

Catholic

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Why I Go to Mass

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How many of the things you did when you were ten years old do you still do today? A lot of things I used to do I don't do now. This is especially true of physical activities. Football is a thing of the past for me.

Even my prayer life has changed. There are some prayers and devotions that I no longer pray. However,

Mass remains constant—in my life and in the life of the Church. After 2,000 years, God's invitation to the banquet still stands.

In this *Update* we'll look at five reasons why I go to Mass. What are your reasons? I hope mine will help you to reflect on yours.



CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

1. I need others to pray well.

It is hard to do difficult things alone. And following Jesus can be tough work. One of the reasons why Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers and other similar programs work is because they are group efforts. To change our lives—in biblical terms, to *repent*, to *convert*—we need the help and support of others. At Mass I join with others who are also trying to live the gospel and follow Jesus.

Sometimes when I try to make good decisions—decisions based on gospel values—I get overwhelmed by the extent of social evils in the world. How can I live justly in the midst of so much injustice? How can I live gospel poverty in the midst of so much conspicuous consumption? How can I forgive in a world that seeks vengeance?

At Mass I'm reminded and assured that I'm not alone in my efforts. I'm a member of the Church. I'm a member of the body of Christ. I share in the Spirit of Christ and I am empowered by that Holy Spirit. At each Eucharist I hear the words: "Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." Together we can make a difference in this world. Together with Christ we can make a tremendous difference. And at Mass we are truly gathered with Christ: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).



2. The Mass enables me to pray with my whole body.

When I pray by myself, at home, I pray mainly with words. I "talk to God"—that's what I was taught prayer is, talking to God. But when I go to Mass, I pray with more than words; I pray with my whole body. I pray with bread and wine, water and oil, coming together and going apart, standing still and processing forward, lighting candles and smelling flowers, even dust and ashes!

At Mass I acknowledge that I am more than just my head or my soul. I am saved body and soul. I am saved body, mind, and spirit. And I am saved by a God who is more than just spirit. I am saved by a God who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Because of the Incarnation, I can approach God not only with words, but with the elements of my daily life: eating and drinking, sharing meals and singing songs.



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