ONLINE CATHOLIC MASS · PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Your First Catholic Mass

What to expect, how long it lasts, and what to do if you are not Catholic. One page, no jargon.

1 Before you go

- Check the parish website or bulletin for the time. Sunday and weekday times change with the season.
- Arrive **10 minutes early**. Seats are easier to find and you settle before the opening hymn.
- Dress as you would for a serious appointment. Clean and modest is plenty; no one is checking.
- Silence your phone before you walk in.
- You do not need a missal or a book. The readings are announced and often printed in a leaflet.

2 How long will it last?

Type of Mass	Typical length	What stretches it
Weekday morning Mass	25–40 min	Short homily, little or no music
Saturday evening vigil	50–75 min	Counts for Sunday, sung like Sunday
Sunday Mass	50–75 min	Two readings plus Gospel, homily, Creed, singing
Holy day of obligation	55–75 min	Fuller homily, sometimes a procession
Christmas Mass	75–90 min	Carols before Mass add 15–20 min
Easter Vigil	2–3 hours	Fire, Exsultet, many readings, baptisms
Wedding (Nuptial Mass)	45–60 min	Vows and rings before the Eucharist
Funeral Mass	45–60 min	Eulogy where the parish allows one
Latin Mass (TLM)	60–90 min	A sung High Mass sits at the top of the range

3 The four parts, in order

Part	Minutes	What happens
Introductory rites	5–10	Greeting, penitential act, Gloria on Sundays and feasts
Liturgy of the Word	15–25	Readings, psalm, Gospel, homily, Creed, intercessions
Liturgy of the Eucharist	20–30	Gifts, Eucharistic Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, sign of peace, Communion
Concluding rites	3–5	Blessing, dismissal, final hymn

4 If you are not Catholic

- You may stay seated during Communion. No one will ask why.
- You may come forward with your arms crossed for a blessing, or simply stay in the pew.
- Stand, sit and kneel with everyone else if you are comfortable. If not, stay seated — nobody minds.
- You are welcome at every Mass. Being there is not a commitment to anything.

5 When you can leave

- Mass ends with the dismissal: *Go in peace.* Leaving after the final blessing is normal.
- Leaving before the blessing is noticed, and it is the one part people remember.
- If you must go early, slip out during a hymn, not during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Three things worth knowing. A baptism inside Sunday Mass adds 15–20 minutes. First Communion or Confirmation adds 15–25. A 90-minute Mass is completely normal on Christmas, Easter and feast days — nothing has gone wrong.

Source: onlinecatholicmass.org/en/blog/how-long-is-catholic-mass.html — typical ranges from US parishes, October 2026.
These are observed averages, not rules. Rome sets the shape of the rite and leaves the length to the parish, which is why the same Sunday Mass runs 48 minutes in one church and 82 in the next town.
© Online Catholic Mass · Free to print, share and hand out.