



From the Pastor
26th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
October 1, 2023

EXCUSES FOR NOT GOING TO MASS.

This is #2 of my 5-part miniseries on the excuses used by some people 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.

Reason #4: I can't receive Holy Communion, so why bother going to Mass. Receiving **Holy Communion** is the highpoint of **Mass**, so all who cannot receive should do all they can to rectify their situation. **Go to Confession**; seek an annulment; let the **Church** validate your **Marriage**; become **Catholic** through the **OCA**. However, joining a worshipping community, hearing **God's word**, meeting other **Catholics**, etc., are all great reasons to go to **Mass** even if you cannot receive **Holy Communion**. Or simply go to 'give thanks,' which is what the word '**Eucharist**' means: it is the **Great Thanksgiving**!

Those who cannot receive should pray an oration that became quite common when no one could receive during **COVID**; it is accredited to **Saint Alphonsus Liguori**: "**My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You have already come, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.**"

Reason #5: Going to Mass with my kids is like being in a wrestling match. They make noise, climb all over me, and can't sit still. Why even bother? Somehow my parents took their five children to **Mass** each week - and took five kids home each week! **Jesus** was not joking when He said, "**Let the children come to me.**" [Mark 10:14] If anyone scorns you because your child gets unruly, remember: **Jesus** became indignant and rebuked those who tried to drive the kids away! When kids go ballistic or get 'temporarily possessed,' take a 'time-out' or go home early. Sit up front so the child can see; no kid wants to look at other peoples' backsides! Join our **Children's Liturgy of the Word** team!

Sometimes the simplest rewards work: make '**Mass Time**' '**Family Time**'. Have a special meal before/after; provide age-appropriate **holy** books for them to read or color; praise good behaviors; let them come with you for **Holy Communion** to receive a blessing. Encourage them to join **CLOW**, the **Children's Choir**, **Altar Servers**, **Epiphany Pageant**, **Passion Play** and every kid-centered event. As **Scripture** says: "**Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it.**" [Proverbs 22:6] By doing so, you will be doing them, yourselves, our world and our **God** a great favor! **[Just don't forget to take them home with you after Mass!]**

Reason #6: I don't like going to Mass. Welcome to Life 101. Most of what we **must** do we do **not** like to do: make beds, cook and clean, take out garbage, get gas, go to work or school, pay bills, cut the grass, shovel snow, change diapers; the list goes on and on and on! Imagine what our world - and we ourselves - would be like if we only did what we **like** to do! I wish this excuse was only used by children, but I do not think any of us truly ever becomes a grown-up!

If we do not like going to **Mass** because we do not understand its meaning or purpose, reread **Reason #3: The Mass is so boring** in last week's article. A sign of true maturity is our willingness to see beyond our limited vision and accept what many have come to believe is invaluable; to trust what countless others have found helpful, if not essential: that the **public communal celebration** of their **Faith** is for our own good.

Many scientific studies have shown that our **spiritual** health has a tremendous impact and irreplaceable effect on our **psychological**, **emotional** and **physical** health. Besides, the purpose of **holy Mass**, the **Sacraments** and other **Rites** is **not** to entertain us or 'make us feel good.' They are encounters with **Christ** and His **Church**! Our presence also has an impact on our family and friends - and even strangers - for when they see us making the effort to publicly express our **Faith**, they are more likely to join in communal worship. Next week: even more so-called 'excuses' for missing **Mass**.

In His holy Name,

Very Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, VF, KCHS