

LITURGY BYTES

Processions

Lately, these past weeks, most of us have either participated in or observed parades whether it be for a holiday or a charity group. Many times, these parades are very elaborate. It certainly is a great community builder. We Catholics appreciate that community building also.



The Church's version of parades is in the form of processions. At Mass, processions are also a part of our prayer experience. Processions mark special times in the liturgical calendar and are a special and powerful sign of our Faith. At the beginning of Mass, we have the Entrance Procession which unites us, focusing our attention on the celebration at hand. The procession always begins with the Cross, the central mystery of our Faith. The Book of the Gospels is also carried in the Entrance Procession, reminding us that it is Christ who speaks when the Gospel is proclaimed. The Presentation of the Gifts happens in the form of a procession which also reminds the assembly that we are to offer ourselves with Christ. In the Communion Procession, as we approach the Lord's table, it signifies unity and communion of us, the faithful, with Christ and with one another. The Final Procession, perhaps, is the most important as members of the assembly leave together but then go their separate ways to bring the Good News to all they may encounter.

The one place processions stand out to me is Holy Week:

- Starting with Palm Sunday, we commemorate the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem.
- At the conclusion of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, we all process from the Worship Area to another area on Church property where the Blessed Sacrament will be in Reposition.
- On Good Friday, we come forward in procession to venerate the Cross of Christ.
- At the Easter Vigil, we process into a dark Church following the Paschal Candle, the symbol of Our Lord, the light of the world.

Just last weekend we processed at the conclusion of each Mass, led by Fr. Michael and the Blessed Sacrament, to the outside of the Church in celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi. All of the above should remind us that we are a pilgrim people, united with Christ and with one another, as we live out our journey of Faith.

Have a blessed, healthy, and peaceful week ahead! ~ *Michele Hall*