

particularly, we have neglected the habit of going to Church. We are in the process of walking away from a friend, the only friend who can sustain our lives, give them meaning, and preserve them eternally - Jesus Christ. You are in trouble or headed there, when you must *decide* to go to Church; the fulfilled, spiritually mature person *assumes* he will go to Church—it's a habit (and a pleasure).

Of course, after we have gone to Church for a period of time, we recognise that there are other reasons for doing so. We come to realise that, not only do we benefit, but God actually requires us (in the fourth Commandment on keeping holy the Sabbath-day) to devote time each week to Him and his purposes. We come to appreciate discipline and sacrifice in the spiritual life, even when we don't want to do something. We come to see that what we give to the Church and to God (the weight of our presence and fellowship, the obedience He desires) outweighs what we *think* we may or may not "get out of it". We begin to understand that the workings of sin and evil are more subtle than we imagined and that the workings of God are subtler still. And we arrive at that point when we perceive ourselves "out of kilter" without that weekly remembrance of His great mercy and love.

Those who go to Church regularly, *know*, for the most part why they go. If you are wondering why, perhaps it's time you did so too. Oh, no mistake about it: not every visit will be a mountaintop experience. But over the long haul, this is how we get to know Jesus. And how our lives are truly filled with His peace.

See you in Church next Sunday!

Why Go to Church on Sunday ?

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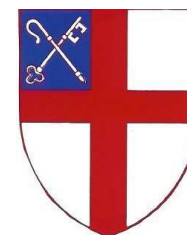
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The above text has been prepared by the

**Diocese of the United Kingdom
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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Why go to Church on Sunday?

There is really no special difference between what the Non-Christian wants and what the Christian wants. Peace. Inner Peace. The strength of spirit which sustains us through all of life's challenges and particularly during its times of hurt, of disappointment, of sorrow, and of conflict. All of us seek that peace which enables us to live tranquil and secure lives in the midst of a chaotic and threatening world.

The difference between the Non-Christian and the Christian comes in how he or she gets what they want. The first seeks such assurance, such peace, in transitory places: wealth, power, position and such. Or he seeks it through false religion (astrology, new age-ism, yoga, etc.) Which, however promising, always seems to fail in the end, right at the crisis. The Christian, on the other hand, seeks his peace in only one place—a person, Jesus Christ.

To say that the Christian finds his or her peace in the person of Jesus Christ is to say it all, and yet not enough. For the Christian, to know peace is to know Jesus. But that is a lifelong process, which is approached steadily, by degrees, proportionate in no small way to the amount of effort expended. Jesus is always ready to meet us, to share His life with us and to enrich our own struggling lives - but He cannot, and will not, force us. We must get to know Him. To know Him is indeed to love Him and to receive his peace.

The question for those who would find lasting, eternal peace then is "How do we come to know Jesus?". We have heard of Him; how do we meet Him? The answer is not



strange or complex: we meet Him in the Church. The Church is His body, made available by Him for the singular purpose of introducing Himself to you! Now the Church is composed of all who are baptised into the Church. You meet a part of the Church when you meet another Christian! How simple, and yet how difficult. Sad to say, Christians are not always identifiably such, nor do we usually meet them on those deep and private terms.

So how do we meet Jesus?

The best way is to go where Christians gather as Christians - in Church, especially on Sundays. Yes, we can meet with Christians elsewhere and other times, but *do we?* Yes, we can meet with Jesus alone, but *do we?* Sunday Church attendance is the surest, best way of getting to know Jesus and beginning the process of entering into His peace. So the answer to our question of "Why go to Church?" is simple: to get to know Jesus.

Surely Jesus can be met everywhere. Even, presumably, on the golf course, though many seek and few find! But we are not everywhere the same. To go to Church is to put us in

touch with Jesus in a unique way. He speaks to us through the words of Scripture and challenges us through the sermon, He encounters us as we open ourselves to Him in prayer, humbles us through the acknowledgment of our sins, and lifts our spirits through song, but most importantly, He feeds our souls, becomes part of us, when we receive His Sacred Body and Blood through Holy Communion.

The mature Christian will, of course, read the Bible daily and pray at least once during the day. He may read spiritual literature or listen to religious music. Some of us will do that; but many will not. Sunday worship represents the one time during the week when we can devote ourselves exclusively to God, to meeting Jesus. And it is, normally the only place where we participate in the Mass and receive Him mystically into the depths of our souls.

The world is very much with us, indeed. It tugs continually at us, urging its deformed values upon us at every turn. If we are to resist, we must take action. And that action is to worship God in Church. We need a 'time out'. Oh, certainly, we can get by for a while, perhaps, on momentum. But finally, the friction of life drags us down, our lives begin to clutter up and to lose direction. We think less and less of Jesus and more and more about ourselves. What little peace we had wears thinner and thinner.

We have, in the words of Mark Twain, "neglected our habits". We have neglected the habits of concern for others, of love for family and those beyond, of devotion to that which is greater than we are, of moral discernment. And that is because, most