



Boston Catholic Journal

www.boston-catholic-journal.com
editor@boston-catholic-journal.com

A House of Prayer



"It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer."
Saint Luke 19.4

... not a place to socialize, not a place of idle chatter ...the latest gossip, sports coverage, or your daughter's outstanding SAT scores.

*As you are sitting awaiting Mass, it is good, now and then, to remind yourself ... just by the way ... that **God Himself lives there** – in Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar ... you know ... that little gold box or turret most often shunted off to some obscure and unobtrusive side as an afterthought lest it overshadow or compete with the various "Lay Ministries" (music, lector, greeter, "servers", (*extraordinary*) "ministers", etc. ... which clamor for your attention.*

God just happens to *be* in that little box (it is called the *Tabernacle*). Perhaps you are not aware of it. You are not alone. As Pope John Paul II pointed out, "not only do [most Catholics] not know the basic aspects of Christian dogma, but in great part [they have] lost even the memory of the cultural elements of Christianity."

When was the last time you entered a Church where the congregation, awaiting the opening procession, was filled, not with chatter, but with reverential silence, steeped in prayer, meditation, reflection ... preparation?

Here and there a person kneels and prays, but most are busy with things other than God.

They are turned casually backwards in their pews, arms spread out and relaxed over the backs of the benches, laughing and chortling with the people behind them, or waving frantically to people 15 rows behind them who are themselves too busy talking to notice the waving hand now attended by a calling voice! In the meanwhile, the ever present "ministers-of-this-that-and-the-other" running breathlessly between aisles and pews to greet this one, or to briefly sit and talk with that one – whatever redounds most to the notability of their benign and indispensable presence ...

Everyone is greeted ... except God. So many are desperately vying to call attention to *themselves* ... except God. He's shy in this way.

In God we Trust

In fact, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that the atmosphere, by and large, is not unlike what we encounter in our banks as we await our disbursements and find acquaintances in the lobby. The difference is that the bank will not tolerate the loitering and we are decidedly less boisterous in our comportment. We could even say that we experience a more subdued and quiet sense of reverence in the bank before money than we do in Church before God.

To carry the analogy a bit further, we find that most, in fact, have not come to Church to receive the *Deposit* of Faith at all; rather, for a *Withdrawal* ... a withdrawal from the "Treasury of the Merits of the Saints" – and from that curious gold box so carefully (and so ... revealingly) segregated from the "worship space" ...

The analogy is not altogether unfitting. Christ Himself said that, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Saint Luke 12.34)

Are you making a deposit today, or a withdrawal?

Where will you go for it?

And will you know the difference when you get there?

God's House is not a social parlor, or a parade of inflated personalities. It is a House of Prayer.

Pray.



Copyright © 2004 - 2008 Boston Catholic Journal. All rights reserved.