

EMBRACING THE CHANGES

Deepen Faith - Nurture Hope - Celebrate Life

Beginning Sunday, November 27, 2011, the First Sunday of Advent, there will be changes in the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Mass. Preparing for these changes will provide us with an opportunity to examine and renew our celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy that stands at the heart of Catholic Christian Life, and to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the Liturgy, nurture liturgical practices that will lead to fuller liturgical participation, and celebrate the Liturgy with renewed purpose.

CELEBRATING THE LORD'S DAY

On Sunday, we gather as the Body of Christ to celebrate the Lord's Day, the day of Christ's Resurrection. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus rose on the first day of the week-the day following the Jewish Sabbath. Each Sunday is a "little Easter" - a celebration of the central mysteries of our faith.

THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST

The primary way in which we celebrate the Lord's Day is with our participation in the Sunday Eucharist. This celebration is not a solitary, private event. Instead, we come together as the People of God, the Church, to worship with one heart and one voice. When members of our church community are absent from this gathering, they are missed. No member of the faithful should be absent from the Sunday Eucharist without a serious reason. The Liturgy should be the first thing on Sunday's schedule, not the last. We should arrive on time, prepared in mind and heart to fully participate in the Mass. Those who cannot attend because of illness or the need to care for infants or the sick deserve our prayers and special attention. Private prayer, though essential to the spiritual life, can never replace the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy and the reception of Holy Communion.

KEEPING SUNDAY-ALL DAY

Celebrating the Sunday Eucharist-though central and essential-does not complete our observance of Sunday. In addition to attending Mass each Sunday, we should also refrain "from those activities which impede the worship of God and disturb the joy proper to the day of the Lord or the necessary relaxation of mind and body" (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 453). Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life. (CCC, no. 2186) To celebrate the Lord's Day more fully, consider trying the following:

- +Don't use Sunday as your catch-all day for errands and household chores.
- +Share a family dinner after Mass. Have the whole family join in the preparation and cleanup.
- +Go for a walk or bike ride and give thanks to God for the beauty of nature.
- +Spend time reading the Bible or a spiritual book.
- +Pray the Rosary or the Liturgy of the Hours, alone or with others.
- +Visit parishioners and others who are homebound.
- +Turn off your gadgets and enjoy the silence.

As we take time each week to celebrate the Paschal Mystery in the Eucharist and to rest from the burdens of our daily lives, we remind ourselves that we are made in the image and likeness of God who "rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken" (Gn 2:2).

Based upon Roman Missal Formational Materials provided by the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops