

Mass Is Our Rite . . . And Our Right!

Many teenagers probably do not consider attending Mass to be a privilege, but it is in fact one of our rights and duties as baptized Catholics. In Baptism, we participate in Christ's Paschal Mystery by dying to sin and being raised to new life in Christ. Through Baptism, we become members of Christ's Church, which we acknowledge as the Body of Christ here on earth.

One of the important shifts in our understanding of the Mass, which was articulated by the Vatican II document the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, is an increased focus on the participation of the *entire* Body of Christ in the actions of the Mass. The priest, liturgical ministers, and congregation seated in the pews all take different roles in the Mass, but we all have a part to play. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* calls for our full, conscious, and active participation in the Mass, both externally (in singing and speaking prayers, making actions, and so on) and internally (by focusing our minds and hearts). The Constitution tells us: "Such participation by the Christian people as 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people' (1 Peter 2:9; see 2:4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism" (14).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to you that you are a baptized follower of Christ? What difference does it make in your life?
- The word *liturgy* comes from a Greek word meaning "public act" or "work of the people." What is the "work" you engage in at Mass?

ACTIVITY

Since many of us were baptized as infants, we often don't remember

much about this day, yet this is an important day in our lives and the life of the Church! Do a little research on your Baptism. Ask your parents about the day, and why they wanted you baptized. Look for pictures from your Baptism, or the candle you received and white garment you wore. Figure out the date you were baptized, and make a point of recognizing or celebrating your Baptism anniversary. Don't forget to recall your Baptism each time you sign yourself with holy water or participate in the sprinkling rite at Mass, as these rituals are meant to serve as reminders of our Baptism!

