

Why Go to Mass? *from Bulletin of February 8, 2004*

Why Go to Mass? - Part III

Entirely by coincidence, last weekend Fr. Dibble included in his homily results of his “survey” on why people go to Mass and came up with seven responses. The ones I liked most were: “I feel better” (that’s positive and personal)’ “I owe God at least one hour a week” (do the math and it’s about giving thanks). As usual the full homily is available on our parish website (www.ckph.org).

Now here are some of my own favorites:

“My spiritual journey and my life can’t be walked alone.

A regular celebration with a community of faith nourishes me and I actually support and contribute something to the life and faith of others, even those I don’t personally know”

. . . “I need to hear the Word and be led and challenged by others instead of a constant diet of my own choices for reflection, opinion and prayer (or non-prayer!)”

. . . . “God may be everywhere, but the presence of the living Christ is unique, powerful and, at least at times, almost tangible at Mass – first in our gathering together, then in the Word of Scripture and most of all in communion”

. . . “It’s about my identity as a Catholic and Christian; regular participation in the Eucharist establishes that identity, regular absence dilutes and threatens that identity”

. . . “It’s the family get together and meal and it’s my family!”

. . . . “I need to be regularly reminded of who I am before God and even if I feel ‘Lord, I’m not worthy’, we celebrate that I am accepted and loved by God”

. . . “I need to hear how believers of the past struggled and lived out their faith long before I came on the spiritual scene; at Mass I feel connected with them and with my loved ones who have passed on”

. . . . “It’s so nice to feel how others believers want me there and need me there”

. . . “I need help with prayer and I need a community of faith whether I am at my worst, really on a roll, or just plodding along”

. . . “I go because I want to say ‘thanks to God’ for yet another day and another chance to live, work and grow”.

An overheard conversation

“I used to be Catholic.” So I asked, “What has taken its place?” He thought a moment and then said, “Well, nothing.” I asked, “Are you sure? One theory says there’s no such thing as an atheist; we always make something or someone into our god.” He countered (a little too quickly I thought), “I’m not an atheist, I’m just not religious”, and then he added the ever familiar platitude and exact quote from Monica Lewinsky to Barbara Walters, “I’m not religious. I’m more (like) spiritual.” (Give me strength). “Oh I’m sure you’re spiritual, but what takes the place of your religion? I mean (like) what do you do Sunday mornings? Who do you pray to? What do you use as a guide for big decisions? What gives direction, meaning and purpose to your life?” – His answer was direct, “Gee, I’ve never thought about those questions before.”