

17. Learn more about your faith. The more you know, the more you'll come to know and love the Lord in the Mass. There are many classes, books and other resources offered throughout the Archdiocese of Denver to help you. The internet is also a tremendous source of Catholic information. Talk to your pastor, or the Director of Religious Education to find out what your parish has to offer. The Archdiocese offers many seminars, classes, lectures and conferences to enrich your faith. Call the office of Evangelization and Catechesis for more information.

18. "The Mass is ended. Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord!" The Eucharist is not complete until we put into practice that which we have received. "The love of God has been poured into our hearts" (Rom. 5:5) and so we are sent out to make that love known to the world. "The love that we celebrate in the sacrament," Pope Benedict XVI said, "is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all."



"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." - Luke 22:14

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ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

MASS APPEAL

How to get the most out of Mass



"This is my body, which will be given up for you."

"Celebrate this Mass as if it was your first Mass; celebrate this Mass as if it were your only Mass; celebrate this Mass as if it were your last Mass."

(On a wall leading to the chapel of the Sisters of Charity in Rome)

Get the most out of Mass

The Church teaches that the Mass is "the source and summit of the Christian life." Everything flows from and is oriented toward the Eucharist. And yet many people feel like they just don't get much out of Mass. If you're one of them, this brochure is for you.

The Mass should be most meaningful event in your life, for "In the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1324).

The ideas in this brochure are meant to help you get the most out of Mass. As with any worthwhile activity, the more you put into it the more you'll get out of it. As St. Francis said,

"It is in giving that we receive."

You don't have to do *all* of the things listed here, but if you try just a few of them, your experience of the Mass will be greatly enriched.

1. Go to Confession. The more you go to confession, the more you'll get out of Mass. We live in a culture that dismisses the idea of sin. The loss of a consciousness of sin results in a *superficial spirituality* that makes it very difficult to get the most out of Mass. Confession puts us in touch with reality. Regular confession (once a month, or more) is essential if you want to get more out of Mass – and absolutely necessary if you have committed a serious sin.



2. Pray. Daily prayer is vital if you want to get more out of Mass. When you rise, thank God for the gift of life and a new day. Before you go to sleep ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, who always points to Christ, to help you be more open and receptive to her son. Ask Our Lady to help you prepare for Mass.

3. Fast. Fasting intensifies our hunger for God. The Church teaches us that we should abstain from food for at least **one hour** before Mass. Also, fast from noise: Unplug your iPod. Turn off the radio and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet your restless heart. Let the worries of the week fade away in the silence before you arrive at church.

4. Dress nicely. If you want to get more out of Mass a good place to start is with your attire. How we dress expresses the importance we attach to the occasion. If you're going to MacDonald's, it doesn't matter how you dress. But if you're going to nice restaurant, what you wear is important. How should you dress? Dress like you're going to a wedding because *you are!* It's the "wedding supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

5. Arrive early. By arriving 10-15 minutes before Mass starts you'll have time to pray, be quiet and prepare for worship. But arriving even a few minutes before Mass would be a big help. Silently pray before the Blessed Sacrament, or meditate on this simple verse before Mass: "As the deer longs for the water-brooks, so long my soul for thee, O Lord." (Psalm 42:1)



6. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to the Word of God and to teach you what you need to know during readings and the homily. Ask the Lord to "give you ears to hear." The Lord has something he wants to say to you. *Listen closely.*

7. Pray for those at Mass with you. Even if you don't know their names, pray for those around you. A spiritual bond develops with those you're praying for. They need you, and you need them.

8. Daily Mass. One of the best ways to get more out of Mass is to go to daily Mass. Make a commitment to attend Mass daily for a season (say, Advent or Lent) for a month or until a specific date.



9. Eucharistic adoration. Some parishes have perpetual adoration and many offer at least some time during the week for Eucharistic adoration. Spending just 20 or 30 minutes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament will greatly enrich your prayer life and help you get the most out of Mass.

10. Use Catholic calendars that call attention to feast days and saints' days. Most parishes distribute Catholic calendars around Christmas. The Archdiocese of Denver has a calendar that's distributed each fall.

11. Pay attention. One of the most common problems that prevent us from getting more out of the Mass is allowing our minds to wander. Distractions are inevitable. They are caused by our fallen natures, the evil one, laziness, lack of preparation, or worry. When you find your mind wandering, focus on the cross and think of Christ.

12. "Offer it up." Offer your Communion for a friend or family member who is sick or who needs a job. Offer it up for your children, your grandchildren, godchildren, nieces or nephews, or your spouse.



Offer it up for a particular priest or a seminarian. Offer it up for an end to abortion, war and all manner of violence. Offer it up for our soldiers overseas, and all those risk their lives to protect us. The more specific you are about your intention, the more you'll get out of the Mass.

13. Tithe. "Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" - Acts 20:35

Our Sunday offering is a symbol of our life and labor and an expression of our commitment to the Lord and his Church. But more importantly, our offering is an integral *part of our worship*: it is a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Psalm 116:17). The more generous you are of your time, talent and treasure, the more you'll get out of Mass.



14. Focus on Christ. Great preaching, inspiring music and reverent worship are, of course, the goal of every Mass. But it doesn't always happen. It's not wrong to expect the best from our clergy, but

we too must give *our* best in worship in order to get the most out of it. The priest is not there to entertain us, but to lead us in worship – to lead us to Christ. Not all preachers are great orators. Not every homily is going to be a home run. Not every piece of music is going to inspire or move us. Attentive and active participation is necessary if you want to get the most out of Mass.

15. Use a 'missalette' or other devotional aids such as the *Magnificat*. The missalette is the book in the pew that contains the Mass parts, the Scripture readings and the hymns. Some missalettes also include traditional Catholic prayers that you can use before and after Communion. Reading and meditating on a hymn before Mass is another good way to prepare yourself for Mass.

16. Pray after Mass. We are never closer to Jesus than right after receiving his body and blood in the Eucharist. Take a few moments after the closing hymn to thank the Lord for what he has just done for you. It is a time of profound spiritual intimacy. Cherish it. And for goodness sake, *don't leave before the dismissal!*

