



Fernando Poyatos's Guide -For a full experience of the Holy Mass-. There are those who throughout his life has attended mass every Sunday, and even every day, "without recognizing that what happens in it should always touch his heart".

That change is one of the objectives of Fernando Poyatos, who has been a professor at the University of New Brunswick and for many years lay agent of Pastoral Health in Canada and Spain. In addition to his professional health workers, he collaborates in magazines like Phase, one of the most important in Spain in the liturgical field, or Dolentium Hominum, that publishes the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral of the health.

His concern as a writer has led him to develop his materials for liturgical pastoral, pre-baptismal or sick, and some of it has curdled in his last work, "Stay with us, Sir". For a full experience of the Holy Mass (editions of Good Ink).

It is a complete guide to know and live the Catholic Mass, not only destined to those who already do, but to those who ignore it. It follows step by step the prayers of the ordinary priest and faithful, explained in a way that not only knows what happens when they rise to heaven but how and why it happens, with all its theological implications.

From his reading, is possible to extract some very practical advice, and that depends only on ourselves, to extract all its fruit to the mystery and miracle of the Eucharistic celebration. We focus on those destined for the laity, but there are also in "Stay with us, Lord" for the priests.

Changes of attitude outside and inside that we predispose better (do what others do, including the priest) so that our heart is touched.

1. Respect the integrity of the celebration. Punctuality is not only a courtesy but an obligation. To go to the movies, we are punctual because we consider the principle also important. Is it going to be less the mass? "We do not recognize the theological importance of what happens from the priest's initial greeting, nor the severity of losing what God was already telling us".

- 2.** Respect the priest. With something as simple as, at the end of the celebration, we do not move from our place until he has left the altar. Such snubbing is not done only to the priest. "This attitude of impatience reflects a desire to absent ourselves as soon as possible ... to fulfill (or so we believe) with God's command as quickly as possible and move on to other things that do not wait".
- 3.** Bless us with holy water. If there is, of course. In such a case, use this sacramental and even share it with whoever is behind. Not as an empty gesture, but "asking our Trinity to purify us and free us from everything we can bring that, not being of God, can harm us and distract us so that we are ready for our appointment with Him".
- 4.** Kneel before Jesus Sacrament. Not only because it deserves that gesture of worship, but because it prepares us for the importance of what will happen minutes later, because thus "we are recognizing the permanent Eucharistic presence of our Savior in the tabernacle of any church in the world, the Same Christ that we receive in communion".
- 5.** Join the others and place ourselves near the altar. It is common to try to be placed in a place away from the rest of the faithful, especially if they are not known. And everyone is familiar with the image of a string of empty banks between the altar and the first assistants. "It is a moral duty before Christ-who gathers us in his house to share his sacrifice with us his brothers-precisely to put ourselves near those who are already there, and from the first banks, around the altar. Let us have the fraternal Christian courtesy of recognizing the presence of the brothers on whose side we sit... And the Christian delicacy of not sitting without even looking at who we have next door".
- 6.** Recognize the importance of the altar. And, when the kneel not proceeds to coincide its location with that of the Tabernacle, "never stop worshipping him by making a deep and paused inclination from the waist, not simply head".
- 7.** A preparatory examination. For this it is necessary, of course, to have arrived with a few minutes in advance. A few reflections are enough: "What is my motivation?... do I bring with me things that overwhelm or distract me, whether they are good or bad?" And the most important: if we are not in the disposition of communion, "to approach the confessional before beginning and to remain calm with the absolution that God will give me through his minister".
- 8.** Consciously live the Penitential act. That is not routine: "We must sincerely wish to purify ourselves of all the faults we need to get rid of before presenting ourselves before God and thus open ourselves consciously (never reciting it mechanically) to whatever favors he wants to grant us, physically, emotionally or spiritually, through the Word and the Eucharist".
- 9.** Listen attentively to the word. It seems obvious, but it is where distractions are

more frequent. Poyatos highlights the whys of a particularly attentive listening: "We should wish that what the Lord has to tell us through his Scriptures touch our hearts and that of our brothers ... Let us give to the Word the reverent attention that its proclamation deserves, and let us not let anything or anyone distract us, for it is God who is speaking to us".

10. Rethink the Homily. For many faithful, it is a part of the determining mass that it likes or dislikes. But beyond that, that does not depend on the layman, what the priest says "with authority", and therefore it is always advisable, immediately (especially if you leave a brief silence for it), review what we have just heard, from which "we can also draw an application for each one of us".

11. Eye with the Offertory! Mass is a sacrifice, and therefore the offering is an essential moment. But because of its location between the tension of the homily and the imminent summit of the consecration, and because it is where the economic collection usually takes place, "those minutes can be improperly converted into a simple lagoon or pause in the middle of the liturgy, as a brief rest." It is necessary to react so that it is not so and to associate ourselves with what the priest does at the altar.

12. How much to give? Here Poyatos gives the word to who will be (since September 4) St. Teresa of Calcutta: "You have to give until it hurts and then continues giving until it stops hurting."

13. Kneel (at least) in consecration. "Through the priest, Minister, and representative of Christ, the greatest miracle that mankind could ever imagine, the gift for us whose price was the death in the Cross of God the Son, of Jesus Christ, for every one of those who are present: Bread and wine are going to become your body and blood, along with your soul and divinity, your whole person. Is it possible to attend something like this in another non-worship attitude? "

14. The seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer. It is such a common prayer that we can make it inconsequential. However, it contains sufficient elements so that, meditated conveniently (and the mass is the perfect time to do so), it becomes "a good examination of conscience", and just before communion.

15. In giving peace... We live properly is a rite "not only wishing the peace of truth but praying at that moment for them mentally."

16. "I am not worthy." We say it before communion, and it's true! That is why Poyatos remembers the "silent gathering" before that moment, because "the fruit that we receive will be in direct proportion to our availability and preparation". And he even adds that this moment is "the only one in which we must isolate ourselves from the brethren and collect ourselves".

17. A little more makes a difference. "It is good, if we can, to stay a few moments

in the church after the mass, better still in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, before the Tabernacle, i.e. with the Lord and with ourselves. And there, with him alone, try to see what this Eucharistic celebration has done to us if it has affected us in something".

"Stay with us, Lord" thus lay the foundations so that attendance at mass produces the fruits and goods for which the holy sacrifice of the altar was instituted. And always bearing in mind that this work is not a recipe book, but a complete theological and didactic approach to all the rites of the Mass, and a completed work in its appendices and diagrams with a wealth of useful information on the naming and origin of the different objects sacred, sacred vestments and sacred books, description and explanation of the liturgical year