



How should I dress for Mass and Adoration?

How should I dress for Mass and Adoration? Why that's a ridiculous question! God does not care how I dress. He loves me just as I am. That is what was wrong with the old church; it was too hung up with do's and don'ts and not concerned enough with love. If God does not care how we dress, then why should anyone else be concerned? People should not push their opinions on others.

Have you ever heard the above statements, or at least some very similar to them concerning dress or behavior in what was once called holy places, such as shrines, churches, chapels and the like? Statements such as these sound logical. What is wrong with being comfortable and at ease when attending Mass or in adoration chapels? Well, this booklet is an attempt to shed some light on this most important subject.

We must admit that God does not fall off His throne when someone enters His Eucharistic Presence dressed as though they had just come from a backyard barbecue. We also know that God is perfect in every way and cannot be made happy or unhappy by the actions of ignorant and often selfish, unconcerned human beings. So, does this mean that it is ridiculous to attempt to encourage people to dress in a more proper way for these Eucharistic encounters here on earth?

The answer is an emphatic, "**NO**". Dress is extremely important, not only for worship but for our everyday living. The way we dress has a tremendous impact on the way we think, not only about oneself as a person, but also on the way we look at things in general. Take dressing for school as our first example. Years ago Zig Ziglar, a well-known motivational speaker, said that every home should have a full length mirror to enable the children to take a good look at themselves before leaving for school. He said the reason for this was to enable the child to inspect the way he looks, for a well-dressed child will do better in school. Now Mr. Ziglar made this statement years ago, and how well did he know what he was talking about. Just a few weeks ago on national news, it was reported that the largest school district in the United States was introducing the policy of wearing school uniforms. They surveyed other schools that had either started or were in the process of starting this practice of school uniforms. They found that just the wearing of a neat uniform had a positive impact not only on the learning ability of students, but also on their behavior. Concern for proper dress in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is not a theological but rather psychological one. Another way one might say it is, "***It is not theological; it's just good old common sense.***" But as the saying goes, "Common sense is not so common anymore".

Some say: "We live in a more casual society than people in the past. We look at dress in terms of comfort." Statements like this are true, but we must remember that we can carry any-thing to an extreme. When we get too casual,

it causes casualties. Casualness in adoration equals Protestantism. Remember the statistic that only 30% of Catholics believe that the Eucharist is really the Body of Christ. Theology is one thing; common sense is quite another. Do not get them confused.

I challenge you, check to see which religious orders are growing today. Is it the ones which dropped their religious garb? Not so. Those who abandoned their religious identity are fast dying out; whereas the orders that have kept their religious garb are growing. What must be understood is this, people who are blind to the need for proper dress are the ones who are most likely to be blind to the little every day needs of life.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of dressing neatly and modestly in the presence of Christ in the most Holy Eucharist. Again, not for Christ's benefit but for ourselves and for our children. The saying, your children more attention pay to what you do than what you say, is most relevant here. In the majority of cases, our children's belief that the Eucharist is truly the Body of Christ will be heavily influenced by the dress and actions of others. Our actions and dress speak so loudly that people cannot hear a word we say. I like telling my children: "Let's dress nicely for Jesus". Young people know deep down that nice dress goes with important occasions. Is going in the presence of Christ an important occasion for you? We must always remember that we are constantly being observed by our children as well as the rest of the congregation. Proper dress and conduct have a building affect on everyone; therefore we need to be aware of how our environment is influencing our family, as well as how our family is influencing our environment.

Before closing I would like to shift from the big church to the little church, that is the home. Recently some young Mormons visited us and the topic of our discussion focused on dressing for the occasion. We had no problems with dressing for church or apostolic action. Mormon missionaries are very neat when going from door to door, but their views on dress at home were quite different. They felt that the way one dresses at their house did not make any difference.

I proceeded to make my point that dress around the house is extremely important by the following sequence of questions: First, do you believe that a salesman must first sell himself to the customer before he sells his product? They agreed that to sell a product the buyer must first believe in you before they can believe in your product. Next question. Do you believe that you are a salesman trying to sell Christ as the Mormons see Him? Yes, they did believe this and that is why they dressed properly in their missionary activities. Then I asked the big question. Do you think you have an obligation to sell the truths that you possess to your wife and children? The answer was yes. Then why do you deny to your loved ones the very thing that you so graciously give to complete strangers? Family members deserve to see us looking nice and neat. Could this be one of the reasons that wives and children tend not to listen to and respect the supposed head of the house (the father) today? It is quite difficult to respect one who does not respect himself.

Our families deserve the best we have and it only takes a little time to dress neatly. Find families in turmoil and then look at the way they dress at home. It is not the big things, but rather the little ones that build strong families. Do you think there are problems in the church? Take a look at the way Catholics dress. A properly dressed person edifies his surroundings. Our problem today is: *proper is not proper any more.*