

# First time in church

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Theological foundation 100 February 13, 2013 Reflection Paper #1 The content of the worship is very different from the way I am used to in Islamic mosques. The priests started by saying “ We bless ourselves for prayer in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” and the crowd responded with an Amen, and then a person started to read from the bible. Every time the priest or the person finished the reading, people said “ The word of the Lord. ” People kept repeating what the priest was saying until he started to read the Gospel.

When he started reading the Gospel, people crossed themselves on the forehead, the lips and the chest with their thumbs to show that Christ is on their mind. Then the priest started to bless the bread and wine, and every person got to drink and eat from them. Then the priest asked people to show a sign of peace by greeting people who are next to each other saying “ Peace be with you. ” At the end, the Priest blessed everyone and ended the Mass by telling people to go forth and spread the word, and the response was “ Thanks be to God. Music was played for most of the time during the mass. The songs played were in fact really pleasant to listen to and reassuring. The orchestra was behind the stage, so it was almost impossible for people to see them playing the music, and I think it is the way it is just to prevent any distraction to people. I was not actually sure that the songs were in English because I did not understand what the crowd was saying although I had the notes I was given when I entered the church. I actually had a wonderful experience in the Catholic Church.

Although I was so nervous and did not expect to be amazed by Christianity at all, there were several things that I really liked and wished that everyone

even non-Christians considered to do as human beings. When the priest asked the people to show peace and greet each other, everyone looked around him and started to hug the person next to him saying “ peace with you”. These three words have a great impact on any person who hears them, and makes him feel that he is loved by others and a part of a community.

Although no one probably knew the other, they were ready to prove that they are united despite the differences between them. There were many times where I was confused and did not understand what other people were doing. First of all, I did not understand what everyone was singing nor the words repeated after the priest. The songs for some reason did not sound English at all; I wish I could understand them because they were really amazing. Secondly, I did not get the part of blessing the bread and wine. In other words, why would people wait in line just to get one piece of bread to eat? What is so special about it? Also, when getting the piece of bread, the priest was holding people’s heads and repeating some words, and then they crossed on their heads and chests, why is that and what exactly did the priest say? Lastly, when people were on their way out of the church, they immersed their fingers in the water in the small fountain in front of the exit and crossed again on their head and chest.

I did not know why people did that especially nothing seemed unique in the water. After everyone was gone, my friends and I interviewed the leader of the mass. Honestly, I do not know what his name was but he was such a nice person. The clothes he was wearing helped me to distinguish which one was the priest among the people even before the mass started. I expected the priest to be wearing a black dress because this is what I had seen priests

wearing, but this priest was wearing a white dress and another green dress above it to distinct him from the other people.

Amazingly, he was not wearing any hat like most priests in other churches do, which is a bit strange because I thought all priests wear hats. He was really nice and welcomed us to ask him any question him we had in mind. His broad definition of grace was “ the undeserved love of God. ” It is the kindness from God we do not deserve; there is nothing we have done, nor can ever do to earn this favor. From interviewing two of my Christian friends, they both defined grace as the favor that God gave to humanity by sending Jesus Christ to die on a cross, and delivering eternal salvation.

Finally, I could not ask the priest many questions because he seemed busy, and I actually was so nervous to keep the talking going. Instead, I just ask one of my friends to tell me about his experience with how god’s grace has changed his live. He said that God’s grace has helped him feel so much better about himself and made him feel strong, confident, and happy. He said that he always trusted god whenever he had troubles, and his life was transformed significantly. He did not know how exactly he overcomes his troubles anddepression, but believed that god’s love and power always helped him.