

CLIFF NOTES

by Fr. Clifford Smith

"Mass is boring! I never get anything out of Mass — why do I have to go?"

The Mass is the source and center of our life as Church ... an assembly of believers, a family of the faithful, who come together to **hear** the Word of God & **receive** the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Mass is where we are fed, transformed, strengthened, and sent out for the hard work of being a Christian from Monday through Saturday.

In order to get something out of Mass you have to bring something. You need to bring an openness and hunger: a hunger that is fed by Word and Sacrament. We have to bring ourselves to pray for and with each other.

The Mass is not entertainment. It's not a show or a spectator event. It is worship of the God who made us, loves us, and saves us.

Here are some other reasons to go to Mass:

The Third of the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God is, "***Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day***" (Exodus 20:8). For 2,000 years the Christian Churches have understood that as taking time for Church on Sunday, for Catholics that means Mass and hopefully some Faith Formation.

The Mass was instituted at the Last Supper by Jesus before his Crucifixion.

When the hour came, he [Jesus] took his place at the table with the apostles . . . Then he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you. Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:14,19).

When we celebrate the Mass, we recall the Last Supper, as Jesus commanded us to do ... we remember and re-present [*make truly and really present*] his great act of love for us on the Cross — taking our sins upon himself so that we, if we follow his commandments, can live with him forever in heaven. ***In the Mass the bread and wine become the Real Presence of Jesus Christ ... human and Divine.***

The Church teaches that we must fulfill the command of Jesus ("*Do this in memory of me*") by attending Sunday Mass (*or the Vigil Mass the night before*). The ***Catechism of the Catholic Church*** (1994, pp. 493-94) explains that Mass attendance on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is part of what it means to be Catholic.

Be patient. Bring an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving to Mass, and you will receive great spiritual riches: consolation, confidence, peace, deep happiness, and spiritual strength for the challenges of life.