

Dear Padre,

I work hard all week and look forward to sleeping in on Sundays. Why should I get out of bed and go to Mass?

I imagine that your parish provides suitable Mass times, even for late sleepers. But there are overpowering reasons for attending Mass. First, I'll discuss how the Mass is our present-day connection with the Last Supper, the Passover meal Jesus celebrated with his apostles. As observant Jews, they commemorated their ancestors' escape from slavery in Egypt. Jesus used his



final Passover meal to teach us how to escape a bondage crueler than the Jews experienced in Egypt—the enslavement of sin.

The next day, Good Friday, Jesus would die on the cross. Think of it: Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, became human to teach us about God's love for

us. The people's reaction to this goodness was to kill Jesus in an inhuman way.

In response, God would have been justified in destroying the world, as he did in reaction to the people's depravities during Noah's time. Instead, God gave us further evidence of his patience and forgiveness. There is nothing our Father would not forgive, including the sin of killing Jesus. At the Last Supper, Jesus said: "This is my blood..., which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

Jesus' death, which we remember during the Mass, liberates us from sin. It also liberates us from death itself. Because Jesus in his mortal body was willing to die, he shows us the plan God the Father has for each of us—a resurrection like Jesus'. The Eucharist is our thanksgiving for these gifts from God.

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Monday
JANUARY 17
St. Anthony,
Abbot

1 Sm 15:16–23
Mk 2:18–22

Tuesday
JANUARY 18
Weekday

1 Sm 16:1–13
Mk 2:23–28

Wednesday
JANUARY 19
Weekday

1 Sm 17:32–33,
37, 40–51
Mk 3:1–6

Thursday
JANUARY 20
Weekday

1 Sm 18:6–9; 19:1–7
Mk 3:7–12

Friday
JANUARY 21
St. Agnes,
Virgin and Martyr

1 Sm 24:3–21
Mk 3:13–19

Saturday
JANUARY 22
Day of Prayer for
the Legal Protection
of Unborn Children

2 Sm 1:1–4, 11–12,
19, 23–27
Mk 3:20–21

Sunday
JANUARY 23
Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Neh 8:2–4a, 5–6, 8–10
1 Cor 12:12–30
or 12:12–14, 27
Lk 1:1–4; 4:14–21

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

We go to Mass because we are sinners and we want to receive God's pardon, to participate in the redemption of Jesus, in his forgiveness. The confession which we make at the beginning is not pro forma. It is a real act of repentance! I am a sinner and I confess it—this is how the Mass begins!

GENERAL AUDIENCE, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

