

IS GOING TO MASS ESSENTIAL?

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS AT MASS?

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

THE MASS - HOW IT ORIGINATED - Part 1

I was recently having a discussion with some of my friends about the decline in Mass attendance by fellow Catholics, and how the pandemic situation has contributed for so many to get used to remain at home on Sunday, rather than return to Church and treat Sunday Mass as ESSENTIAL.

Since I knew that my friends lived in different areas of the city, I enquired if they went to Mass regularly.

One replied: “if I am free, I try to go..., it all depends...”

One said: “I usually go at major occasions like Christmas and Easter, as well as funerals and weddings. But I do my best at least on these important occasions.”

The third one stated: “I, too, go on important occasions like weddings and funerals, out of respect of the people who have invited me. Otherwise, I prefer to pray at home...”

The fourth one replied: “Actually, to be honest, I have not been to Mass since I received my Confirmation, in grade eight.”

Then he added: “As far as I can remember, and also from what I hear, Mass is somewhat boring... I don’t get much out of it. Rather than pretending, I prefer to not go at all...”

I thanked my friends for their honest answers. Then they said to me: “Ok, now it’s our turn to ask you: **WHY DO YOU GO TO MASS EVERY SUNDAY?** What do you get out of it? What is it that makes you go on a regular basis?”

“I am glad you asked”, I said. “But I cannot give you a quick answer or a brief explanation. It would not be fair to you. I need to explain to you how the Mass originated and how it has evolved over time.

The subject is too important to be covered during one conversation. So I ask you to be patient and to be willing to meet a few times to listen and discuss while we enjoy some coffee and donuts together.

And so, on the following week we met for our first discussion on the Mass, as I began with the introduction:

“For Catholics Sunday Mass is central to their faith.

Going to Sunday Mass is so important to their spiritual survival, that missing Sunday Mass deliberately means risking one’s eternal salvation!

It follows that unless one is prevented by illness or by exceptional involuntary circumstances, like our present COVID-19 pandemic situation, as directed by our Bishops, Catholics are reminded that participating at Sunday Mass is crucial and very ESSENTIAL to their life as Christians.

You see, Mass began more than two thousand years ago, not in a church building like ours today, but in ancient Israel, on the last three days that Jesus spent before dying on the cross, on mount Calvary.

He had tried to prepare his closest followers for this crucial moment in his life, by revealing to them that his way of living, his teachings, his loyalty to God the Father, and the demands that he made on those who professed to be true observers of God’s Law, had earned him many enemies, particularly among the religious leaders.

The time was ripe, and his enemies had been seeking an opportunity to have him arrested under any pretext, and have him executed, thus freeing themselves of an inconvenient reminder of their double standards and self-serving interests.

The religious festivity of the Passover offered such opportunity.

NEXT WEEK: what happened on Thursday night, when Jesus celebrated Passover with his friends.