

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Celebration of Mass – Proper Church Attire

Proper Attire

The Liturgy Office has been receiving requests for guidelines on the proper attire in church. The summer season usually sees an increasing number of people who come to church to attend Mass or other liturgical functions dressed in a way that disrespects the sanctity of the House of God and the sacredness of the Liturgical Celebration.

This is a difficult topic. We do not want to suggest that one is not welcome at a Sunday liturgy without expensive clothing – and yet, out of respect for what we are doing at Mass and as an example for young children, a modicum of propriety is expected.

The goal in dressing for Mass should be not to attract undue attention to oneself. It must be considered that some people, out of necessity, come to Mass wearing the clothes required by their profession, however, under normal circumstances attire should reflect the solemnity of the Mass. One should aim for, “you look nice today,” as opposed to, “my gosh! Did you see what she or he was wearing today?”

The faithful are advised not to wear caps, tank tops or jersey shorts during Mass. Women are also asked not to wear spaghetti-strap tops, short skirts, skimpy shorts or sleeveless shirts with plunging necklines. Simply put—beach wear, lounge wear, etc. are not appropriate attire.

What we wear says a great deal about what we value. If you are a public minister in the liturgy, a lector, a Eucharistic minister, or a cantor, for example, you should dress with extra care, so that your appearance does not pose a distraction to the worshippers. We usually dress well when we go to things that are important to us, and as Catholics, this is the most important thing that we will do each week. The manner in which the minister dresses is part of the reverence that is shown to the Lord present in the Eucharist, as well as respect shown for God’s holy people.

“Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of the moment when Christ becomes our guest.” CCC1387b