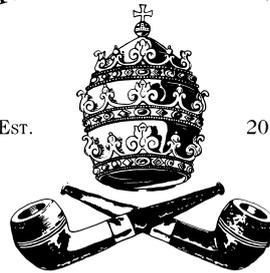




The
CATHOLIC GENTLEMAN

BE A MAN.

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BE A SAINT.

DRESS UP FOR MASS!

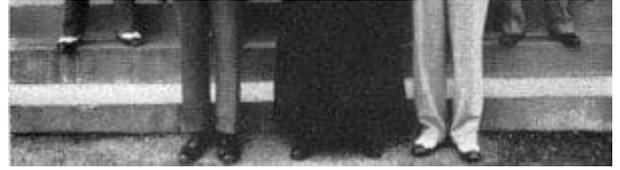
July 27, 2013



Society is growing more and more casual. I have seen people shopping for groceries in their pajama pants and fuzzy slippers. I've been to world-class classical concerts where people are dressed in Hawaiian shirts and jeans. In fact, it's hard to think



of *anything* people will dress up for anymore. Even weddings and funerals are getting more and more casual.



Dapper gents from Our Lady of Victory Catholic Parish, Cincinnati, OH. (1943)

This bothers me because how we dress is a sign of how much respect we have for ourselves and for other people. If we don't dress up for anyone or anything, it's a sure sign that we don't respect anyone or anything.

Dressing up is a small sacrifice

Looking sharp takes effort. Putting on a well pressed suit and tie, rather than a wrinkled t-shirt, takes time. Shaving, rather than sporting a scruffy five-o'clock shadow, takes a little bit of effort. Combing your hair, rather than letting it stand on end, requires a small amount of work. It is exactly these little sacrifices of time and effort, though, that tell other people that they are worth it.

Trust me, I know it's not easy for men. We naturally don't want to make that effort. I guarantee that if you do, though, you will feel like a million bucks. You will feel more manly and more confident.

Dress up for mass!

Even if you don't think dressing sharp is worth it for every day activities, there is one place you should *never* slum it. Ever. And that is holy mass.



Jesus, the Kings of kings, is at your parish. Angels tremble before him, demons flee from him, and he makes himself present on the altar at every mass. **Do you really want to meet him in flip flops and cargo shorts? Do you really want to tell Jesus, "You weren't worth dressing up for?"**

We struggle as a society to understand royalty. We have a warped view of equality that tells us that no one, no

Catholic gentlemen.

matter who they are, is worthy of honor and respect. This is simply wrong. St. Paul says to “give honor to whom honor is due.” And if anyone is worthy of honor, it is Jesus Christ, our priest and king.

I know, I know. Nobody else does it. In fact, the mass at your parish may not be very reverent (I hope it is). But that is no excuse. Part of being a man is doing the right thing, even if it isn't popular. **Be strong, swim upstream.**

Priests, consider explaining the significance of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and then gently encouraging your congregants to show respect in how they dress.

Legalism is not the answer

While I think every man should dress up for mass, I'm not about to prescribe exactly what you should wear. **It's not my place to recommend a three piece suit, a certain color of pants, or wingtip shoes.** While I won't tell you what to wear, I will suggest three basic rules on how to dress for mass.

1. Your outfit should take effort – When choosing what to wear for mass, don't go for what is most comfortable and easy. In fact, make it a little uncomfortable. For example, if you have been wearing Crocs to mass, try wearing some nice leather shoes instead. If you have been wearing a polo shirt, try a dress shirt. If you have been wearing a tie, try adding a sport coat. In other words, put forth some effort and make a small sacrifice.

2. Your attire should be above average – We all live in different places, and our culture has much to do with what constitutes respectful dress. A ranch hand in rural Montana or poor migrant worker is not held to the same standards as a wealthy Wall Street executive. No matter where we live, though, we should all have “Sunday best”—clothes we wear that are nicer than what we wear every day. If you're wearing the same thing to mass that you do when going to the movies, there is a problem.

3. Do it for love – Most importantly, love should be our motivation. The moment we start doing things for reasons other than love, we are wasting our time. I have heard a lot of people say, “God looks on the heart. He sees that I love him even if I don't dress up.” **WRONG. Love always manifests itself outwardly through acts of self-**

giving. Love is not a feeling, it is a choice to sacrifice yourself or something you value for someone else. As I said earlier, dressing up is a very small sacrifice. Tell Jesus you love him and respect him by making a sacrifice of effort when choosing your attire or grooming for mass. The more you don't feel like dressing up, the more valuable your sacrifice of time and attention will mean to Jesus.

Conclusion

While the world may tell us that nothing is worth dressing up for, that should never apply to the Catholic gentleman. We should show respect to ourselves and others by making an effort—especially for holy mass. We must be courageously counter-cultural in our dress, even if we get funny looks.

What is the attire like at your local parish? What is one way you can dress up more for mass?

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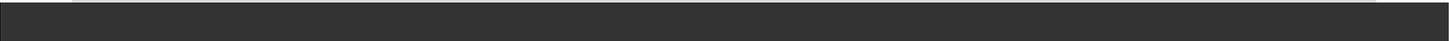
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