or the opera was boring? First, I assume those who say this are not paying attention and striving to take an active part in the celebration. If so, I agree with them: there is nothing more boring than to be at an event in which we are disinterested.

However, there is no excuse for anyone in our **Parish NOT** to have a deeper understanding of the **holy Mass!** I say that because of: **1]** these very articles in which I try to explain why we do what we do. **2]** The **Parish** pays for everyone to log on for **free** to **FORMED.ORG** which offers **FREE Faith Formation** talks and presentations on the **holy Mass** and other **Rites**, and a treasure chest of information about **Catholicism!** **3]** Each year I explain every part of the **holy Mass** for our kids, their families, and all of us. **4]** We offer **Faith Formation** sessions for all ages, and invite all to serve, if possible, in any liturgical ministry, which is the best way to enter into the **holy Mass**. Next week: more 'excuses' for missing **Mass**.

In His holy Name,

Very Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, VF, KCHS