

PASTOR'S COLUMN

“Dress Attire for Church”

(On the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, June 13th, at homily time, I addressed a number of issues in regard to the role of the Assembly in our Eucharistic celebrations.

One point that I emphasized was dress. This week's Pastor's Column, again, raises the issue of dress attire for Church.)

“Dress” is a very subjective matter and when one begins talking about a dress code, one, I believe, opens a “can of worms!” It is not my intention to do that today.

No matter how anyone dresses, needless to say, I am happy that they are in Church. If one isn't dressed appropriately, from my perspective, there, indeed, may be a reason. Who knows what went on in the hours preceding Mass! Maybe it was a miracle and an act of sacrifice, that that person was able to make it to Mass at all!

On the other hand, it is good, I believe, from time to time, to bring the issue to consciousness for all of us to consider and to self-monitor our own dress for “Church.”

As I look at the congregation from week to week, some concerns come to mind. I ask for your consideration regarding the following type of clothing: Levi's (especially tight fitting), Bermuda shorts, tank tops, t-shirts with questionable slogans and advertising, short and tight skirts, flip-flop shoes, and clothing that leaves shoulders, backs, and midriffs bare. Can we not, as a congregation, do better than this? Can we not attempt to make our time together a bit more special and sacred by the way we dress?

In raising this issue, it is my desire that each of us simply looks at our own style of dress and makes personal decisions. Our liturgy and our community life will be less, if Mass time becomes “judgment time.” That is not the purpose of these comments. Rather, my comments are meant to call us to a new realization about things we haven't thought about or are taking for granted.

There are areas in Parish Life where the question of dress can be more closely monitored—all of our liturgical ministers when serving within the Liturgy, our children and young people in our Faith Formation Processes—in these situations, appropriate guidelines are given and expected to be followed.

It is my hope that, in regard to the Sunday Congregation, each of us look at ourselves before coming to Mass and ask: “Is this clothing appropriate for helping to create a sacred environment in which we meet God and God's People?”