

What We Believe... Why We Believe It

By
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BREAKING NEWS: Jesus Announces Upcoming Visit to Local Parish!

Aw, man! Did you read that headline in the local paper? What an event! Jesus is actually going to come to the parish for a visit!

Hey, I think we'd better get ready for the visit! Let me think... I suppose everyone is in agreement that we should do our absolute best. After all, it's a pretty big event to get a visit from our Creator and redeemer.

What should we do to impress Him? Well, let's start with the altar servers. You guys and gals want to impress the Boss, don't you? It would probably be a good idea to make sure you have your role down absolutely correct. You know, ring the bells the right way at the right time, be at Father's side when you're supposed to be, *et cetera*. It would be really embarrassing to goof up in front of Jesus. Oh, and even though your clothing is likely to be covered by your altar server vestments, I'd think you'd want to wear the best thing you own... complete with dress shoes instead of tennis or running shoes. I know you guys are on top of it, though.

I suppose the readers are next. You'll want to be sure you do your part perfectly too, so as to avoid embarrassment. At least, I assume you take this visit seriously enough to want to do it right. After all, this is even bigger than a visit from the pope! So remember: it's not, "The first reading (second reading) is taken from the book of Isaiah." To be proper and avoid disappointing Him and embarrassing yourself it's said, "A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah." Don't forget that doing it any other way than by reading *exactly* what's in the missalette is to be in disobedience to Him, because His Church says that's the way it's to be done.

Extraordinary Lay Ministers of the Holy Eucharist, front and center! Can I be honest with you? Frankly, more often than not, you look kind of bored and more like you are handing out cookies and fruit juice than you do confecting the Holy Eucharist. So you might want to keep in mind that the Boss takes the Eucharist pretty seriously. If you don't want Him to get upset with you, it might be a good idea to remember that. You know, being an Extraordinary Lay Minister of the Holy Eucharist is the greatest privilege a lay person can have!

Ushers? As long as you look the part, I suppose you'll be okay. But I think it's a good idea to mention one thing. If you're one of those ushers who thinks you've got to guide people from the pew to the Communion line, please knock it off. You see, when you do that the people in the pew feel pressured to go to Communion, and many times they're not worthy for reception (I

Corinthians 11:27). I know you don't mean to make them feel pressured, but that's the reality of it. I know, because I've experienced myself.

Now for the rest of us. You know, I went to a wedding at a parish church, then attended Mass the very next day. I was amazed at how many of the same people showed up at the wedding in the best clothes they had, but showed up at Mass the next day looking like they were dressed for a picnic. Why would we dress up for a wedding or funeral then dress down for Mass? Don't do that, okay? After all, Jesus created us, redeemed us from sin, and we claim to belong to Him. So it would probably be a good idea to wear the best we've got in honor of all He did (but didn't have to do) for us. Don't worry if your best isn't very good, because He really just wants to know you want to respect Him. That's the boat I'm in, but it's a matter of respect, you know.

Ladies, I realize you like men to look at you, but you can believe me when I tell you Jesus isn't interested in seeing your cleavage or a lot of leg and thigh. In fact, He really gets pretty upset by too much cleavage and leg—so much so that He actually enshrined it in the sixth and ninth commandments. So you might want to try wearing modest dresses rather than looking like you're going to the local nightclub. I hate to be so blunt about that, but it really is a problem. Besides, assuming I'm like most men, I really don't need to fight temptations at Communion time when walking behind you. I already have enough trouble with the Boss!

Since the teenage girls are likely to ignore this bit of advice altogether, you dads need to actually do your jobs as fathers and make your daughters look like ladies. Mary is the role model, not some Hollywood celebrity. Besides, Jesus would appreciate you doing as He taught through the writings of His servant St. Paul (Ephesians 6:1-4). Let's do all we can to make His visit memorable!

While we're on the topic of parenting, you folks with small children really need to keep the kids in line. After all, you don't want Jesus giving you those same disturbing looks everyone else gives you on the other Sundays when your children misbehave and distract people trying to worship. Try teaching them what the Mass is, how they are to comport themselves and to show respect. Bringing a bag full of finger foods, toys and coloring books is no way to help your children.

Then there's the Sign of Peace. Jesus has already told us, through His Church, how we're supposed to do that. There's no kissing, turning to everyone nearby to greet them or walking around the church to shake hands. We're supposed to turn to the person on either side of us, grasp that person's hand and quietly say, "Peace be with you." Anything else is distracting, disrespectful to the Boss, and (worst of all) disobedient. The Mass is about Him, not us.

That should about do it!

Oh, wait, I forgot. Jesus already comes to the parish everyday. It's called the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and He's really and truly present in the Eucharist: His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Hmm. I guess we need to do these things all the time, because He comes to visit all the time. After all, this is What We Believe... Why We Believe It.

Have questions or comments about this or any other Catholic topic? Visit JoeSixpackAnswers.com to get your answers or ask me questions directly. While you're there, sign-up for the free email course about the faith and get special invitations to weekly free webinars. I'll teach you things about the Catholic faith you've never heard before. I can also help you set up study groups in your parish where I can attend and teach you live. Ask me how!