



Boston Catholic Journal

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Questions & Answers



about *Authentic Catholic Teaching*

QUESTION:

- **How to Survive the New Mass (*Novus Ordo*) without losing Sanity, Sanctity, or the Sense of the Sacred.**

"My question is about attending the new Mass. I find it very unnerving to attend this Mass as I feel that it is more of a social hour than time I can spend with my Lord and assisting at Mass. Besides I always attended a Mass said in Latin and with people who dressed respectfully for our Lord and women who covered their heads in respect. So my question to you is how do I go to this new Mass not really feeling like I'm attending Mass. I feel like I am just doing this for show."

LH

ANSWER

Dear LH,

First, thank you for the courage it took to ask about the Elephant in the Room that everyone sees and no one wants to talk about. Even our priests. Especially our priests --- and more especially our bishops who are too deeply involved in other things of a more ... social nature, and decidedly more pressing than the salvation of souls.

The short answer:

- Buy a **1962 Roman Missal** (available from [Baronius Press](#) and other publishers), go to page 9, the "**Liturgical Calendar**", find the *month* and *date* of the Mass for the forthcoming Sunday (or weekday), hunker down in a back pew and open it to pages 889 - 896 ("**Preparation for Holy Mass**") **BEFORE** Mass begins.
- **When Mass proper begins**, do as the rest of the congregation does (if kneeling is not practiced --- yes, we know, incredible, but it happens --- *kneel anyway* when you know you should --- especially during the Canon of the Mass when the species of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Most Holy Body and the Most Precious Blood of Christ during the Holy Eucharist, and after receiving Him in Holy Communion --- even if everyone just sits and drapes their arms over the backs of the pews). **You have no obligation to join in singing** that you are "The Light of the World" (you probably are not and neither am I) or any other maudlin ditty. At times of singing, you can quietly read or re-read the Gospel or Epistles in your Roman Missal --- fiercely focusing on them to drown out the strident singing and the banging of the drums and piano. This requires holy focus. Pray to Mary. She will help you. Everyone is paying attention to everyone else --- **you** are paying attention to God and the Readings in your Missal.

- Be resolute in fixing your gaze upon the Tabernacle in which dwells our Blessed Lord, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. He is there! What do you care of what others are paying attention to? *You may be the only person there who knows what is really going on* behind the clamor and distractions surrounding you: *the very Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross* ... and you are standing or kneeling at the foot of the Cross. HE is why you are there! Focus on Him! He is, after all, focusing on *you*! It is you, Christ, Mary, and the Holy Angels surrounding the Altar. They did not come to listen to the "music" or to be entertained by the "Music Ministry" or the antics of the priest. They came for you. They were waiting for you. And now you are there. To Whom, then, will you pay close attention? At Whose feet will you sit? Will you mount Calvary to be with Him under the Cross ... or join the minstrels who would drop their instruments and fall into awe and silence before the Crucified Who is on that Cross, and on that Altar before them --- could they see Him with the eyes of Faith. *Close your eyes* and see Him Whom others fail to see with waking eyes!
- Fold your hands in front of you during the "**Sign of Peace**" and politely bow to any who turn to you, front and side, without turning around. They will get the message that you do not wish to shake hands, talk, laugh, kiss or run across the aisle to greet everyone possible. They will respect that. If someone is insistent, nicely tell them that you do not wish to pass around your illness (we all have ailments, so it is not lying). They will stay clear of you.
- Fold your hands reverently before you as you go to Communion, heedless of the indifferent carriage of others. You know Whom you approach. And if you can, if it is physically possible to you, at least genuflect on one knee --- right to the floor --- and bow your head before you arise to receive Him, the King of Kings. Do not be ashamed to honor Him so. He promised to those that were ashamed of Him on Earth, that he would be ashamed of them before His Father in Heaven and His holy Angels. (St. Matthew 10.33). Saint Francis of Assisi, the man recognized to be the most Christ-like of all men,

did not consider himself worthy to hold Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist in his hands. For that reason he never became a priest. Receive Him in Holy communion on your tongue, knowing that Father Francis himself did likewise. It is an act of utter humility and love.

- After Mass, do not flee as the others. What have you been given? Ten lepers approached Christ to be healed, and only one returned to give thanks (Saint Luke 17.12-19). Do likewise. Go to Him in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar after Mass and give Him thanks and praise. The gift you were given is far greater than the gift given the lepers. Christ's very self! Body and Blood!
- Remember that on Calvary there were many, and even some gambled beneath Him. Do not be ashamed to do as Mary did, and not the cruel soldiers. Go to Him. And do not judge the crowd around Him at the foot of the Cross at Mass. We see appearances. God alone sees the heart. Some there are who love much and suffer much. Do not disdain them because the crowd is loud around them, too --- even as the crowd was loud and scornful as Christ hung on the Cross and only Mary and John remained.

The longer answer:

Yours is a question that deeply vexes, even unsettles, Catholics with a deep sense of the sacred and an earnest desire to worship God alone in a manner due His Divine Majesty. Even this very term "His Divine Majesty" is seldom, if ever heard, in the New Mass. Somehow, it offends our sense of democracy; the "progressive" notion that, not only are *all equal before God* (bishop, priest and laity alike), but that God Himself is trespassing upon our cherished sense of a presumed, if politely unstated, equality with Him. Catholics no longer "do transcendence". God is *imminent* in us all --- rather than *transcending* us and everything. In celebrating *ourselves* we

celebrate *Him* --- or so we are urged to believe. The logic is sound ... even if the premises are deeply flawed --- in fact, completely untrue. In philosophy, *Modus Ponens* always produces a sound logical argument --- that is to say, the *form* of the argument is always valid even if the *terms* themselves are ludicrous.

WE ... are now the Light of the World

This loss of transcendence, aptly supplanted by a suffocating sense of imminence (indwelling) is a major factor contributing to our loss of the sense ---and Presence --- of God. *Christ* is no longer the Light of the World: "***We are the light of the world***" as the ditty goes in virtually every parish and quite nearly at every Mass. God is an interloper in His own House; a disruptive Guest with a Divine attitude Who presumes to eclipse this "light" by momentarily distracting us from ourselves during that brief moment of Transubstantiation that we politely accord Him before resuming the celebration of ourselves and the absolute certainty of our salvation. We are the tenants who have evicted God from His own House, much as the tenant farmers in the Gospels.¹ It has largely ceased to be the "House of **God**" and has become "**Our Faith Community**", our "**Our Prayer Space**", terms as bizarre and disconnected with the continuity of the Church as the practices that most often occur within them. The focus is "We", "Ours" ... in a word, the apotheosis of the *self* over God.

Think of the stultifying term, "**We** are Church" ... apart from its ungrammatical format (languages that use *the definite* ("the") and *the indefinite* ("a") *article* use it to articulate a distinction between things specific ("the house", meaning *this particular and unique* house) and things general ("a house" meaning *any house apart from distinguishing features specific to it*). This is no quibbling with words, however silly and foreign they may sound. It is a deliberate divesting of the Catholic Church's *unique* role as the means to salvation instituted by Christ Himself.² Think of "**We are Government**". Which government? What kind of government? Of what country? Is it the government of an empire? A republic? A democracy? A regime? There

are no distinguishing features to which we can appeal. It is a senseless and meaningless utterance, because the statement lacks anything *definite* that we can predicate of it. It is not "*the Church*", or even "*a Church*" ... it is just, well, ... "Church."

Equally noteworthy, apart from *what* church it is (which we cannot answer), is *whose* church it is. It is no longer *God's* Church --- it is *our* Church. Even if we no longer know *what* it is, we at least know *who* it belongs to. It belongs to *us* ... not *God*. It is *our* Church. In fact, its only distinguishing feature is that, whatever it is, it is *ours*. --- and not Christ's. *It is us! "We are Church!"* For 2000 years (minus 40) it was *the Body of Christ* of which He is the Head. ³

Celebrating Ourselves

Is it any wonder, then, that at the New Mass, the *Novus Ordo* (still valid *despite* its being trivialized and much abused. See the heresy of Donatism which holds that the Sacraments are invalid, and even the Mass itself, if the presiding priest is unworthy) we *celebrate ourselves* --- rather than worship God. The focus appears to be upon everything and everyone --- from the show-host priest striding jestingly in the aisles, to the miserable cacophony of pianos, drums, trap sets, cymbals, guitars, and the most dismal "folk music" (think Joan Baez and Cat Stevens) that ceased to exist 30 years ago everywhere except in the Catholic Church, to the divas inviting your applause, and Kiddie-Hour at the Altar --- *everyone and everything* ... except Jesus Christ in *the Most Holy Sacrifice* (absolutely *the most central feature* of the Mass, apart from which there is no Mass; a now "antiquated" notion which is no longer spoken of --- let alone *emphasized* --- in most "modern" Catholic Churches.)

In short, we have not lifted ourselves to Heaven, but dragged God down the Earth --- and like our priests, He, too, has largely become rather "one of the guys" ... with a cameo appearance in the Most Holy Eucharist.

We deign to favor Him with our presence at Mass ... smug in our certainty that He is keenly aware of the sleep-in, sports event, or other social obligation that *we* have sacrificed for *Him* --- and of which He is surely, and most appropriately, not only cognizant but deeply grateful.

Yes, the sacred nature of the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is often trivialized ... and by many unknown. But *you* know, LH.

In short, yes, you and I can survive the appalling lack of reverence at so many Masses. We must ... because Christ Himself must. Day in and day out.

Mother Teresa held that the most effective means of conversion is personal example. It starts with one. And beholding the beauty of the one, another comes to know this beauty also.

God keep you.

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Joseph Mary del Campos

Editor

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¹ St. Matthew 21.33-41 Saint Matthew 16.17-19

² St. Matthew 16.17-19

³ Colossians 1:18



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