

Part I: Why go to Mass on Sundays?

Fr. Bobby's Homily for October 5, 2025

Introduction

I want you to imagine for a moment this scenario. You're speaking with a friend who has drifted away from the Church—for whatever reason. You invite them to come back to Mass with you, but they respond, "I already have a relationship with God. I pray on my own." Then, out of genuine curiosity, they ask, "But why do you go to Mass on Sunday?"

I think this is a crucial question, and each one of us should be prepared to answer it.

Transition

Friends, today we begin a month-long parish initiative to deepen our love for and understanding of the Mass. And I think the best way to start is by asking ourselves this question: Why do we come to Mass every Sunday?

We all know people who no longer worship with us—family members, friends, co-workers—and there are many reasons for this. But it's my opinion that one of the deepest reasons so many people have stopped going to Mass on Sunday is that we've lost the sense that we owe anything to God.

We've lost the sense that we owe anything to God because we believe that we've made it on our own. This is the culture in which we live—we are self-made, and we don't owe anything to anyone.

We Owe God Everything

On my recent pilgrimage to France, one of the pilgrims made a simple but impactful remark. She said, "God has done so much for us. He died on the Cross for us. And what do we give Him in return? We give Him nothing."

And I think that's the key right there. Why do we go to Mass every Sunday? Because we do, in fact, owe something to God—yes, we owe something to God. Think about it: He created us out of nothing. He sustains our existence at every moment—every heartbeat, every breath we take is because of Him. And above all, He gave us His only-begotten Son, who suffered and died for the forgiveness of our sins—for our salvation.

So yes, friends, we owe something to God. And what is it that we owe Him? We owe Him our worship.

That is the foremost reason why the Church calls us to Mass every Sunday. The Mass is not just another prayer. It is not just one devotion among many. It is the supreme act of worship we can offer to our Heavenly Father. Because at Mass, we are not simply gathering as a community of believers—we are entering into Christ’s one eternal sacrifice, made present to us here and now on this altar.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life because it is the memorial of Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross. Everything we do flows from it, and everything we are as Catholics points back to it.

Our Culture

I think we live in a culture that tends to see religion in terms of, “What do I get out of it? What’s in it for me? How is it going to make my life better?” There’s this consumerist mentality about our faith that is poisonous.

The Mass is not first about what I get—it is about what I give back to God for how good He has been to me. It is a matter of justice because it’s about giving God what is due to Him: our adoration, our thanksgiving, our love, and ultimately our whole selves.

In the Mass, we need to remember that there’s only one audience—and that audience is God. We are here to please God and to give Him the best worship we possibly can.

But here’s the beautiful mystery: when we give God what belongs to Him—our worship—He never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity. He pours so much grace back into our souls, and He does so with the gift of Himself. God literally gives us all that He has to offer—His whole self—in the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of His Only Begotten Son.

Irish Catholics

You know, our ancestors in the faith understood this better than I think we do. Take the Catholics of Ireland during the many years of English persecution after King Henry VIII. This really happened—it’s not a myth.

Under the penal laws, Mass in Ireland for hundreds of years was outlawed. Priests had bounties on their heads and were hunted. Churches and abbeys were destroyed, and to attend Mass could cost you your freedom—even your life.

And yet the faithful risked everything. They gathered in the dead of night, in the cold, often in the rain, at secret “Mass rocks” hidden in the countryside. A priest would celebrate the Holy Sacrifice in whispers, with sentries posted to watch for British soldiers. The faithful risked arrest, flogging, imprisonment, and even execution—just to be at Mass. Yes, this really happened.

And we can ask ourselves: Why would they do that? Why would they risk their lives for Mass?

Well, because they knew the Mass is not optional. It is not a cultural habit. It's not just a nice family tradition. It is the very heart of our faith. It is the re-presentation of the sacrifice of Christ that saves us—the supreme act of thanksgiving and worship.

You see, the Irish knew that at Mass they were at Calvary, standing at the foot of the Cross. They knew that there, in the Eucharist, they received the Body and Blood of the Lord—the Bread of Eternal Life. And perhaps above all, the Irish faithful knew they owed an obligation to God that was higher than any to the English government.

If Mass were only about “feeling inspired” or “getting something out of it,” then it would never have been worth risking one's life for. But the Irish faithful understood what the saints and the Church have always taught: the Mass is where heaven and earth meet.

The Saints

St. Padre Pio, who himself knew what it was to suffer for the faith, once said, “It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without the Holy Mass.”

And listen to St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, who devoted his entire life to bringing people back to the sacraments. He said, “If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy.”

Friends, that is the kind of awe and gratitude the saints had for this mystery. Do we feel that too? Do we share that joy with our friends and family who are away from the Church?

Conclusion

So, why do we go to Mass on Sunday? Because God deserves our worship. Because Jesus Himself commanded us at the Last Supper: “Do this in memory of me.” Because the Mass is not our work, but God's work—the work of Christ offered to the Father on our behalf. And because without the Eucharist, we cannot truly live as Christians.

To miss Mass willingly is not simply to break a Church rule—it is to turn away from a gift, the greatest gift that God has given to us.

Friends, this month is an opportunity for us to rediscover the treasure we have been given—to let our love for the Mass be renewed, to deepen our gratitude for what happens here at every celebration of the Eucharist.

May we be able to say with conviction to anyone who asks us:

“I go to Mass on Sunday because I owe God everything. The Mass is the greatest way I can give Him thanks and praise. The Mass is my greatest joy.”