

Resurrection Parish

CELEBRATE



Gather: The Introductory Rites

When does Mass begin? When we make the sign of the cross? When we are greeted at the door? When we pull into the parking lot? When we get up on Sunday morning, get dressed and drive to church? Let's see . . . This Sunday's Mass really began last Sunday when we were blessed and sent forth, ". . . to love and serve the Lord." Our next Mass begins when we are commissioned not only to take Christ to the world but also to be Christ in the world.

Our gathering is important though. We have all said, "We're off to a good start." Getting off to a good liturgical start is all about hospitality, and paying attention to the presence of Christ. It is within our very act of hospitable and gracious gathering, that we first encounter Christ. He said it himself, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20). This is not gooey, gushy hospitality. This is the kind of hospitality that recognizes and respects the presence of Christ in each and every person. This is the kind of hospitality that says for the time that we are together there is a privileged place for you in my life. The late Fr. Gene Walsh said it well, "Gathering is the first step in Christian love. It is the initial movement in fulfilling God's command to love one another."

Jesus said,
"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and
whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."
Matthew 10:40

We come together as the Body of Christ.
We lose our individuality and find our common identity; we let the noise and
the preoccupations of our lives die away as we become aware of him in
whose presence we stand, and of those with whom we stand.
Dr. Mark Searle

For reflection and sharing . . .

- ❖ Recall a time when you experienced a warm welcome and felt that you were truly an important part of the group.
- ❖ Recall a time when you were ignored or felt invisible or unwanted in a group.
- ❖ When you gather for Mass, what practical things can you and other parishioners do to ". . . take on the form of a community, prepare to listen to God's word and celebrate the Eucharist worthily?" (*GIRM #46*)
- ❖ How does our church building here at Resurrection help or hinder the gathering of the community?

Welcome. Engage. Celebrate. Serve. Connect.