How To Get More Out of the Mass

By Putting More of Yourself In It

When you are at Mass, do you sit, stand, kneel, speak the responses, and sing? That’s only the beginning of how you can be fully involved.

You are an important part of the community of all God’s priestly people. By learning how to be an active participant at Mass, and by praying through and with Christ, you can engage your mind, heart, body, and soul.

CONCLUDING RITE

❖ Go back to your seat and continue to sing the Communion song. This is not time for “me and Christ” but to join with the praise of the whole community.
❖ After the song is over it is time to personally thank Christ.
❖ Pray that what you have received will change and strengthen you to carry out the part of the mission that God has entrusted to you in your family, your workplace, your school, and your community.

❖ Go forth singing with joy, feeling ready to face your week until you return to Mass to renew your covenant to be an important part of God’s mission.

❖ When you stand and the priest says “Let us pray,” collect yourself—and listen. These texts often provide guidance for how the Eucharist should affect us and our actions in daily life.
❖ Receive the blessing knowing that you are sent into the world to help bring about the reign of God through your daily actions—a mission given to you at Baptism and renewed each week as you are sent forth.

❖ Go forth singing with joy, feeling ready to face your week until you return to Mass to renew your covenant to be an important part of God’s mission.

FROM MASS TO MISSION
Understanding the Mass and Its Significance for Our Christian Life
BEFORE MASS

❖ Prepare during the week by studying and praying the Mass readings. The Mass readings are easily found on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (go to www.usccb.org and click on “Bible,” then on “Today’s Readings”).

❖ Think about what you are grateful for, or who or what needs prayer this week. Bring these needs with you to Mass.

❖ Enter the church, greet other members of the community with sincerity and affection, and then collect your thoughts and prayers in the silence before Mass.

❖ Notice what liturgical season the Church is celebrating by observing the seasonal colors and decorations around the church (banners, altar cloths, priest’s vestments).

❖ Above all, be mindful and intentional; not passive or purely sociable in this time before the Mass.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

❖ Join in the song as the ministers process to the sanctuary. Admit your sinfulness during the Penitential Act and sing the Gloria with joy. You are here to praise and worship the Father through Jesus Christ—the community needs your voice.

❖ As the priest says “Let us Pray,” add those intentions you reflected on earlier—your thanks or your needed prayers.

❖ As the priest offers the bread and wine to the Father, offer yourself—your whole life—with all its joys, sorrows, and challenges. Your offering will become part of the Eucharistic “power that transforms the world” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 901).

❖ When the priest says “Lift up your hearts,” imagine you are holding up your heart and offering it to God with joy. Continue to offer yourself to God during the prayer and join fully in the sung or spoken responses.

❖ As the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine, calling down the Holy Spirit to change them, feel yourself being drawn spiritually into the change that occurs.

❖ Remember and visualize Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. Call to mind that you are praying with the entire Church around the world at all times and in all places as well as with the saints and angels who are praying in heaven. They are all present, right now, at this Mass.

❖ When the priest holds up the consecrated bread and wine, be mindful that Jesus Christ said “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood,” and know his presence is truly in these gifts.

❖ Pray the Our Father fully mindful of each phrase and how it affects your daily life. Be grateful for the Bread of Life you are about to receive.

❖ Come forward and reverently bow before receiving the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine. Let your “Amen” be firm and heartfelt. You are saying yes, that you believe Christ is present in the Eucharistic species.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

❖ Give the readings and homily your full attention. God’s Word is alive and active—something that you hear today is meant for YOU. If you have looked at them ahead of Mass, this will be even easier. Listen actively; reflect during the silences; try to ignore distractions. The Holy Spirit is waiting to do the rest.

❖ Sing the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation with joy and conviction. This is Good News!

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

❖ Place your monetary gift in the collection, join in the song, and as the bread and wine come forward “send” yourself in mind and spirit to the altar along with them.