

## Mass Parts 2/52:

### ***Immediate Preparation in Church***



You have arrived at the church, looking for somewhere to park, and have walked into the building. How long before Mass starts do you arrive? Did you remember if you are scheduled to be a lector, server, or Eucharistic Minister? If so, have you arrived early enough in the sacristy so that others don't have to worry about finding subs?

When we enter a Catholic Church, and before we sit down, we genuflect to the tabernacle. Our tabernacle is not in a separate chapel, so we go down on our right knee in recognition of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eu-

charist. When we pass the tabernacle, when moving from one side of the church to the other, we genuflect to the tabernacle. When we leave the church, we genuflect to the tabernacle. I know friends who, and I know I myself, have been caught genuflecting when going into a row of seats at a movie theater. This rule doesn't hold if you are too old and or your knees just can't take it anymore. Then you are

allowed to bow. If you are late and Mass has already begun, then the focus has shifted from the already present reality of the Eucharist in the tabernacle, to the altar and the coming-to-be-present of the Eucharist in this Mass. Then you would bow to the altar.

Once seated, it is time to mentally prepare yourself for the celebration. It is a time to put all your worries and concerns behind you, to come to some sense of peace. Kneeling or sitting are both acceptable for preparatory prayers. I do get complaints, though, about people talking in pews before Mass. Many people come early and appreciate this quiet time to pray and prepare. I know that we all love each other, and we can all take the time to greet each other, but I would ask that we save extended socializing until after Mass. Discussions of how close that final kick was, or who you would have brought in as the relief pitcher can wait.

I usually use some variation of the following prayer with the ministers in the sacristy:

Lord God  
as we offer this Eucharistic Sacrifice  
and receive the precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ,  
may we be transformed by it into your Son,  
that we too can bring his message of peace, love, and forgiveness  
to the rest of the world.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Next Week: Entrance Procession

- Father Scott Kopp