

Feast of Christ the King - Cycle A

Over the past year I've had a lot of interesting questions come my way. "Is it true the Mass is going back to Latin?" "Will Fr. Dave be the new Pastor over all 3 parishes?" "Will Fr. Jason be staying on as an associate pastor?"

It seems to me that we are not going back to the Latin Mass where the language is predominantly Latin...although; our new English translation will be closer to the Latin language. But there is another question that I am continually asked: Is missing Mass a mortal sin?

I'm not sure what motivates the question, but in the interest of clearing the air on the subject, I will attempt to address the issue. Surprisingly, most people I spoke with reject the concept of mortal sin.

"That's Old School theology" they say. It's just meant to instill fear in people. Well, if you understand what mortal sin is and what it does to our relationship with God; there is reason to be fearful.

You see, mortal sin is a deliberate and willful act on our part to turn our backs on God. We consciously reject God and His Law. And when we do that, we put ourselves in a position that bars us from receiving God's Grace.

For mortal sin to occur, 3 things must be present. The sin is a grave matter. Full knowledge of what you are doing. And finally, full consent of the will to commit the sin.

So is missing Mass a mortal sin? Let's look at that question. This weekend we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. If we accept that Christ is our King, then what does that makes us?

We're servants and stewards of God's Kingdom. So if Christ is our King, what does he expect from us? Did He give us any clues?

"Unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you have no life within you". "For my flesh is real food, my blood is real drink". So if we believe His words, it's easy to see why Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith.

Jesus also tells us to “forsake not to assemble yourselves in my name”. “Where two or more are gathered in my name, I too shall be there”. Do we believe those words?

We also have the third commandment: “Keep holy the Sabbath Day”. For us Catholics, that means from 4 p.m. on Saturday through Sunday. So is missing Mass a mortal sin? The answer is yes. When we miss Mass for no good reason, we are saying that whatever we are doing is more important than receiving Eucharist. It’s more important than gathering in God’s name.

And I’ve heard all the excuses. “I’m tired; it’s my only day to sleep in”. “I was at the bar and lost track of time”. “The Brown’s are on at 1 o’clock”.

The excuses are endless. And in those instances, and ones like them, missing Mass is a mortal sin.

However, there are legitimate reasons to miss Mass. Illness and work to name a few. Your job may require you to work during Mass times. Personal illness or injury may prevent you from attending Mass.

In those instances, and ones like them, missing Mass is not a mortal sin. But even in those circumstances, Catholics are encouraged to pray, read scripture, or watch Mass on TV.

Mortal sin can only be removed by a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I’ve had people tell me I don’t need a priest judging me, and I don’t need Confession. I can talk to God by myself.

“Peter, you are Rock, and upon this Rock I will build my Church”. “Those sins who you hold bound, shall be bound in Heaven. Those sins who you shall loose, shall be loosed in Heaven”.

The priest, “in persona Christi”, is in the person of Christ during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. So in essence you **are** talking to God and He is absolving you of your sin. The priest does not judge you. He is doing exactly what Christ told Peter, our first Pope, over 2000 years ago.

So on this Feast of Christ the King; do we accept our Lord’s Word as sacred truth? Or do we accept **our** words and justification over His?