

Dear Parishioners,

If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy.”

I love this. St. John Vianney nailed it.

He also declared, “There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, he would have given it to us.”

The Mass is a paradox in which God has interwoven infinite with finite; mortal with immortal; everlasting with time-limited. It truly is an experience of heaven on earth. It’s an opportunity to be in the physical presence of the creator of the universe.

Here are 7 strategies to help your teens get the most out of their Mass experiences:

- 1. Ask your pastor to offer a “teaching Mass” for your teens** — explaining every detail from beginning to end. The Mass is rich with tradition and history, from the vestments worn to the prayers offered. Knowing why we do what we do in the Mass is enlightening.
- 2. Explain the transcendentals** — beauty, goodness, and truth. Invite your teens to reflect on the one that helps them draw near to God most. Then encourage them to observe where they see this present in the Mass the next time they attend.
- 3. Focus on the five senses** — seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Send your teens on an assignment to discover all the ways the senses are involved during the Mass.
- 4. Encourage your teens to do “pre Mass prep.”** This could include going to confession, reading the Sunday readings before the liturgy, and personally reflecting on questions such as: What would distract me from paying attention and fully participating? What are the needs in my life for which I can pray? What are the needs in the lives of my family, friends, and community?
- 5. Participate. Participate. Participate.** This is twofold. It includes sitting, kneeling, standing, singing, responding, reciting, praying, shaking (hands), giving (money), but it also means being an active lay leader. Teens can be ushers, lectors, cantors, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.
- 6. Plan road trips to other Catholic parishes and attend their liturgies.** The beauty of the Catholic Church and its parish communities is that they are the same, but different. Explore and experience the uniqueness and beauty of each one.
- 7. Don’t take for granted that your teens are going to Mass on Sunday.** The reality is that many don’t. Ask them to go. And if their families don’t attend, invite them to sit with you.

**I wanted to let you know that this week we have almost reached our base goal for the Annual Appeal: as a parish we have pledged \$36,080 (about \$315 left to reach our base goal) and we are making good progress towards our stretch goal. We have about \$6,000 left to go to reach it. Please keep in mind that our progress to date is the result of only 81 donors! If we all pitch in, we will be able to exceed our stretch goal. We can do it with just 60 additional \$100 pledges. Perhaps \$100 isn’t realistic for your family at this time, so we ask you to turn to the Lord in prayer and discern what you can give. Remember: five families who each \$20 moves us \$100 closer to our goal. Reaching our stretch goal reduces the monthly amount we owe to the Archdiocese and allows your Sunday contributions to do more here. Thank you all for supporting the work of the Church throughout the Newark Archdiocese.**

**God Bless,**

**Fr. Scott**