

Catholic Church Etiquette

Welcome to St. Francis Xavier Parish. Like any house to which one is invited, there is always some sort of basic etiquette, and God's house is no different.

Below are some basics to help you be more at home, and to allow others to worship as well.

Pre-Mass Preparations

___ Hopefully, your preparation for Mass began before your trek to Church! Catholics are asked to attend **mass every Sunday and on Holy Days** >

___ If you think you may be **contagious**, the **requirement to attend Mass is waived**. Getting others sick is not charitable!

___ Please be considerate and **arrive in the Church before the Mass begins**. It is considered disrespectful to arrive after the Mass has begun. The opening and closing of doors, the movement of people to their pews and the disturbing of people to accommodate people arriving late is very distracting to some very important moments in the Mass.

___ **Silence is most appreciated** in the Church. The Church is a House of Prayer, please refrain from carrying on conversations in the Church.

___ Please remember that there is a **one-hour fasting** discipline in the Catholic Church before receiving Holy Communion. **Please, no gum, food or drink in the Church**. This requirement is waived for babies, the elderly, the ill and necessary medications. Chewing gum does break the Eucharistic fast.

___ While the Church never imposes a **dress code**, it is a sign of our interior disposition, and a sign of how important we consider coming to Mass. Men must never wear a hat or cap while women are allowed to wear something covering their heads. No one should wear sunglasses in the church unless for health reasons. Please dress modestly. We want to keep everyone's eyes on Jesus Christ. "Formal attire" is not necessary.

___ Our Lord says, "**Let the little children come to me.**" Children at Mass are a sign of God's love and promise that the Church will endure until the end of the ages. Patience is always afforded to crying infants, but parents are asked to be as courteous as you can be for others trying to pray and listen. You can step outside for a minute to quiet things down, even during important times at Mass. God, the priest and everyone else will understand. Most of us have been there!

___ Check that **cell phone!** Is it off or on vibrate mode? As in most important moments, cell phones ringing, buzzing or people texting is highly inappropriate. Please turn off your phones prior to the Mass beginning. It is NEVER appropriate to answer your phone in the Church or make a call. Emergencies are obvious exceptions.

___ Remember that good Christian behavior should be exhibited on the road to Church and its **parking lots** as well! Patience is a virtue – yes, even when it's related to safety!

At Mass

___ If you arrive late, please stand in the back and **wait for an appropriate pause**.

___ **Bless yourself with Holy Water** doing the Sign of the Cross at the fonts at the entrances as you enter and leave. It is a reminder of our Baptismal vows, and it is a sacramental, a source of grace. You may bless yourself with Holy Water if you are not Catholic or able to receive Communion.

How many days of the year are you required to participate in Mass?

52 Sundays

+ 6 - Holy Days of Obligation (U.S.)

58 There are 8,760 hours in a year. God asks for just about 60 hours.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION: DUE WORSHIP

1. Christmas – Dec. 25th
Jesus' birthday 
2. Mary, Mother of God – Jan. 1st
Mary's title = human son is divine 
3. Ascension – 40 days after Easter
Risen Jesus enters Heaven 
4. Assumption – Aug. 15th
Mary enters Heaven, body & soul 
5. All Saints Day – Nov. 1st
Honor everyone in Heaven 
6. Immaculate Conception – Dec. 8th
Mary conceived without original sin 

___ As you enter the row of pews, **genuflection in the direction of the tabernacle**, as a sign of reverence and respect for the Real Presence of Jesus. To make a proper genuflection bend the right knee to touch the ground, a sign of our acknowledgement of Jesus' Divinity.

___ Custom dictates that when we have found our seat, we **kneel in prayer briefly in the pew**. This is a great opportunity to offer to God gratitude/thanksgiving or make our petitions that we intend to pray for during Mass.

___ Please do **join in the songs** and prayers of the community! If you think your singing will distract others, or you do not quite know the hymn or prayers, a soft tone is fine.

___ The **restrooms** are located in the Narthex.

Reception of Holy Communion

FOR CATHOLICS. Communion means "union with." It is the True Body and Blood of Christ sacramentally made present. All Catholics of age in union with the local bishop and pope, not under any unconfessed, grave or serious sin, or irregular marriage situation, and who followed the Eucharistic Fast may receive Holy Communion. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all Catholics.

___ Those who can receive may receive on the tongue or on the hand (please do not "grab" the Host). If in the hand, create a mini throne with one hand under another and extend to the minister.

___ Please consume the Host immediately. This is to protect the Sacrament. Intinction ("dipping" the Host in the Precious Blood) is generally not allowed.

___ When the Eucharistic minister presents the Host and says "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ" (for the Chalice), the proper response is a simple "Amen!" This indicates that you know and believe that what you are about to receive is Jesus Himself.

___ Please make sure you have a firm hold on the Chalice (without grabbing it) from the Eucharistic minister. If you are sick, please do not receive from the Chalice!

___ It is sufficient to receive under either Eucharistic species (the Body or Blood) to truly receive Communion. So if you "forgot" one species or the Precious Blood ran out – you received Communion.

FOR NON-CATHOLICS. The Eucharist is a sign of our communion with each other who are in communion with the Church, its bishops and all in communion with Rome. For that reason, we regret that it would be a false sign for those not in communion to receive the Communion Host. This is NOT a moral judgment or condemnation on your person! We pray for the day when the Church is truly One and Universal once again! Make a "Spiritual Communion" instead, if you wish (offering to God your great desire to receive Communion when you can), or pray as you wish.

FOR THOSE NOT RECEIVING COMMUNION. If you cannot receive for any reason, that is fine. You may come up for a blessing in the Holy Communion line (just cross your arms in front of you). You may also remain seated for there is no obligation to come up. All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

Finally...

___ Mass does not end until the final blessing. Please wait until the priest has exited before making your pilgrimage to the parking lot.

___ Please respect those who wish to remain in prayer and thanksgiving to God! May God bless your worship time with us here, and may it be a source of grace, strength and consolation for your body and soul!