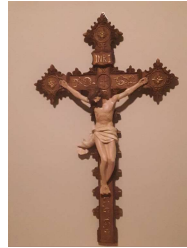
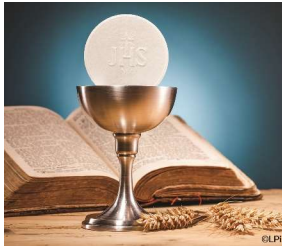


St. Mary's of the Lake, Watkins Glen, NY
St. Benedict's, Odessa, NY



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff
March 7, 2024

1



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Webinar Tips

- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for "fit to window" under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters "Q & A". Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does, you can drag it around.

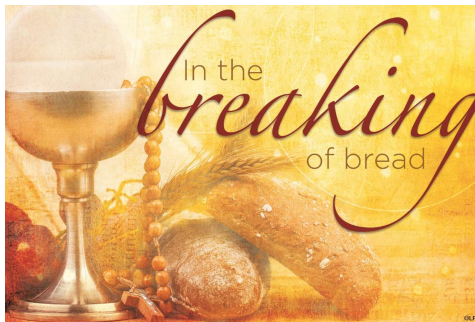
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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Opening Prayer



3




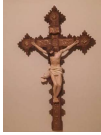
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



USCCB, *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*

"55. In recent years, increasing numbers of Christians in our country have left their churches and become religiously unaffiliated. We invite Catholics who have left the Church or who no longer practice the faith to come home. We miss you and we love you. **We pray that Jesus will draw you back to your Catholic family**, his Mystical Body, through his Eucharistic Body. **We repeat words attributed to St. Teresa of Calcutta: "Once you understand the Eucharist, you can never leave the Church. Not because the Church won't let you but because your heart won't let you."**"

4






Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Other Related Presentations

- *Sacraments: Channels of God's Grace, Part III*
<https://renewaloffaith.org/sacraments-channels-of-gods-grace-initiation-ii/>
- *Uncovering the Treasures of the Mass*
<https://renewaloffaith.org/uncovering-the-treasures-of-the-mass/>
- *The Greatest Gift: The Eucharist*
<https://renewaloffaith.org/the-greatest-gift-the-eucharist/>

5

Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?


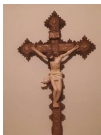
The Witness of Martyrs

Initially, the Eucharist was celebrated **privately** due to persecution. Many were martyred. Yet, they saw something so great in the Mass to be willing to take the risk.

Despite the risk to one's life, it was a time of great growth in the church.

On the other hand, no persecution or trial can lead to complacency in one's faith. Then to...

6



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Knowing What the Eucharist Is Leads Us to Reverence **and** a Deeper Faith

Comments from Past Evaluations:

- "One thing I love about the Catholic Church is the reverence - upon entering and praying before Mass, during the Liturgy and throughout the service."
- "I love the reverence we have in the Catholic Church. We are entering his holy sacred church and He is right there in the church and I love how we are mindful of Him when we enter the Catholic Church."

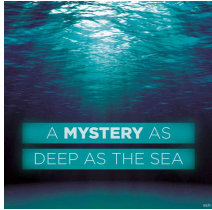
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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Appreciation of "Mystery"

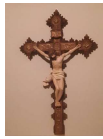
"The word *sacrament* also has its origins in the Greek term for "mystery," *mysterion*. The sense of the term *mystery* is something **unfathomable**, something so **extraordinary** and **overwhelming** that we can **never fully comprehend** it. Sacraments are often called "sacred mysteries," not in the sense of problems to be solved, but rather in terms of sacred realities to be immersed in and to be experienced again and again." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 11)



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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Sacraments as Mystery (cont'd)

“The celebration of the sacraments contains the church’s agreed-upon and time-tested signs, symbols, gestures, words, and the context in which these are enacted, all of which comprise what sacraments are and do. **Words will always fail to describe adequately and fully** what sacraments are and do.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 2)

Please don’t let what you don’t understand get in the way of the mysteries at play in the Mass.

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



What is a Sacrament?

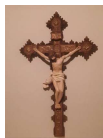
A Sacrament is a **gift** because it is an **encounter** with Christ. In the Sacraments, we receive **Grace**.



10



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



What is the Primary Purpose of Mass?

- Is it just to feel good for an hour?
 - Music, homily...(everyone has different tastes)
- Give praise to God
 - *Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 221 – “In what way is the Father the source and the goal of the liturgy? **Through the liturgy the Father fills us** with his blessings in the Word made flesh who died and rose for us and pours into our hearts the Holy Spirit. **At the same time, the Church blesses the Father by her worship, praise, and thanksgiving and begs him for the gift of his Son and the Holy Spirit.**”

11



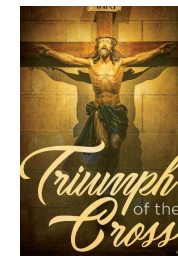
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



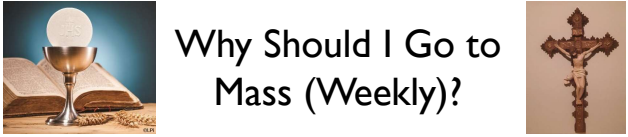
Names for the Eucharist

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1328 – 1332

- The word *Eucharist* means “**thanksgiving**”
- Lord’s **Supper**
- Breaking of the Bread
- Holy **Sacrifice**
- Holy **Communion**
 - Communion vs. community



12

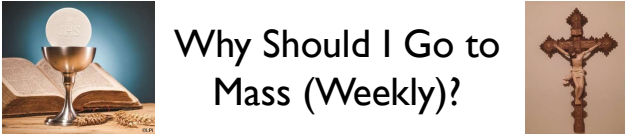


Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Eucharist as Sacrifice

Hebrews 5:7-10 – *“In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

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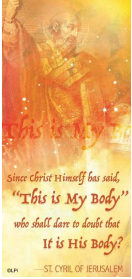


Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

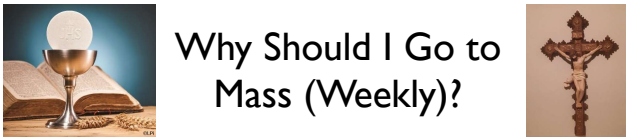
The Catholic Church Did **Not** Invent the Eucharist

Jesus **instituted** the Eucharist at the Last Supper with **his** words,
*“this **is** my body...this cup **is** the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.”*

Matthew 26:26-28
 Mark 14:22-24
 Luke 22:14-20
 Cf. I Corinthians 11:23-25



14



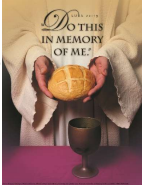
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

The Catholic Church Did **Not** Invent the Eucharist cont'd

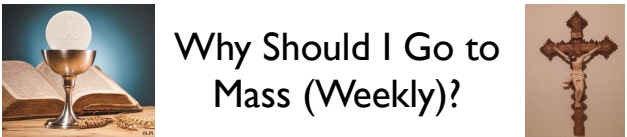
And Jesus told us to continue to celebrate it with his words,

“Do this in memory of me.”

Luke 22:19
 cf. I Corinthians 11:25



15

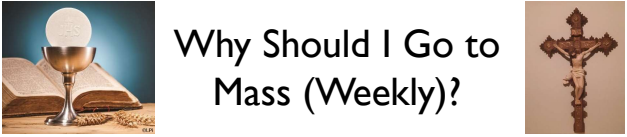


Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

“Do This in **Memory** of Me”

- Passover Meal
 - Reading for Holy Thursday (Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14) ends with
 - “This day shall be a **memorial feast** for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a **perpetual institution.**”
 - Memorializes God setting his people free from Egypt
- It was no coincidence Jesus Crucifixion came at the time of the Passover
 - The Eucharist memorializes Jesus setting us free from our sins.

16

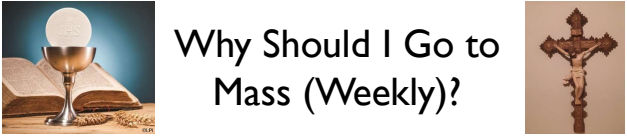


Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

The Eucharist is Food for Our Souls

- “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever **eats this bread will live forever**; and the bread that I will give **is my flesh** for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)
- “Amen, amen, I say to you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood**, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is **true food**, and my blood is **true drink**.” (John 6:53-55)
- “Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, **whoever eats this bread will live forever**.” (John 6:58b)

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

The Eucharist and Real Presence

How can one hear these words and not believe in the Real Presence **instituted by Jesus**?

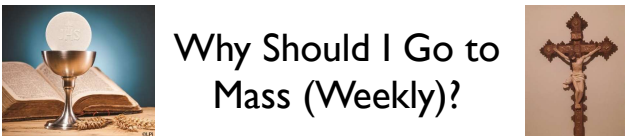
Yet that is what they do

- “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” (John 6:60b)
- “As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of the life and no longer accompanied him.” (John 6:66)

Peter’s Response?

- “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68b)

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

The Sunday Obligation Remains

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2180

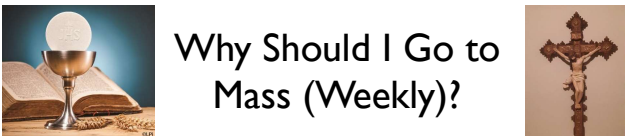
“The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: **“On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.”** “The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2181

“The Sunday Eucharist is the **foundation** and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are **obliged** to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless **excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants)** or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”

Cf. Code of Canon Law, 1245-1248

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

The Obligation is Important

The obligation is important. For example, at times we might visit family in nursing homes more as an obligation than desire.

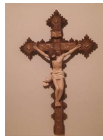
Fr. Rolheiser – Why does an alcoholic keep going to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings when he/she hasn’t been drinking? He/she goes to keep from drinking (*Our One Great Act of Fidelity, 77*).

→ We shouldn’t wait until we fall to come to Mass. We need grace to help keep us from falling.

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



The Sunday Obligation Transcends Our Immediate Gratification

“But families that sustain community also gather regularly, ideally daily, irrespective of whether there is a special occasion or not. They don’t just gather when the energy is good, when everyone is at his or her best, when nobody is bored or angry, and when some occasion merits the effort. They come together regularly despite tedium, **boredom, low energy, busyness, distractions,** and interpersonal tensions” (Rolheiser, 47, my emphasis).

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Participation in the Mass During The Scholastic Period

“With regard to the Eucharist, called the “sacrament of sacraments” by many authors, **the celebration was done by the priest on behalf of those in attendance** ...However, in communities of well-educated monks and mendicants, their participation in the liturgy influenced their understanding of God, the incarnation, and the sacraments.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 95)

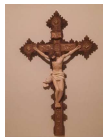
Contrast to today
Eucharistic Prayer III –

“at whose command **we** celebrate these mysteries”

22



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Active Participation

“The twentieth-century liturgical movement was undoubtedly the main stimulus within the church for the contemporary renewal of the sacramental practice and a revised understanding of the dynamism of the sacramental action. The work of liturgical scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was responsible for a reawakening of the importance and centrality of liturgy as public worship that, by its nature, required the **active participation of all participants**.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 130).

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



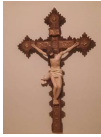
From Obligation to Why We **Need** the Mass As Part of the Lord’s Day

When your cell phone, laptop, or tablet, goes weak/dead, what do you do? You plug it in to charge it. **In fact, we normally don’t wait for them to go dead before we charge them.**

Where do we go to recharge our souls?

To Mass.

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

How Often is “Frequent”?

- Should **desire** to receive at least weekly
 - The Sunday Obligation (Third Commandment – Keep the Sabbath holy) is to come to Mass not to receive Communion.
 - However, you should desire to receive as often as possible
 - Should not receive in a state of mortal sin
- Daily Mass
- Can it be received more than once in the same day?

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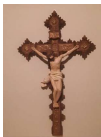
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Does Livestreaming Fulfill the Sunday Obligation?

This question strikes at the very center of the Eucharistic Revival.

- For those who are **homebound/in nursing homes** – Yes!
- For those who are able to attend in person, livestreaming
 - Misses the community aspect
 - Takes a minimalist approach to Mass
 - **You don’t receive the Eucharist**

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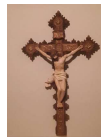
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

More than an **Obligation** Sunday as the Lord’s Day

Third Commandment – Keep the Sabbath Holy

- <https://renewaloffaith.org/keeping-the-lords-day-what-does-it-mean-to-me/>
- *Dies Domini* by Pope John Paul II - http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2168-2195

27


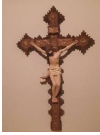
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Who Can Receive the Eucharist?

- Sinners – if one is guilty of mortal sin, healing begins with the Sacrament of Reconciliation

“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord **unworthily** will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. **A person should examine himself**, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:27-29, cf. *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*, 48-50. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1384-1387).

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Who Can Receive the Eucharist? A Clarification

- Can a person who is divorced **but not** remarried outside the church receive the Eucharist?
- Can a person who is divorced **and** remarried outside the church receive the Eucharist?
- Annulment as a healing **process**

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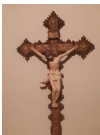



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Who Can **Worthily** Receive the Eucharist?

- Venial sins forgiven in celebrating the Eucharist (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1394)
 - “All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not **deadly**.” (1 John 5:17)
 - Penitential Act & Lord, I am not worthy...

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Worthy Reception – Venial Sins

USCCB *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* 45. ...Venial sins are those sins and **everyday faults** that, although they reflect a degree of selfishness, **do not break the covenant with God**. They do not deprive the sinner of friendship with God or of sanctifying grace. **Venial sins are not to be taken lightly**, but they do not destroy communion because they do not destroy the principle of divine life in us. **Indeed, reception of the Eucharist strengthens our charity and wipes away venial sins, while also helping us to avoid more serious sins.** Pope Francis brought attention to this medicinal character of the Eucharist when he pointed out that it “is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

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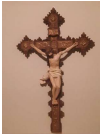
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Worthy Reception – Mortal Sins

Mortal sins need to be confessed before receiving Communion

- “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, **go first** and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)
- USCCB, *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church* – “46. There are some sins, however, that do rupture the communion we share with God and the Church, and that cause grave offense to human dignity. These are referred to as grave, or mortal, sins (see 1 Jn 5:16-17). One commits a mortal sin by **freely, knowingly, and willingly** choosing to do something that **involves grave matter** and that is opposed to charity, opposed to love of God and neighbor.”

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Why Can't Non-Catholics Receive Communion?

Again, we turn to the Old Testament and receive instruction from the Lord himself.

“The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: This is the Passover statute. **No foreigner may eat of it.** However, every slave bought for money **you will circumcise; then he may eat of it...** If any **alien** residing among you would celebrate the Passover for the LORD, all his males **must be circumcised**, and then he may join in its celebration just like the natives. But no one who is uncircumcised may eat of it” (Exodus 12:43-44,48).

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?


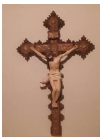
Why Should You Go to Mass?

- To Praise God
- To receive his Word as told in the Bible
- To join in celebrating Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends” (John 15:13).
- Eternal Life – “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (John 6:54).
- Forgiveness of venial sins

The Eucharist is the greatest gift.

<https://renewaloffaith.org/the-greatest-gift-the-eucharist/>

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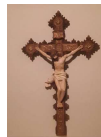
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

How Does the Way We Celebrate Mass Reflect What's in the Bible?

- Luke 24:13-35 – Jesus broke open the Word and then broke bread with the two disciples.
- Some verses, like the institution narratives, provide specific words used in the prayers at Mass.

My homily for the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time Year B
Sunday of the Word of God
<https://renewaloffaith.org/3rd-sunday-in-ordinary-time-year-b-homily-5/>

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

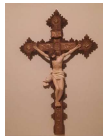
Why Should We Go to Mass? To be Transformed

- Eucharistic Prayer II – “Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by **sending down your Spirit upon them** like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- We ask the Holy Spirit to transform us into the Body of Christ
 - Example – Eucharistic Prayer III – “**grant that we**, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, **may become one body, one spirit in Christ.**”

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Preparing to Receive the Eucharist

- One hour Fast and demeanor at Mass
 - “First, the consumption of the Passover lamb was to be preceded by several hours of fasting, from the time of evening sacrifice (about 3 p.m.)” (Pitre, 150-151).
- Why fast before receiving Communion?
 - Some medicines require an empty stomach
 - Anticipation of what we are to receive, what we hunger for
- Penitential Act and Liturgy of the Word precede the Liturgy of the Eucharist

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



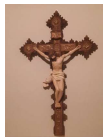
Ocular Communion and Adoration



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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



The Catholic Church Did Not Invent Adoration - Jewish Roots

“Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel” (Exodus 34:23, 23:17). According to both the Jerusalem Talmud and Babylonian Talmud, at each of these feasts, the priests in the Temple would do something remarkable. They would remove the Golden Table of the Bread of the Presence from within the Holy Place so that the Jewish pilgrims could see it. When they removed the holy bread, the priest would elevate it...” (Pitre, 130).

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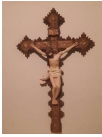
Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?



Eucharistic Processions



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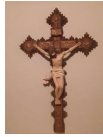



Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Future Schedule

- I welcome ideas for future presentations.
- When you exit this webinar a short evaluation questionnaire should come up to invite your feedback.
- The slides for this presentation will be available online at <https://www.renewaloffaith.org/whymass>

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Resources



Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

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Why Should I Go to Mass (Weekly)?

Resources cont'd

Rolheiser, Ronald, *Our One Great Act of Fidelity: Waiting For Christ in the Eucharist*. New York: Image. 2011.

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