

Celebrating the Holy Mass in our family

Blessed John Paul II in his Encyclical letter ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA wrote: *'The Eucharist has been given to us to make our whole life, like that of Mary, may become completely a Magnificat'*. We know that in order to become closer to these deep thoughts, we as a family have to love the Holy Mass, love Jesus, who is present in his Words, and who gives himself in the form of bread and wine, coming into a communion with a man.

We have been married for 15 years and since the beginning of our marriage we have been trying to build up unity between us and get into deeper relationship with God. Each Sunday is for us a special day of the week - it is a day of celebration. We happily experience that the words of Jesus *'And I am with you for all days, until the end of the world'* in a wonderful way become true during the Holy Mass.

To make each Sunday a special day for our family we try to prepare for it doing all the chores earlier. So we clean our house, do the shopping, wash, bake cakes on Saturday. We also remind our children to do their homework the day before Sunday. We try to organize our day in such a way that on Sundays we would focus on God, on meetings with our family and friends.

There was such a moment in our life that we realized what is the most important mission for us as parents. That was giving (handing down) our children faith, that would be based on the Bible and to be a good example for them in our everyday life.

For us there is nothing more important than attending the Holy Mass on Sundays to meet Jesus, our Lord. That's why we got our children into the habit of celebrating the Lord's Day.

An important thing preparing us for the Holy Mass is pondering the Words of God for the Sunday Mass. Every Sunday after breakfast I invite my children (especially the older ones) and we read the Holy Bible together. After reading we reflect upon these words and try to understand what God wanted to tell us today. I ask different questions that are suitable for each child. So, the youngest one Szymek (6 years old) tells what he remembers from the text, the older children, Bartek and Julia, try to relate some details from the Gospel to their lives. I encourage them to remember these words and try to live in accordance with them.

By doing this we hope that our children will remember The Words of God. Reading the Bible before the Mass helps them to understand and be more open during the Holy Mass.

I remind my children to think about the intention that they would be praying for during the Eucharist. We choose the Mass for children so that they could hear the preaching suitable for their age. The words they would hear help them to get to know Jesus better, their love for Jesus would become deeper and they would have a desire to imitate our Lord.

After the Holy Mass when we come back home we talk about the preaching, so these words would stay for longer in our hearts, we share our reflections, and we talk about the most essential thoughts for us.

Throughout the period of 15 years of our marriage we sometimes experienced difficult times, but nothing could stop us from attending the Sunday Mass. When I was on a business trip, or our children were sick, my wife asked our friends or relatives to stay with them for one hour and she went to church. When we are on holiday, we usually know on Saturday where the church is and what time we could go to church on Sunday.

These external factors weren't a problem for us but more difficult to deal with was the reluctance to participate in the Holy Mass by our children. We know that the Holy Eucharist is the Mystery of Faith and that everybody comes to this Mystery through all their life. So what we try to do is to explain to our children that there is Jesus in the Church and that he is waiting for them, and that He loves them very much, and he misses them. Sometimes we try to use other comparisons from everyday life so that the children could understand there is Love waiting for them, but there are times when none of these explanations work, so then we remind them about the third Commandment *'Remember to keep holy the Lord's day'* and that there is nothing more important than listening to our Lord. We go to church and you go with us.

There was a time when one of our children before the First Communion was very rebellious and did not want to go to church. So we decided to let him take the consequences of this behaviour and said that *'because you don't want to go to church it means that you are not ready to take Jesus to your heart, because you don't want to meet Him in his House so we are going to postpone the First Communion till you are ready'*. You can probably guess what was the final decision of our child.

In our hearts we always wanted to be in Church together, whole family. Unfortunately this wasn't always possible. There was such a period in our life when our kids were very absorbing, and we couldn't be with our Lord in our thoughts entirely, because we had to take care of the youngest who was very curious of everything that is around us. So then we decided to go to church separately. We suffered the loss of something important; it was like being next to someone but not in fact with Him. So that's why we took this decision. After some time we tried again to go to church with our whole family and when we saw that our children did not disturb us and other people any more we decided to go to the Mass together. This situation lasts till this day.

We bring our family, our everyday living to the Lord. We give him our joys and our worries and we trust that every difficult situation can turn into something good.

During the Holy Eucharist we feed ourselves with God's word, that brings us love, that lasts for ever and ever. In the Communion we receive Jesus's flesh, that was crucified for us. When we go to Mass we meet God and other people in the Church community.

We always fight for the full participation in the Eucharist. We try to live in the holy grace, examine our conscience every day and confess every month, all these things are very important for true participation in the Eucharist. We want to be a good example for our children because we believe that it makes them believe that participation in the Holy Mass is a great value.

What's more they remember about their confession every month and they want Jesus to come into their hearts.

We owe everything we have, what is the most important in our marriage and in our family to Jesus who is alive in the Holy Eucharist. He feed our souls with love and strength and it helps us to become good, loving and forgiving. From Eucharist we learn how to bring up our children in love and for love. We let God change us and when we look back we can see how many miracles he did in us and for us.

We go out of Church with Jesus in our hearts, with Almighty God's blessing for everyday life. We try to continue this celebration at our home. We set our dining table in a special way, where we eat our dishes and where we talk. We take care of Sunday, this is a special time for God, family, relatives and friends. Jesus inside us let us build the communion with other people.