

## FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

This week I will begin a series on how to get more out of Mass. The Mass, this greatest prayer, too often is seen as “boring”... and not just by little kids! If we really knew what was going on at Mass, there’s NO WAY we could be bored! The Mass is the source and summit of our Faith – the source from which we come (we are fed at the table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ) and the summit to which we strive (the height and pinnacle of our life in God). It is here where Jesus re-presents Himself – His suffering, death and resurrection – to His Father in Heaven, giving us mercy, grace and life!

So how do we get more out of Mass? Well, we have to know what’s going on, and we have to prepare ourselves to receive this *great grace*. So let’s look at how we can prepare ourselves before Mass even begins.

Preparation for Sunday Mass, ideally, should begin during the week leading up to Sunday. Reading and praying over the readings for the following Sunday are a great way to start (you can find the readings on-line at the US Bishop’s web site: [uscgb.org](http://uscgb.org); then click on the date on the calendar on the right). By reading and praying through them, we create a familiarity with the readings that can prepare our hearts to hear God speak to us. It is a wonderful practice to read them out loud as a family or with friends, and then discuss what they mean. Sometimes they will be easy to understand; sometimes it takes some thought and research. But because it is God’s Word, He always has something for each of us to help us grow closer to Him. He is a loving Father that loves to speak with His children, but we have to open our hearts to hear His voice.

Another part of preparation for Mass is a daily examination of conscience. If every day we look over the last 24 hours – examining where we have followed God’s love (and thanking God that we have followed His loving lead), and where we have failed in love (and making a practical plan as to how we can love better tomorrow) – we will find that our lives will improve in how we relate to God, others and ourselves. This daily examination will help us prepare ourselves to receive God in Word and Sacrament at Mass.

That’s a good start. As we prepare our hearts in this way, it will help us to receive ALL the great gifts God wants to give us in the Mass!