

St. John's Newsletter



All the People say Amen

Why do we go to Mass?

Sometimes people see attending Mass as a chore or a compliance instead of the gift to be in the presence of God and a part of the Body of Christ. According to Church teachings, we are *needed* in the celebration of the Mass.

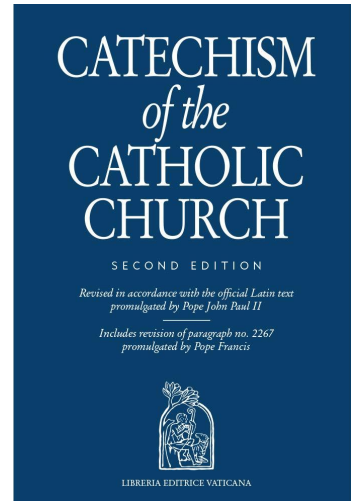
Many sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) emphasize the importance of attending the Sunday sacred liturgy to be a part of the Eucharistic assembly. In further understanding of the teachings of the Church through the catechism, we learn that our active participation, our prayers and our attention are a vital part of the sacrifice of the Mass.

As Father Mike Schmitz recently said on a podcast: "There is a reason we are in pews and not bleachers."

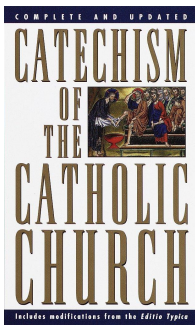
Through Baptism, we become the Body of Christ and a part of his royal priesthood, called to live our lives in Jesus. (CCC 1267-1268) As members of the Baptismal priesthood, we should also offer our active participation, prayers, and our sacrifices to God during Mass.

CCC 1348 states: "Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. As high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharist celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to plan in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose 'Amen' manifests their participation."

At every Mass, we join our prayers with all attending at St. John's Church, in the World, and in Heaven worshipping God with one voice. Amen!



Catechism of the Catholic Church



In 1986, Pope John Paul II set up a commission of 12 cardinals and bishops led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who later became Pope Benedict XVI) to compile a reference text of the beliefs of the Church in the light of Vatican II. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was released in 1992 on the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

In the introduction, Pope John Paul II writes that "a catechism should faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors and saints of the Church, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery and for enlivening the faith of the People of God."

The book follows the organization of the older Catechism of St. Pius V. There are 4 main parts: the *Creed*, the *Sacred Liturgy*, with pride of placement given to the sacraments, the *Christian Way of Life*, explained beginning with the Ten Commandments, and finally *Christian Prayer*.

The topics are organized in 2865 entries (called paragraphs), often cross-reference to other paragraphs of the book. There are hundreds of footnotes that cite Scripture, ancient texts, prayers and teachings over the nearly 2000 years of the Church.

I have had my copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for over 20 years (older edition) and have occasionally looked things up, but I confess I have not invested much time in the book until this year. It is only recently that I have discovered the richness and the beautiful writing in the Catechism.

If you want to know what the Church teachings are, this is the place to go.

Source: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. English Translation by the United States Catholic Conference. 1994.