

## Understanding the Mass

### Part 3 in a series

#### I'm in the pew; now what?

Now that we have arrived and are seated, what next? If possible, we kneel, but if we physically can't then we sit quietly with our hands resting in our laps. These are called *postures of prayer*. These five to ten minutes before the Mass begins should be devoted to prayer and reflection. It is good to open with a few memorized prayers. You may have your favorites but you can't go wrong with the Our Father and a Hail Mary! Pray them slowly and thoughtfully, thinking about what each phrase means.

After your prayers, take the time to have a conversation with God. Tell him what's on your mind, what's troubling you, what's made you happy the past week. Have a real conversation with God. Sometimes I think we just try too hard. We don't have to use flowery prose or \$50 words! Just take this time to open yourself up to Jesus, becoming aware of His presence in the Eucharist. Ask Jesus to help you get the most out of the Mass you are about to participate in.

Here is an example of how to ask Jesus to help you prepare for the Mass. Don't feel you have to recite this word for word. Put it in your own words if you wish. Maybe even cut this out and bring it with you as a guide. The point is, just have your own conversation casually with Christ asking for calm and attentiveness, for spiritual growth, for a response of faith.

"Jesus, thank you for calling me to this celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Calm down my mind so that I may be attentive to the words, actions, symbols, and signs of this act of worship. Surround my heart with your peace so that it may long for you alone. Help me listen with faith to God's message in the readings. May I have an open heart to the homily. Motivate me to carry the effects of the Mass into my daily life and to be a missionary of your Good News."