



From the Pastor
27th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
October 8, 2023

EXCUSES FOR NOT GOING TO MASS. This is #3 of our 5-part miniseries on the excuses used by people for not fulfilling the obligation to attend weekly **Mass**. We gleaned these from the www.catholiclink.org website, which offers

timely insight into the challenges now faced by the **Catholic Church**.

Reason #7: Sunday is my only day off. As a **Dominican Sister** who taught me used to say, "Imagine if God took a day off from us!" In our often 'one-sided' relationship with the **Lord**, we often take for granted or forget all that **God** does for us ... which is everything ... since we did not create, nor can we sustain, ourselves or our world. Yes, most of us work hard - very hard; and we all truly need a break, but the **holy Mass** is supposed to BE the ultimate break, if not the most rewarding respite of all!

For as **Jesus** said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." [Mathew 11:28] How does **Jesus** give us rest? By giving meaning and eternal value to all we say and do. For by uniting our sufferings and sorrows, works and worries, pains and problems to the **Cross of Christ**, they become the means by which **God** builds up His **Kingdom** on earth. And with four opportunities each weekend at our **Parish** to come to **holy Mass** - and with so many **Catholic Churches** near us - getting to **Mass** each week should be no problem. Besides, as the great **Saint Augustine** said: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." So, give **God's** rest a try!

Reason #8: There is nothing in the Bible that says I have to go to Mass. We do not hold the **Protestant** belief in '*Sola Scriptura*,' that the **Bible** contains everything we need to know, say or do. While everything in **Catholicism** is *consistent* with **Sacred Scripture**, and nothing in our **Faith** *contradicts* what's in the **Bible**, **Jesus** did *not* promise that a **BOOK** would keep us orthodox. At the Last Supper, **Jesus** assured the **Apostles** and their successors: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he

comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." [John 16:12-13a]

With the inspiration and inerrancy provided by the **Holy Spirit**, our **Bishops**, in union with the **Pope**, the **Church** sets many rules and regulations. First, she 'changed' the **Sabbath Day** to **Sunday**, which even most **Protestants** accept; **Seventh Day Adventists**, reject this change and worship on Saturday. Ironically, they dismiss what **Jesus** so vehemently said about the **Eucharist** being His **Real Presence** in the **6th Chapter** of **John's Gospel**! **Jesus** could not have been more blunt: the **Bread** is His **Flesh**, His **Flesh** is true **Food**, and His **Blood** is true **Drink**. One wonders why the **Church** even needs to **obligate** us to take part in this **Sacrificial Meal** at least once a week! How could we ever want to miss it?

Reason #9: I don't understand the Priest. As a child, I sought the Priest from **India** for **Confession**, assuming if I could not understand him, he could not understand me. [I was shocked to find out how wrong I was about him!] For many decades, we sent **American-born Priests** and **Religious Sisters** and **Brothers** to all parts of the world; eventually, they formed their own native-born leaders. [Is their increase in **Vocations** due to their inability to understand us?!]

Let me humbly ask you: do you regularly pray for the **Priests** who try to serve you, despite our weaknesses and limitations? Do you support the **Catholic Annual Appeal** which provides training for our **Seminarians** and ongoing formation for those who are already **Ordained** or **Professed**? Do you truly strive to comprehend those who speak with a heavy accent, or do you mock or insult them? Do you encourage your own sons and daughters, grandchildren or relatives, to consider a **Vocation** to a **Church Ministry**? In any case, the personality or charisms of the **Priest** should not be the main reason for going to **Mass**: it is to hear and receive the **Lord**! Perhaps we need to do our 'homework' before or after **Mass** by using a website or media venue that offers what we do not receive at **holy Mass**. Next week: more so-called 'excuses' for missing **Mass**.

In Christ,

Father Mark

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