

Dear Padre,

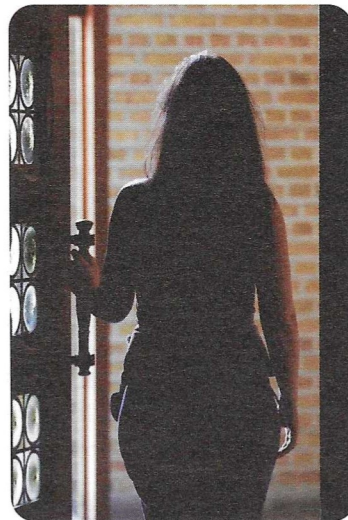
While on vacation, I attended Mass at a church where many people left right after Communion. Why would they do this?

Canon law says the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass on Sundays and other holy days. We are expected to attend the entire Mass.

A misunderstanding of this law may be traced to a pre-Vatican II teaching. Some theologians taught that the Mass had three main parts: offertory, consecration, and Communion. Some people reasoned that their obligation would be fulfilled by attending only those parts of the Mass. They felt justified in coming late and leaving early.

This changed with the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The Mass is divided into four sections (introductory rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, concluding rite), and Christ is present throughout the Mass. Attending Mass means being there from the processional hymn through the recessional hymn.

Some people have valid reasons for leaving Mass early, such as feeling ill or taking a crying child from church. Perhaps they are traveling and need to get to the airport on time. Still, I also wonder why there is a great exodus before the Mass has ended in some churches. In my opinion, people who are in the habit of leaving early should reconsider that practice. ●



GOODMORNINGPHOTO / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Victor Karls, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

MONDAY

January 22

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
2 Sm 5:1–7, 10
Mk 3:22–30

TUESDAY

January 23

Weekday
2 Sm 6:12b–15, 17–19
Mk 3:31–35

WEDNESDAY

January 24

St. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
2 Sm 7:4–17
Mk 4:1–20

THURSDAY

January 25

Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22
Mk 16:15–18

FRIDAY

January 26

Sts. Timothy and Titus, Bishops
2 Tm 1:1–8 or Ti 1:1–5
Mk 4:26–34

SATURDAY

January 27

Weekday
2 Sm 12:1–7a, 10–17
Mk 4:35–41

SUNDAY

January 28

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Dt 18:15–20
1 Cor 7:32–35
Mk 1:21–28



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Brothers and sisters, before the Lord's call, which can reach us in a thousand ways—through others, happy or sad events—our attitude at times might be rejection. But God's call is always love: we have to try to discover the love behind each call, and it should be responded to only with love.

ANGELUS, ROME, JANUARY 17, 2021

Pope Francis meets with "Phone Friend" volunteers of the Samaritans Italy in 2017. © L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO