

Meditation Before Mass *by Msgr. Romano Guardini*

(Composure In the Presence of Divinity)

- I am composed and ready for Mass when my “heart and mind are concentrating on the here and now, not off on daydreams. It is *being all here.*”
- “The Liturgy is based on the fact of God’s presence in the church.”

My Prayer. Help me, O God, to respond to Your willingness to be here. Open in me a desire to be with You, my ever-present God, with my whole body, mind, and soul, with attention, reverence, and love. That is composure; You have gifted me with the ability to do this. Give me the desire and help me develop such composure. Amen.

- “To be present is more than to sit or kneel in place. It is an act of the spirit and expresses itself in one’s whole bearing.”
- “As for sitting itself, in church it signifies more than mere comfort; it is the position of attentive listening.”
- “Kneeling is the expression of our rightful position to God. Standing in church is the bearing of reverence before the heavenly Lord.”
- “We can do these things convincingly only when we are fully conscious of what is taking place around us, and that awareness is ours only when we are self - collected and composed. Equally elementary and self-understood, yet equally in need of vigilance, are our acts of looking and seeing.”

“We do not come to church to attend Mass as a spectator, but in order, to be with God,” individually and as a community, to learn who we are and to grow into whom God gave us the potential to become.

“Everything we do — our entering, being present, our kneeling and sitting and standing, our reception of the sacred nourishment — should be the divine service”, the Mass of one community - those gathered and those absent. “All we do overflows from the awareness of a recollected heart and the mind’s attentiveness.”

Note: “When I seat myself at my desk or . . . do a job in my workshop, I unconsciously pull myself together; otherwise, it will go wrong. Everywhere some utilitarian purpose to be accomplished binds my attention. In the Mass there are no such purposes. The believer simply steps into the presence of God and remains there for Him. The Liturgy is a thing of exalted purposelessness, but it is filled with the sense of sacred attending, and over it reigns the sublimity of God. It must be willed and practiced. Otherwise our ‘service’ grows dull, indolent, careless, an insult to divine Majesty.”

AT MASS

We Gather sing Hymns. We form ourselves with Christ into an **assembled community of believers, disciples of Jesus**; we let our voices arise in song. In a **Penitential Rite**, we acknowledge our sins, our failure to be the missionary disciples of Christ we promised, at baptism, that we would be.

We are Quiet and Listening. In quietness we let surface what is on our minds and in our hearts; we let God’s Spirit flow in and among us, healing our wounds and guiding our thoughts.

We listen to the **reading of Scripture** which challenges us to conversion: we hear that Word together and, therefore, have a “common obligation to fulfill it in our lives.”

We Profess our Faith. We stand together and proudly proclaim to God, ourselves and each other, our wholehearted response to the Word of God which was just proclaimed.

We Present our Gifts. An expression of our acknowledgement that “everything we have received is a gracious, unmerited gift from God” *Who am I and who are we that God has given us so much?*

(The quotations below are from the book *Catholic Discipleship* by Frank P. DeSiano CSP.)

We Pray the Eucharistic Prayer. “We are invited to identify our prayer with the prayer of Jesus – to be one with his sacrifice. ‘Accept us, Lord, together with your Son,’ we pray. As he gives himself to the Father, so we unite ourselves with him in that unending prayer which culminates in the great song of glory, ‘Through him, with him, and in him, O God almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever.’ Few prayers summarize discipleship as well as this one.”

We Receive Holy Communion. “The Lord stands before us and says, ‘Take and eat; take and drink.’ It is an invitation, but also *a dare*. The Body that Jesus offers is one that was given in love. . . so that we will be free from sin and evil. As Catholics we approach the altar knowing that Jesus Christ is truly present, truly offering himself to us, and truly *inviting us to identify ourselves with his life and saving actions.* . . *Will we take his broken body, his blood shed in love, and make it our own flesh, our own blood? Will we be Christ today, in our daily lives?”*

We are Sent. “Go and proclaim the Gospel in your lives.” The Mass sends us forth as converted disciples into the world to bring Christ’s life into our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods and the world which is God’s world.

The Mass calls us to be missionaries in a world that resists God’s plan for us. How am I being asked by God to do that? Am I allowing myself to be transformed into Christ, our God-become-Man who has shown us the Way?

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