

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,
So, did you get a Mass Journal?

For those who forgot or missed last week Matthew Kelly suggests that we get a Mass journal and write in it: **Lord, show me in this Mass one way I can become a better version of myself.** This simple act helps prepare us to receive from God at Mass. When something strikes us at Mass (and it always will, if we are open to it), we then write that one thing down in the journal, and look at it throughout the week. As we look at it throughout the week, we continue a dialogue with God, and see how He wants to improve our lives – to make us saints. It also helps us to focus on listening to God at Mass.

I've written about preparing for Mass over the last couple of weeks. Now Mass begins! If I asked you how Mass begins, you might say, "With the Sign of the Cross," or "With the Processional Song." These are, of course, at the very beginning of Mass, but the first thing we do is we STAND. A small thing, to be sure, but not something to be overlooked. Sometimes we make fun of our "Catholic Aerobics" (stand, sit, stand, sit, stand, kneel, stand... it almost sounds like "Simon Says"!), but our posture is important.

You see, God didn't make us like the angels, who are completely spirit and never had bodies. No, he made us body and soul. Our bodies are GOOD, and God wants us to use our bodies to pray. We stand, as we would stand to greet a friend who entered our home. We stand to greet Jesus, to show respect, and to remember that we are children of God and have risen with Christ.

Then we sing the Processional Song. The Bishops of the United States said this in their document, *Sing to the Lord*:

Music is ... a sign of God's love for us and of our love for him. ... [I]t is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people.

The Second Vatican Council calls us to "full, conscious, and active participation" in Mass. This means the singing, too! Give back to God the voice He gave you! Singing unites us so well in community so that our voices and (more importantly) our hearts may be raised to God. Throughout the Bible (Old Testament and New) we hear about the people of God singing to the Lord. The very heart and center of the Bible is not just a song, but the Song of Songs – a romantic love song between Almighty God (the groom) and his people (the bride).

I encourage you, if you struggle with singing, to open up your heart (and your mouth, as much as you dare) to the praise of Almighty God. Think about the words we sing. Think about to whom we are singing. Then offer your prayer in song to God. He doesn't want a good voice (none of our voices are anything compared to His glorious and omni-melodic voice); He only wants the love from our hearts rolling off of our lips in praise!