

1. Because GOD says so: "**Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy**" (Dt 5:12).
2. "The **Day of the Lord**" for the Jews was the **seventh day**, which is *Saturday* in our pagan name-system (**Sun**, **Moon**, **Tiw** [*God of War*], **Woden** [Odin, the *top God*], **Thor** [*God of thunder*], **Fria** [*Goddess of love*], and **Saturn** [*God of farming*]). Christians switched to the **first day of the week**, the day on which God had said, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3) because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day and started a *new creation*.

**Every Sunday is a little Easter**--even the Sundays during Lent.

3. **Jesus promised a special blessing to prayer together** that is **NOT** promised to private prayer (although private prayer is also good and essential): "**Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them**" (Mt 18:20). For orthodox Christians, it is not "*either private prayer OR group prayer*" but **BOTH**.
4. From the **apostolic age**, Christians have recognized an **obligation** to meet together regularly: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..." (Heb 10:24-25).
5. For Roman Catholics, the centerpiece of Mass is **communion**, a *sacrament* in which Jesus gives us Himself: body, blood, soul, and divinity. Finding God in nature is a good thing--it is good to find God in all things, all day long, in all circumstances--but this blessing of communion is reserved to the Church. To take communion, you must be present with other members of the Body. *When you are absent, you ex-communicate yourself*.
6. When we withhold ourselves from union with the Body of Christ, **we weaken the Body**. *No one else can take our place*. We are not interchangeable parts. Each person plays a unique and special role in God's plan of salvation. **Our presence at Mass makes a difference; so does our absence**.
7. Sickness, travel, or serious responsibilities that occasionally prevent attendance are good reasons to miss Sunday Mass. But "**those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin**" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2181). Instead of practicing faith, hope, love, mercy, compassion, and group prayer, such people practice denying their relationship to God and to their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

*But everyone in Church is a hypocrite. They are just there for show. All they think of is what other people think of them.*

**How do you know that?** Can you read the secrets of others' hearts? Even if it's true, Jesus commands us to love our neighbors, forgive their sins, and to preach the gospel to them. If we are true Christians, we should be there letting our light shine before others, like a city set on a mountaintop (Mt 5:14-16). When we go to Church, we show others that we believe. **We preach by our prayerful, loving presence (1 Pet 3:1). Actions speak louder than words.**

*But I hate Mass. It's boring. I don't get anything out of it.*

**Prayer is hard work.** We need to close our eyes and open our hearts in order to "see" the real action of the Mass: Jesus giving Himself to us anew as He did on the Cross and in the first Eucharist. **This action is invisible.** We make it real to ourselves only by **acts of faith**.

No one else can take a bath for us.

No one else can pray for us.

No one else can open the vision of faith for us.

If **we** keep our minds closed to God, **we** will not see God in Church.

**The more we give of ourselves to God in prayer in Church, the more we receive.**

*This is the **priesthood of the laity** ("laity" means the faithful who are not ordained). Each of us has the power to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God, imitating Jesus' priestly self-sacrifice on the Cross.*

Mass is not a TV show. The script is **always the same**: See what love the Father has lavished on us in giving us His only Son to be our Savior (1 Jn 3:1; Jn 3:16). If you refuse to let God love you, you will not feel God's love for you. As the computer geeks say, **Garbage In, Garbage Out (GIGO)**.

*But my Church is dead. There's no life there. The priest gives horrible sermons. He's the worst person I've ever met.*

**Love is hard work.** Those people whom you find so despicable in Church are the sons and daughters of God (Jonah 4:9-11). They are your brothers and sisters. They are the people for whom Jesus died on the Cross. They are members of His Body, and therefore they are **united to you through Jesus**. When we receive Jesus in Communion, we receive all of them, too, in a sense, insofar as they are joined to Him. "Love you neighbor as yourself" (Lk 10:27).

On Judgment Day, we won't be asked how many good sermons we heard or how much fun we had at Church. We will be asked how well we loved God and our neighbor. The priest and the parishioners count as neighbors. **They need and deserve our love.**