

Personal Preparation for Mass

When I started this series of mini-lessons on the Mass almost two months ago, I anticipated that I would simply go through the Mass step by step with a word of explanation about each its parts and actions. However, as we have seen, I've gone in something of a different direction so far. But it looks like it's time to begin that step by step approach. My first couple of mini-lessons dealt with the very first thing we do at Mass, which is to show up, to gather together rather than stay at home {or somewhere else} for our prayer and relationship with God. Once we have shown up and found our places, the next-first thing we do is to prepare ourselves personally for prayer. We do this by simply settling ourselves down as much as possible, quieting our minds and opening our hearts to the Lord who has gathered us together, and who will be with us in a special way as we celebrate the Mass. Some people come quite a bit ahead of time to do this, others not so early. But as with most – if not all – activities we participate in, the better prepared we are the better it goes for us, the more we will get out of it. Some people begin their preparation for Sunday Mass even before arriving at church on Sunday by reading, reflecting on, and praying through the scriptures to be proclaimed that week. There are many resources and guides to help with this, such as the scripture prayer and study sessions held here in the Parish almost every week. *The Word Among Us*, the booklet of daily meditations available here in the Parish, provides reflections on both the daily and Sunday scriptures. And there are many sites on the Internet that give the upcoming readings, and offer information and reflection on them. The United States' Bishops' website gives both the Sunday readings and related links at <http://www.usccb.org/nab>. Two sites I use regularly in my preparation for Sunday are one by the Center for Liturgy at St. Louis University, <http://liturgy.slu.edu>, and one by the Dominicans of Raleigh, N.C. at <http://www.judeop.org/latest.htm>. What we do before Mass even begins is an important part of our prayer of the Mass itself as it helps us get more out of what we are doing in coming to Church in the first place.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about. Contact our Council for Catechesis at tkautza@saintmaryhc.org.