

Seek the Lord.....call upon him. One of the reasons we come to Mass is that we put ourselves in touch with God. Many of us lead busy lives, and its really no good for us if we just go through each day without pausing for a moment or two to be quiet, and think about the reason behind it all. Silence, solitude, time with God.

Sometimes things happen which we don't understand, sometimes we see things going on in the world, or in the lives of people around us, and we wonder why things happen the way they do. Many people struggle to make sense of it on their own, without any spiritual help and support; others turn to drink or drugs or the pleasures of the world to try and shut out their pain or forget their confusion.

But the Church has always offered what we believe is the God given way of coming to terms with the big questions of life. Prayer, worship,

silence, reflection – we are offered the scriptures, which, if we listen with the heart, will help us shed light on these questions. This is why the Church asks her members, the Catholic faithful, to set aside some time, the minimum is just one hour every week, but we should do it every day – it is here that we can stop and think, we can put things into proportion, and so realize what really matters in our lives.

How does Mass help us do this? Firstly, there are the scriptures, the Word of the Lord. Very often they seem difficult to understand, but hopefully there is always a thought which we can take away with us which will help us make sense of our lives. For example, from today's readings we have heard the Lord say to us "my ways are far above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts", and in the gospel it is clear that God's way of rewarding people for their work is very different from what

would be considered a fair deal in the workplace today. God's ways are not our ways, but to tune into God's ways, we need time to ponder and reflect.

Hopefully, during every Mass, we find the space to do this. It may surprise you to know that silence is an integral part of our liturgy. In fact it is built in the Order of Mass, and there quite a few places in the Mass where we are all supposed to have a period of silence. These are : at the beginning of Mass before the Penitential Act, when we are invited to dwell upon our failings and also upon God's mercy; then before the Collect, when the priest says "Let us pray", which should be followed by a period of silence for the people to collect their thoughts, and recall their own intentions for the Mass; this can also happen at the end of the bidding prayers; the final period of silence is after Holy Communion and before the Concluding

Prayer and blessing. We reflect upon what we have received, before going out into the world to try and live out the gospel message. We should try not to let these moments pass by without any thought – our Mass will then hopefully be more thoughtful and more prayerful. And we also have our monthly holy hour – a whole hour with God, mostly just sitting there in silence. As we share these moments with the Lord, perhaps our thoughts will become more in tune with his thoughts, and we will realise why it is we have come to Mass in the first place – to be filled with his love, his generosity and compassion, and then to go out to share these things with the world

God's ways are high above our ways as the heavens are high above earth. We lift up our hearts as we ask him to make our thoughts more like his.