

# Why We Go to Mass

- I. Liturgy & Our Lives
- II. Table Fellowship
- III. The Mass

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Loving and Gracious God,  
We ask you to bless our time together.  
Be with us as we seek to deepen  
our understanding of our Sunday liturgy.  
Awaken within us a desire to make our liturgies  
more alive and more meaningful.  
Open our eyes to see your presence in the ritual.  
Open our ears to hear your call to serve.  
Open our hearts to be empowered  
by your powerful and ever-present love.  
We pray this in the name of your Loving Son and your  
Holy Spirit. AMEN.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Liturgy as Our Story

- II. Table Fellowship

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Fr. Murray talks about the importance of table fellowship. He describes how Jesus invited all people – even the outcasts of society – to share a meal with him and his disciples. “He gathered all of these people, he gathered everyone to a meal because he had a purpose in mind. And the purpose was transformation!”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Jesus shared meals with all people because he wanted to transform their lives. When you share a ritual meal with others in liturgy, how are you a part of Jesus’ table fellowship? Is Jesus also calling you to be transformed?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

“What God has done in the past, God continues to do in the present situation of our lives.”

2. Reflect on how God has been present to you in your life. If God has seemed more present than in the past than he seems to be today, who has moved?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

“God may not come when you want, but when God comes, God is always right on time.”

3. How have you experienced this statement in your faith? What do you need to change or do to become more aware of God’s presence in your life today?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Fr. Murray demonstrates the importance of ritual by asking, what happens when a great tragedy occurs? “We do something; we engage in ritual activity. One of the first things people do is walk to the site, go to the site where tragedy has occurred. What is that? It is called pilgrimage.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. Discuss examples of similar ritual activity that you have participated in. Were you and other participating in order to “get” something from the experience or to “do” something? What does this tell us about the nature of ritual?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Fr. Murray says, “We usually come to liturgy expecting to ‘get something’ from the Mass. Liturgy, however, is not about ‘getting’ something, it is about ‘doing’ something. Liturgy calls us to be fully and actively engaged.”

5. What can you do to prepare for the next Mass in order to celebrate it more actively and meaningfully?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Fr. Murray responds to the charge that “ritual activity is meaningless” by showing how rituals help us to express ourselves when the experience is too deep for words. He uses the example of ritual activity done in times of great sadness, such as a national tragedy. “We can’t summon words to express what is going on inside us. So we do something.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6. What experiences in your life speak to the truth of this statement? What symbols do you use to express what you cannot say?

7. How can this deeper understanding of the meaning of ritual help you to celebrate the ritual of the Eucharist?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Loving and Gracious God,

We thank you for the gift of our time together.

Bless us with a renewed desire to lift up our hearts

and give thanks and praise to you.

Fill us with your Spirit so that each of us may

enter more fully into our celebrations of liturgy.

We pray that we will celebrate our liturgies

with passion – and that this passion

will change the world.

We pray this in the name of your loving Son and

your Holy Spirit. AMEN.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---