

FR. JOHN'S DIGITAL QUILL FOR SPIRITUAL MUSINGS AND PARISH NEWS

When is it required that a Catholic attend Mass and when is it okay to skip Mass?

Increasingly, this is a question among both students in our grade school and among adults as well. I have desired for a few weeks to address it, but Advent, Christmas, and necessary school announcements got in the way of my being able to put my thoughts together.

First, I would like to say that I do not write this response to call people out nor to shame people about their decisions regarding Mass attendance. My whole purpose in writing this column is to present authentically the Church's teaching on this question so that, as an informed Catholic, you may make the best choices regarding your faith life.

Catholics are obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation. (*Catechism* #2180) This obligation can be dispensed only for a serious reason. (*Catechism* #2181) A serious reason would be illness. A good rule of thumb here is if you are sick enough to miss Mass, you are going to be home all day resting, and limiting your contact with others. With COVID, the flu, and RSV, among the other illnesses going around, if you are under a doctor's care and instructed to limit your contact with others, you would also be dispensed from Mass. A third acceptable reason to miss Mass would be to take care of a child who is ill.

If you are traveling or on vacation, you should make every effort still to attend Mass. There are many different websites to find a Catholic church at your location, including masstimes.org or Google. There are two conditions when a traveling Catholic can miss Mass on Sunday. The first is that it is just unreasonable or impossible to get to church. An example would be if flying, the flight schedule would simply make it impossible to attend Mass. A similar example would be that the travel time to the nearest church is onerous, meaning significantly farther than to planned restaurants or tourist locations. The second condition is that the church you expected to attend did not have Mass due to a change in schedule and it is impossible to get to another church. Obviously, this is not your fault; you tried to fulfil your obligation and were prohibited due to circumstances out of your control.

Livestreamed Mass does not replace the obligation to attend Mass. Certainly, if you are ill or in a circumstance listed above, it is good to watch a livestreamed Mass if possible. But a Catholic cannot, under normal circumstances, substitute a livestreamed Mass for the Sunday obligation and consider that obligation fulfilled because you cannot receive the Bread of Life: the Eucharist.

Catholics who do not attend Mass on Sundays or on Holy Days of Obligation commit a grave (mortal) sin. (*Catechism* #2181) A mortal sin is a sin, something seriously wrong, we know that it is wrong, and we freely choose to do it anyway. This sin, willingly choosing to miss being with the Lord on His special day, requires that you go to Confession before returning to Holy Communion. If you do not, you are committing the grave sin of sacrilege, or receiving a holy thing unworthily. (*Catechism*, #2120).

Some say they are too busy to attend Mass. To say this means that they decide to put other things on their calendars. Consider, though, that each week, Jesus asks you to spend an hour with Him at Sunday Mass. How are you responding to this request?

Others say they do not get anything out of Mass, so they choose not to go. Let me respond in this way.

Two years ago, I took golf lessons. I went to play only once and was not very good. Last year, I never picked up my clubs. Will I be better at golf if I try to play this year? Probably not.

The same with Mass. If I simply say I am not getting anything out of Mass and stop going, I am not going to suddenly get better. It is only through time and effort that I will see the benefits flowing from Mass.

FR. JOHN'S DIGITAL QUILL FOR SPIRITUAL MUSINGS AND PARISH NEWS

January Offerings

Prayer Groups

Our parish prayer groups met for the first time this week! The prayer group that I facilitate will meet again on Monday, January 30, at 2:00pm in the cry room. Pam Hager will meet with her group on Tuesday, January 31, at 9:30am. Deacon Bob is still determining the start time for his group.

Please know that while these groups were formed in Advent, they are still open and available to everyone!

"Bother Father"

We will have our second "Bother Father" for 2023 on January 24, from 9:00-11:00am.

A helpful suggestion was to create a Signup Genius so people can sign up for a slot The Genius was sent out this past Wednesday. If you would like help in signing up, please contact the parish office.

Parish Rosary Program

This is a very simple offering...each week people commit to praying a decade or more of the Rosary. We will unite in praying for the intentions of our parish, but in particular each week, I will propose an intention.

Last week, we received additional intention cards. There are now 12 people offering 33 Rosaries and 21 Decades each week for the intention listed in the bulletin.

This week, our prayer intention will be for persecuted Christians in the world.

Would you like to pray with us and see that number of Rosaries increase? If so, please fill out this intention card and return it in the Offertory.

I will see you online or in church! - Fr. John
#SRAstrong

P.S. Today marks 50 years since the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court Decision that legalized abortion in the United States. While we are called to continue to thank God for the Supreme Court decision in June, 2022, we should continue to pray for an end to abortion throughout our country. Let us also pray for the victims of abortion, including the mothers and fathers who suffer silently from the physical, spiritual, and psychological effects of abortion.

May we not be blind as well to the increase in the use of the death penalty in our state and an increase nationally and internationally in the practice of euthanasia. Let us continue to call awareness to these abuses against the dignity of human life and work to curb these increases as well.

May we see today a renewal in our prayer for the continued growth of the Culture of Life from conception to natural death.



**SAINT RAPHAEL
THE ARCHANGEL**
CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRE K - 8TH GRADE

Open House
Sunday, January 29 | 11am-2pm

Formed in faith, Prepared for life

6000 Jamieson Avenue | sraschool.org
(314) 352-9474

I commit to participating in the Parish Rosary Program (Name Optional) _____	I will pray... _____ Decade(s) _____ Rosary(ies)	Every: _____ Day _____ Week
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------