



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

This is part 3 in a series on how to attend Mass, to get more out of coming. To review, here were the three bullet points from last week: 1. Look for one point or message from the readings; 2. use your imagination; 3. and learn to emphasize different words in the prayers at Mass.

As stated last week, the Mass has two major parts, the Liturgy of the Word, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Then, comes the Communion Rite. Today, let's look at how we prepare to receive and how we receive Holy Communion.

10. Community. While it is important that we are individually participating in Mass, we should also remember that Mass is a communal prayer. We gather as a family of faith around the Table of the Word and the Eucharist. That is brought to mind when we pray the Lord's Prayer. There is so much in that beautiful prayer, but it is important to remember how it begins—Our Father. We are praying together, as a community, as a family to God.

That spirit continues as we move to the Sign of Peace. It is more than just a greeting to those immediately around us, whom we usually know. It is symbolic. It is an expression of true charity and blessing even to those we don't know, or maybe don't even care for. It is actually a prayer. It is proclaiming that we pray that the peace that Jesus came to bring will be known and shared by all at Mass, and beyond. It is really saying that we hope that the peace we express in that moment at Mass will be known and lived in the world.

11. Communion. How do you receive Communion and what does it mean to you? We should never receive Communion without respect and devotion. As we wait in line, we should be reflecting about meeting Jesus. As you approach, make a sign of reverence, such as a head bow. If receiving on the hands, hold them high. After the minister of Communion says, "The Body of Christ," you respond, "Amen." Then place Communion in your mouth, immediately. No one must walk away without first placing the Host in their mouth. If you are not receiving Communion, you may still come up. Approach a priest or deacon and you can receive a blessing.

After you receive, you are not done! Return to your pew and PRAY. This is why you receive. This is your opportunity to talk with our Lord. Remember, the word communion, union with. Too often, we start thinking about something else, ignoring the presence of Jesus with us. After receiving Communion, spend time in prayer!

12. Commissioning. After Communion, we have the final prayer, blessing and dismissal. This does not mean, Mass is over so now we can leave! At the end, we are blessed and sent forth to bring what we have celebrated out into the world and to our families and community. It is a commissioning. One of the most beautiful dismissals states, "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." That beautifully expresses exactly what should be on your minds and what should happen. Imagine if everyone who went to Mass truly sought to do just that—live out the Gospel and bring the blessings of Mass in their lives?

"You are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:48)