

Dear Padre,

I haven't been to Mass in a long time, but lately I feel drawn to come again. Can you help me better understand the Mass?

Welcome home! To learn more about the Mass, you might consider participating in your parish's program for those who are thinking about joining the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, we can offer five principles that form the foundation for what happens at Mass.

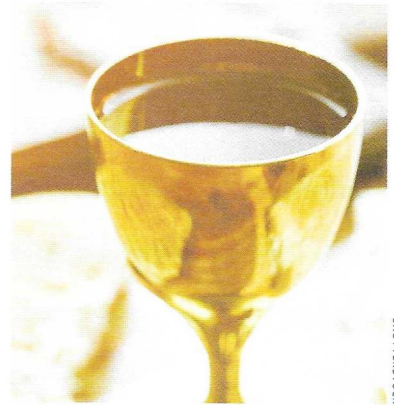
• **Participation rather than passive attendance:** Mass is a time of prayerful activity—listening intently, praying fervently, reflecting quietly, singing and worshipping joyfully.

• **Gratitude for God's mercy as we acknowledge our sinfulness:** There are several occasions during Mass when we are called to acknowledge that we sin, but also that mercy and forgiveness are offered freely to all who acknowledge their imperfections and sinful behavior.

• **Word and sacrament:** The liturgy comprises the Liturgy of the Word (penitential act, Scripture readings, homily, and prayers of the faithful) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (presentation of gifts, eucharistic prayer, and Communion rite). Both are important.

• **Christ's Real Presence:** Under the forms of bread and wine (the Eucharist), the Real Presence of Christ retains a prominent place in the Mass. Christ is also present—in different ways—in the words of Scripture, in the presence of the priest, and in the assembly gathered in his name.

• **A celebration of family and community:** Jesus fostered a sense of family among his disciples. Parish liturgies should be a time when young and old, rich and poor, families and single people join together to experience unity in Christ Jesus. ●



SHUTTERSTOCK

The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

MONDAY

December 26
*St. Stephen,
First Martyr*
Acts 6:8–10;
7:54–59
Mt 10:17–22

TUESDAY

December 27
*St. John,
Apostle and
Evangelist*
1 Jn 1:1–4
Jn 20:1a, 2–8

WEDNESDAY

December 28
*Holy Innocents,
Martyrs*
1 Jn 1:5–2:2
Mt 2:13–18

THURSDAY

December 29
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 2:3–11
Lk 2:22–35

FRIDAY

December 30
*Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and
Joseph*
Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Col 3:12–21 or
Col 3:12–17
Mt 2:13–15, 19–23

SATURDAY

December 31
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 2:18–21
Jn 1:1–18

SUNDAY

January 1, 2023
*Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God*
Nm 6:22–27
Gal 4:4–7
Lk 2:16–21



CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The great mystery of our faith is shown in this simple sign of the Nativity scene....God loves us to the point of sharing our humanity and our lives. He never leaves us alone; he accompanies us with his hidden, but not invisible, presence. In all circumstances, in joy as in pain, he is the Emmanuel, God-with-us.

HOMILY, SHRINE OF GRECCIO, RIETE, ITALY, DECEMBER 1, 2019

Daybreaks inspires during our Church's holiest seasons.

Leading Catholic voices inspire the faithful with daily reflections & prayers for Advent and Lent. Including: Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Dr. Mary Katharine Deeley, Sr. Dianne Bergant, Fr. Paul Turner, and more at Liguori.org.