

# *The Year of Faith*

## *Catechesis on the Mass*

This Sunday, in honor of the Year of Faith, we begin a project where, before every Sunday Mass, we will hear a brief explanation of the various parts of the Mass. Between now and March, we will cover the entire Mass with the hope that by renewing our appreciation of the high point of our week, we may better put into practice the saving mysteries which we celebrate at Holy Mass. These brief explanations will also be available on our website.

### **Processional and Greeting**

Mass always begins with a procession to the altar. As Catholics, our entire lives are supposed be directed to the altar, which represents Christ. As the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered on the altar, so we should be able to bring the sacrificial love, which we express in daily lives to that altar each and every week.

The followers of Christ gather for Mass each and every Sunday and Holy Day Obligation. As Catholics, we know the drill: we enter the Church, bless ourselves with Holy Water, proceed to our pew, genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament, and spend minutes in quiet prayer preparing for Mass. The priest's entrance represents the *conclusion* of this process. (We therefore should be in Church **before** Father begins.) We sing together to direct our thoughts to the day's Mass as Father and the ministers move toward the altar, genuflect to the tabernacle, and the priest kisses and sometimes incenses the altar. The processional represents our pilgrimage to Heaven, with the sanctuary being the Holy of Holies. With the assembly now fully gathered, we begin with the Sign of the Cross after which the priest greets the people with one of several greetings. In recognition of his special role as priest and celebrant, the people respond with "And with your spirit."

Next week, we cover the Act of Penitence...

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