

When two or three are gathered

A guide to participating from home in the celebration of Mass

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“Jesus promised to be where two or three are gathered in his name (cf. Mt 18:20). We give the name *church* to the people whom the Lord gathers, who strive to follow his way of love, and through whose lives his saving presence is made known.

A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a domestic church or *church of the home*.”

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Follow the Way of Love](#)

“The Church at worship is God's priestly people called together and united with Christ in a sacred work through which God is glorified and we are made holy.”

-The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: [Sacrosanctum Concilium](#), [SC] #7

The [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy](#) reminds us that “all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's Supper” (SC, #10).

Yet being a part of the worshiping assembly is not always possible for all members of the community. For a variety of reasons, people do not have the opportunity to be physically present with a regular worshiping community. For this reason, many dioceses telecast the Mass and other liturgies as a way of reaching out, to bring the Lord's healing and comfort.

Live broadcasts, by their very nature, attempt to connect people that are physically separated by inviting us to join in worship together at the same time. Although the televised Mass is not a substitute for participation in the actual celebration of the Church's liturgy, it does provide an opportunity 1) to identify with a worshiping community, 2) to hear the Word of God, 3) and to be moved to expressions of praise and thanksgiving. But there can also be a tendency with the medium of television, its inherent lack of physical interaction, to lead people to more passive roles as spectators.



The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* clearly articulated the primary importance of the faithful's "full, conscious, and active participation" which is called for "by the very nature of the Liturgy" and which is their "right and duty" by reason of their baptism (SC, #14).

As members of the worshipping assembly, even when the Mass is televised or live streamed, we are called to join the offering of ourselves with the offering of Christ. Thus, our participation involves an inner attitude of prayer and external expressions including physical movement, sentiments of praise and adoration, and joining in the responses. Whether you are participating in a televised Mass at home alone or with others, we are still gathered together, lifting our hearts and minds, with others who are also participating at that time.

This resource, "When Two or Three Are Gathered" is intended to provide you with ideas for how you can express your "full, conscious, and active participation" when participating in a televised or live streamed celebration of the Mass.

-Adapted from the U.S. Catholic Bishops "Guidelines for Televising the Liturgy" USCCB, 2014. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions/guidelines-for-televising-the-liturgy.cfm>. Last accessed March 19, 2020.

Be It Ever So Humble: Setting up the space at home

Prayer involves lifting the mind and heart to God. We have also been created to experience spiritual reality through our bodily senses. For this reason, the Church encourages us to give thought to finding an appropriate place for private prayer or prayer with others, like our family.

The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) invites us to create a "prayer corner" in order to be there before our Father. Though God is present everywhere and always, creating a prayer corner helps to create the space where God meets us and we meet God. In a Christian family, this kind of 'little oratory' fosters prayer in common. (CCC, 2691)

Find some of the same elements you find in Church that draw souls to God and incorporate them into your home - consider small statues or icons of saints, framed Catholic art, candles, your Bible, or a crucifix.

Find a small table and drape it with some kind of cloth. If you can, find a cloth that matches the [color of the liturgical season](#). Then, place the elements on top. If you have children at home, invite them to find items that remind them of God and have them help set up your "family altar."

You may also need to rearrange furniture in your house in order to participate fully when it is time for Mass.



Be intentional – pray out loud, stand and kneel

A key to “full, conscious and active participation” is to be intentional. This is true wherever and whenever we participate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. But it becomes especially true when we participate in the televised Mass. Moreover, if you have children at home, as parents you teach and model the gestures and words of the liturgy for your children.

Get ready before Mass starts the same way you do when gathering at church. Arrive a little early if you can. Light the candle. Sit or kneel as you are able and enter into an attitude of prayer. Tune your television or device to the broadcast.

Mass in the Diocese of Grand Rapids is broadcast every Sunday at 10 a.m. on WXMI FOX 17 and through Facebook Live. For complete information, visit <https://grdiocese.org/diocese/televised-mass/>.

Stand, sit and kneel as you are able at the appropriate times.

Join in the responses out loud.

Consider purchasing a missal or downloading an app, such as iBreviary or Laudate, so that you can follow the celebration. If you have small children, you may already have an age-appropriate book that they can use to follow along. In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, you can view or print the worship aid for the Sunday Mass as well as a copy of the Mass Responses and Prayers, at <https://grdiocese.org/diocese/televised-mass/>.

At the offertory, offer yourself in prayer as the bread and wine are offered, to be united in Christ’s sacrifice and transformed more completely into members of his body. Pray over your gift that you have prepared to send to your home parish.

During reception of Holy Communion, make an act of Spiritual Communion.

Once Mass is complete, extend the communion you’ve experienced in prayer through more shared activities with your family. Enjoy brunch or the at-home version of “parish coffee and donuts.” Even in Lent, Sunday remains the primordial “feast” day of the Church.

Making an Act of Spiritual Communion

Text below is adapted from the article by Philip Kosloski, posted by [Aleteia](#), Sept. 18, 2018.

In cases when we cannot receive Holy Communion, the Church encourages us to make an act of “spiritual communion,” where we unite ourselves to God through prayer. It is a beautiful way to express to God our desire to be united with him.



Below is a traditional prayer of spiritual communion that many saints have prayed over the years. It can be prayed if you find yourself unable to receive the Eucharist, or even in the midst of your daily work, lifting up your thoughts to God.

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and
unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Glorify the Lord by your lives: Resources for making the Lord's Day holy

Here are some helpful resources for you and your family to further "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

52 Sundays from the Archdiocese of Detroit <https://www.52sundays.com/>

Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families 2020-2021 from Liturgical Training Publications ([English](#) | [Espanol](#))

Grand Rapids FAITH Magazine from the Diocese of Grand Rapids
<https://grdiocese.org/category/faith-magazine/>

Faith and Family from Franciscan Media <https://info.franciscanmedia.org/faith-and-family>

Sunday Gospel Activities from Catholic Mom <http://catholicmom.com/kids/catholic-gospel-coloring-worksheets-sunday-mass/>

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