

Holy Mass Etiquette & Attire

How we act at Mass should help us pray, listen and worship as well as help our neighbors do the same. We should remember:

- That Mass is holy.
- To dress appropriately. (Please see below for appropriate attire)
- To be on time. It is distracting when people arrive late to Mass. If you are delayed or late, be thoughtful of others and sit in the back so as not to disturb those already into the prayer of the Mass.
- To turn cell phones and pagers off.
- To remove chewing gum from your mouth AND dispose of it in a PROPER manner (not on the floor or pews).
- To genuflect toward the tabernacle before sitting down. Genuflecting is bending the right knee to the floor and rising up again. If one is physically incapable of genuflecting, they should instead make a profound bow. The purpose of this is to show respect to our King and to acknowledge His Presence in the tabernacle.
- To sit quietly. Once we have found a seat, we should sit or kneel quietly to pray or meditate. This is not the time to socialize with our friends. If we must talk quietly, we should make it brief. The purpose of this is again to show respect for the Blessed Sacrament, and to show that WE BELIEVE HE IS TRULY PRESENT—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity! If we do not believe this, we need to be considerate of those who do, and use the quiet time to contemplate this Truth.
- To respect boundaries. At the Our Father, for instance, we should be sensitive of our neighbors' needs to, perhaps, deeply speak to "Our Father", which can be interfered with by another ones desire to hold hands (it is not in the rubrics of the Mass that we hold hands at this time).
- To stay until the end of Mass. Judas was the first one to leave Mass early at the Last Supper. Let us not follow in his footsteps. Mass ends when the priest or deacon says: "The Mass is ended, go in peace" and we say: "Thanks be to God." It is most polite to stay in our pews until the end of the recessional hymn. Emergencies will arise from time to time; in such cases, we should be as discreet as possible so as not to disrupt the Mass that has not yet ended.
- To reverently, gently, and silently leave the church. Again, this is to show respect of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. There is a custom where some stay several minutes after Mass in thanksgiving for the Eucharist they have just received; the church should also be quiet out of respect for this deep union taking place. We can talk all we want once we have reached the vestibule.

What To Wear

We should wear to Mass what we would wear if a King invited us to his home for a feast. That is, we should wear our best. Our best should never draw attention to ourselves but give the utmost respect to the King (and His family) of whom we are special guests.

What Not To Wear *

Immodest or revealing clothing is never acceptable.

For Women:

- Any clothing that bares midriffs or cleavage.
- Tight clothing meant to accentuate (to draw attention to) various body parts that God considers, and that we ought to consider, sacred.
- Short skirts (above knee) or miniskirts
- Shorts (capris are okay if they hit below the knee—but still discouraged)
- Sleeveless tops (short sleeves are okay).
- Jeans.

For Men:

- Shorts (yes, even in the summer months)
- Tank tops.
- Jeans.

Dirty or torn clothes (especially torn jeans) are never acceptable.

An unkempt body is never acceptable (e.g., dirty hands or fingernails).

Why is it Important to Dress Modestly at Mass?

Immodest dress distracts others and could cause them to sin in their thoughts, which is not why we are at Mass.

*There will be times that our only opportunity to attend Mass is after a physically demanding job or after helping Grandma bail out her flooded basement. There is nothing to worry about in such times. We should never let circumstances that are out of our control keep us away from the Sacraments! God knows what we've been through, and it's not anyone's job to judge us. By all means, come to Mass!

Still, modest dress is always in our control – if we dress modestly every day, this will never be an issue.