

How do we participate in the Mass?

We, the lay faithful, are a real and integral part of the celebration of the Mass. We are not simply “spectators in an audience”, removed from the action. Church documents tell us that: “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. ... This full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else.” (SC 14)

There are a few ways we can increase our participation in Mass. Preparing ourselves before Mass is an excellent way to begin. Last week we discovered that the Mass is an intimate meeting between each of us and God. Take a few moments in silence before Mass to review – am I prepared to meet God right now? Do I love Him, or even know Him? What is on my mind and heart that I need to bring to God? Review the readings and listen to what God is speaking to you –each Sunday there is a specific, private message only for you – your love letter from God. If you are prepared and listening, you will begin to hear the words that God is whispering just to you.

Next week we will discover how our movements and gestures, standing, sitting, kneeling, bowing, are more than “light aerobics”. They have very significant meanings and should be approached with intention – stand like you mean it! We’ll also look at our responses and prayers – are we reciting empty words or are we paying attention and meaning what we say? As we are careful to “read the fine print” before entering into a civil contract it is even more necessary to know what we are vowing and promising at each Mass before entering into a covenant with God that costs us our life.

On roadways, the most dangerous driver is one who is not fully aware of his surroundings – that driver could bring death on himself or others. When we come to Mass, God longs for us to participate with all our mind, body and soul fully engaged – see how active participation has the power to change our experience of Mass!