

***Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time***  
***September 1, 2019***  
***Part Three***

*“and Jeremiah sank into the mud.” (Jeremiah 38:6)*

As we continue our examination of the results from both the Gallup and Pew surveys, I stated that I would attempt to propose a few small things we could undertake to see if they would help us in gain a greater appreciation, love, and devotion for the Eucharist and our Catholic faith. It is my intention to offer these suggestions to help us form the habit of reverent liturgical worship. Let us begin by asking ourselves two questions: (1) What do I expect of myself as I come to church on Sunday? (2) What do I expect of my parish church when I am there to worship on Sunday? I believe both questions could be answered with one phrase - the mindset of habit.

Have you ever heard the statement (or some form of it) which goes: “You get out of it what you put into it!” What do we expect of ourselves has we begin our preparation to worship God on Sunday? At first this may seem an odd question, but I believe our at home preparation is the first phase in changing our mindset. You and I must view our Sunday liturgical worship as something extraordinary. It is different from all other events, activities, interactions, or jobs we have participated in over the week. We are gathering together to speak with God. Therefore, how I dress can be a first step in reminding me of where I am going and to whom I am going to speak with. Some Catholics will become upset when we speak of Mass attire. Consider this example: Mobile, Alabama prides itself on being the mother Mardi Gras. Great care is taken to have amazing Mardi Gras balls with white ties, tuxes, and lovely flowing dresses. Have you ever heard someone say: “If they ever say something about the way I dress, then I will not go back to that Mardi Gras Ball!” Yet, how many times have we heard Catholics adamantly state they left a parish church because Father said something about the way they were dressed. We accept formal attire for a moon pie, yet refuse semi-formal attire for God. Our dress conveys respect to those around us, and in this case, Our Father. Let us ask ourselves these other questions: Do I arrive early enough to quietly pray thanking God for the help he offered last week and seeking His guidance for the coming week? Or, have I developed the habit of continually arriving late? If my place of employment expects me to be punctual, then should God expect anything less from me? Might I suggest that we return to an old habit, let us invest in a nice set of “Church” clothes and set an alarm to arrive early. It may not seem like much, but these two things might become good “Church Habits”.

The second question, “What do I expect from my church?”, is also very important for our continued spiritual growth. What do you expect when you come to church on Sunday? As Maximus Decimus Meridius (Russell Crowe’s character from the Gladiator movie) would shout: “Are you not entertained?” Have we come to expect being entertained instead of encouraged? If we are trying to instill the habit of worship in ourselves, then should we not also expect reverent worship when we come to church? You should accept no less than a church that is neat and clean, which offers quiet time before Mass allowing for personal prayer. A church offering good music which elevates ones heart and mind toward heaven. Insightful homilies or sermons which elicit a call to intellectual growth and a deeper spirituality. Reverent liturgies which affirm the

devotions and traditions of our Catholic faith. Our parish liturgy should always be an affirmation of the beliefs we profess as worshippers.