

No Rides to Weekday Masses

I have a very rare and painful illness that has left me handicapped. I have trouble finding rides to doctors' offices and to church.

Consequently, I feel very disconnected from my parish in which I once served as a catechist and director of religious education. I do some adult education from my home. My chemo schedule makes attending weekend Masses problematic, but I could go to some weekday Masses if I had a ride. Any suggestions?

Perhaps someone from your adult education group could give you a ride on Tuesdays—or whatever day works best for you and that person. If you select a day of the week, your parish might be able to connect you to someone who usually goes to Mass on that day of the week, leaving you and that person to work out all further details.

Quick Questions and Answers

If I go to heaven when I die (hopefully), how can I be truly happy if someone whom I have loved does not go to heaven but instead is in everlasting torment?

All those in heaven are in God's presence forever. Could they really complain that someone else isn't? I can understand your disappointment, but Jesus' teaching that in heaven people neither marry nor are given in marriage (Mt 22:30) warns us against making heaven a larger version of a happy life on earth. In heaven, God's "normal" will indeed be our new normal.

Are we supposed to pray to angels the way we pray to Mary and the other saints?

Mary, saints, and angels have no power independent of God. Our prayers "to" them are, in effect, prayers asking their help that we may be as open to God's grace as they were. All of them used their freedom wisely. We ask their help to do the same.

Is it true that the Catholic Church has always regarded virginity as a higher calling than marriage? Does lifelong virginity guarantee that this person has reserved his or her heart completely for God? Can't sanctity be found in any calling?

Life is too complex to establish a pecking order of holiness. Very generous married people can be more holy than selfish female or male virgins. St. Paul is often cited by those promoting virginity as a higher calling. His Second Letter to the Corinthians rejects the idea that virginity is a higher calling. The highest calling is the one for which a specific person is best suited.

Why does the Catholic Church insist that Mary was forever a virgin? Is this a biblical or a Catholic tradition? Why is this teaching seen as important?

Many people would say this teaching reinforces the uniqueness of Jesus. All teachings about Mary are first related to the Church's belief about Jesus. When Bishop Nestorius taught that Christians should call Mary "the mother of Jesus" but not "the mother of God," the majority of bishops at the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) disagreed. The first major challenge to the teaching about Mary's perpetual virginity came during the Protestant Reformation (the 1500s). For centuries, Catholics in the East and the West disagreed about many things, but the virginity of Mary was not one of them.

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