TIPS

- As a remark of respect we do not eat or chew anything during the service. Prior to receiving Holy Communion Catholics observe a 1 hr. fast.

- Make sure mobile phones or other communications devices are switched off.

- During the period before the service begins other members of the Congregation may be engaged in silent prayer so please try and keep noise to a minimum out of respect for them.

- If you find yourself walking with everyone else to receive Communion, don't panic. Just cross your arms so they form an X over your chest with your closed fists touching your shoulders. All the priest/Eucharistic minister will do is bless you, so there's no need to say anything.

- Feel free to greet the priest after the Mass if he is standing outside the church. It is **always** appropriate to call him, "Father," even if you don't know his first or last name. Just say thank you and that you are visiting. If he talks to you for a while, don't feel pressure to join or do anything, just know that he is doing his job trying to make you feel welcome.

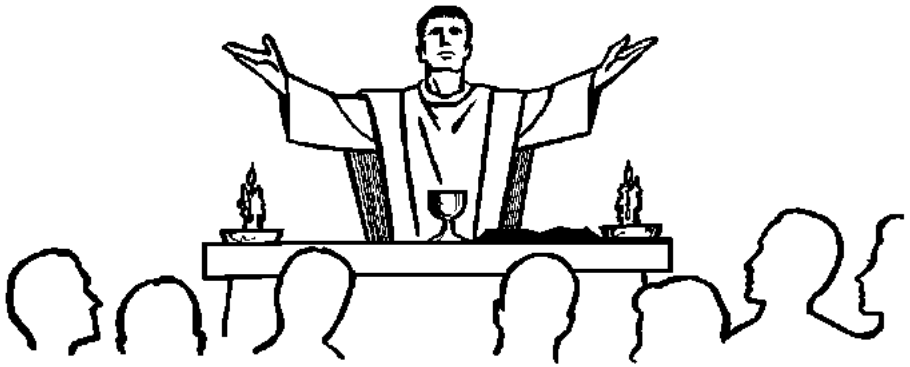
- If you are interested in becoming Catholic, contact the parish priest and they will usually be able to connect you with people in the parish that will help you find the path more easily.

- Try several different churches; investigate what you see as being different in the architecture, attitudes of the people or other practices. Also, notice what stays the same. This can be a very enriching process for an institution with such a long, cultural heritage.

- In Catholicism, you will find all the truths Jesus intended for his church and peace in life.

Catholic Churches of
St Mary's Brownedge &
Our Lady of Lourdes & St Gerard Majella
Lostock Hall, Preston

What to expect at a Catholic Mass



A Guide for Parents and Visitors to Mass in a Catholic Church

1. Understand that Catholicism differs from other denominations in practice and belief. The service usually contains these things:

   - A reading from 3 passages in the Bible with one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament and one from the Gospel.
   - The reception of Holy Eucharist
   - Singing of up to four hymns, if a sung Mass
   - Sometimes, some parts or hymns will be in Latin
   - A sermon

2. Come a few minutes early. You will feel so much more comfortable if you can park (or better yet, walk) and get in the church five minutes early. Walk in through the main doors, and if you see people picking up a hymnal or leaflet, the Missalette (full details of the Mass, except hymns,) do the same.

3. You may see genuflecting (bending on the right knee), or bowing if their knees are bad, in the direction of the altar (the table up front). If you are not Catholic, do not feel awkward about not doing this, but please pay respect to the church by looking up at the altar before finding somewhere to sit. Catholics believe God is literally present in the Eucharist, which is kept in the tabernacle, which is often placed behind the altar. Genuflecting is simply a sign of deep respect for God and the Eucharist

4. Feel free to sit anywhere in the pews. Consider sitting closer to the front, so that you can see what is going on, and also toward one of the sides of the aisles. If you are taking notes (for class for example), you will be more comfortable sitting toward the side.

5. Look for a board somewhere towards the front that has numbers on it. These numbers refer to the numbers in your hymnal. Feel free to join in with the singing; chances are, the church needs your voice

6. In the pews in front of you, you should see a Sunday missal. Missal, coming from the word “Mass,” contain the order of the Mass (what things are said and in what order, for every mass no matter where you are) and the proper for the day (readings, prayers, etc. that are specific to that day). Catholics call their worship service a “Mass,” which comes from the Latin word “missa,” meaning to be sent. Catholics go to church to be sent to the world.

7. Once the Mass starts, breathe, sit back, and enjoy. This is not a stressful process. All are welcome to kneel, stand, sit, or bow when the congregation does so, but do not feel pressure to do any of these. It is recommended, however, to stand when the congregation stands and sit when they are either sitting or kneeling.

8. At one point, the priest usually says, “Let us offer one another a sign of God’s peace.” The typical sign of peace is a light handshake accompanied by the phrase “Peace be with you.” and other person may reply ‘And with your Spirit.’

9. Prepare for Communion. Communion can be stressful unless you have a plan. Only regularly practising Catholics may receive communion. Feel free to simply stay in the pew, but be sure to let people by. If the pews are very narrow, just get into the aisle (hence the recommendation to sit towards the outside pews in your first couple times and let people through until everyone is back in the pews after Communion.

10. Appreciate the beauty of the church. After Mass, feel free to take a few minutes to look at any of the beautiful statues in the Church. These statues and icons are "not" idols. No Catholic prays directly to these wooden statues or images, but the statues help a Catholic focus their prayers to God or help them ask a saint for intercessory prayer to God.

11. Feel free to take a bulletin to read later, and feel welcome to greet the priest after Mass. Most priests are very friendly and glad to shake hands and talk.