



From the Pastor
27th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
October 8, 2023

EXCUSES FOR NOT GOING TO MASS.

This is #3 of my 5-part miniseries on the excuses used by 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 now faced by the *Catholic Church*.

Reason #7: Sunday is my only day off. As a *Dominican Sister* who taught me used to say, *"Imagine if God took a day off from us!"* In our often 'one-sided' relationship with the *Lord*, we often take for granted or forget all that *God* does for us ... which is everything ... since we did not create, nor can we sustain, ourselves or our world. Yes, most of us work hard - very hard; and we all truly need a break, but the *holy Mass* is supposed to BE the ultimate break, if not the most rewarding respite of all!

For as *Jesus* said, *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."* [Mathew 11:28] How does *Jesus* give us rest? By giving meaning and eternal value to all we say and do. For by uniting our sufferings and sorrows, works and worries, pains and problems to the *Cross of Christ*, they become the means by which *God* builds up His *Kingdom* on earth. And with four opportunities each weekend at our *Parish* to come to *holy Mass* - and with so many *Catholic Churches* near us - getting to *Mass* each week should be no problem. Besides, as the great *Saint Augustine* said: *"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."* So, give *God's* rest a try!

Reason #8: There is nothing in the Bible that says I have to go to Mass. We do not hold the *Protestant* belief in *'Sola Scriptura'*, that the *Bible* contains everything we need to know, say or do. While everything in *Catholicism* is *consistent* with *Sacred Scripture*, and nothing in our *Faith contradicts* what's in the *Bible*, *Jesus* did *not* promise that a *BOOK* would keep us orthodox. At the Last Supper, *Jesus* assured the *Apostles* and their successors: *"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth."* [John 16:12-13a]

With the inspiration and inerrancy provided by the *Holy Spirit*, our *Bishops*, in union with the *Pope*, the *Church* sets many rules and regulations. First, she 'changed' the *Sabbath Day* to *Sunday*, which even most *Protestants* accept; *Seventh Day Adventists*, reject this change and worship on Saturday. Ironically, they dismiss what *Jesus* so vehemently said about the *Eucharist* being His *Real Presence* in the *6th Chapter of John's Gospel!* *Jesus* could not have been more blunt: the *Bread* is His *Flesh*, His *Flesh* is true *Food*, and His *Blood* is true *Drink*. One wonders why the *Church* even needs to *obligate* us to take part in this *Sacrificial Meal* at least once a week! How could we ever want to miss it?

Reason #9: I don't understand the Priest. As a child, I sought the Priest from *India* for *Confession*, assuming if I could not understand him, he could not understand me. [I was shocked to find out how wrong I was about him!] And having gone to *Mass* in the *Vatican* and other places that were not in English, hosting foreign missionaries and ministering with *Priests* from other countries, I feel your pain! For many decades, we sent *American-born Priests* and *Religious Sisters* and *Brothers* to all parts of the world; eventually, they formed their own native-born leaders. [Is their increase in *Vocations* due to their inability to understand us?]

Let me humbly ask you: do you regularly pray for the *Priests* who try to serve you, despite our weaknesses and limitations? Do you support the *Bishop's Annual Appeal* which provides training for our *Seminarians* and ongoing formation for those who are already *Ordained* or *Professed*? Do you truly strive to comprehend those who speak with a heavy accent, or do you mock or insult them? Do you encourage your own sons and daughters, grandchildren or relatives, to consider a *Vocation* to a *Church Ministry*? In any case, the personality or charisms of the *Priest* should not be the main reason for going to *Mass*: it is to hear and receive the *Lord*! Perhaps we need to do our 'homework' before or after *Mass* by using a website or media venue that offers what we do not receive at *holy Mass*. Next week: more so-called 'excuses' for missing *Mass*.

In His holy Name,

Very Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, VF, KCHS