



From the
Pastor



PARISH ETIQUETTE:

Our Children—Part II

Encourage your child to learn and participate in the actions of the Mass—making the sign of the cross, sitting, standing, kneeling, listening, responding and singing. You may take your child out of the assembly if he or she becomes repeatedly too loud or distracting for long. Remember to compliment your child's good behavior at the end of the Mass. Clean up after your child and yourself when Mass is ended. I appreciate very much those parents who encourage their children to greet the priest, the staff and other members of the assembly. In this way they learn that they are part of a praying community. Remember that children learn by observing you and others. Therefore, never undermine the importance of setting a good example for the children.

What about movements during the Mass? Please restrict movements as much as possible during the Mass. It happens rarely with adults but often with children. It is true that sometimes children become restless, and there will be emergency needs. However, we do find children walking out of the church and parents paying no attention. The Consecration, when we are kneeling, is the most important time of the Mass. It is essential that we take greater care to avoid as much distraction and movement as possible at that time.

Children need to learn the sacredness of time and space. They need to be in the custody of the parents at all times when they are in church so that they do not wander about in the church at any time they wish during the Mass, or go out to play. In case of emergencies, a parent needs to accompany the child. We've had a couple of incidents when children, unattended by a parent, were wandering around in the church and pulled the fire alarm during Mass. Please instruct your children not to run in the church at any time. By insisting on these little things, you will have instilled in your children a reverence for liturgy as well as a sense of sacredness for the church. My hearty appreciation goes to all the parents who make many sacrifices to get ready and bring your children to Mass. Do not forget that they can teach us how to pray. Jesus praised the children for their closeness to God: *"He called a child over, placed it in their midst and said, 'Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven' "* (Mt. 18:3-4).

—Father Jose