

Catholic mass experience



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I chose to attend a Catholic Mass service at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. I selected this type of experience because I have never attended a Catholic service. I am an African-American female and I was raised in the Baptist faith. In my community there are very few Black people of the Catholic faith; therefore contacting a friend to attend the service with was impossible. I attended the service on a Monday. The service started at noon. The congregation was predominantly white. The African-Americans I saw were very few in number. Since I am a very open person I was really excited to attend the service.

My family on my mother's side are mostly Seventh - day Adventist and I was taught several ideas about the Catholic Church. The beginning of the service was called the Introductory Rites. This part of the service was very similar to the first phase of any other service I have attended. It began with the entrance of the priest and everyone was standing just like when a pastor comes into the pulpit in a Baptist church. I was not surprised by what I saw next; the congregation began to sing hymns and then there was a prayer. After the prayer the priest read from the Old Testament scripture of the bible.

Objectively, I went into this situation thinking that there would not be many differences between the different denominations. As the service continued I noticed that there were numerous references to Pope and the different prayers that I did not understand. I am very familiar with communion, but communion was only served once a month in the church I grew up in. The parishioners were very friendly towards me; however when I entered I got a

few glares from people. I am not sure if it was because I am Black or if it that I was a new face.

They gave me gazes that were awkward, but I am use to gawks from people so that did not interfere with my intended purpose. I sat in the congregation confused at times. As the service continued from the Introductory Rites to the Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and dismissal of the service I began to feel as if I missed something. I enjoyed the priest sermon; however as I stated earlier the many references to the Pope confused me. I considered that I may have had some predisposition about Catholics and these feelings were all negative until I attended the service.

Surprisingly, as the service proceeded I did not feel at all uncomfortable. I believe that the cultural differences were obvious; however as a culture that currently has a biracial president the intermixing of the races in churches is the inevitable. I do not feel as if I totally understood their practices, but as a Christian I understood the overall meaning of the message that was delivered. The sermon was the longest part of the service which is different from the experiences I have had at a Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist churches. In the churches I have attend the services were extremely emotional with focus being on life experiences.

In these churches there is a really long process where the people are testifying of how God has delivered them from trouble; I noticed that there was little participation from the people that attended the Catholic Church. There was no singing by and individual and no loud outburst. The service was very peaceful. I went alone to the service. I was raised in the church

with my family and entering in a house of worship without them was an intense emotion. As I sat in the pew I began to remember as a child how I attended Primitive Baptist services with my mother and my maternal grandparents.

I believe that as individuals the choice of how you worship is your own. I wondered during the entire service how the people around me made the choice to become Catholic. Was it exclusively familial or was it because they truly believed in what they were practicing? I did not have a well-defined answer by the end of the service. I felt as if maybe it was because I attend service during a week day that I did not obtain a clear observation of what it meant to be Catholic. Honestly, I do not know if I would attend another Catholic service. I do believe in God, but I am having issues with the faith I was raised in.

I know the scripture; however I believe that because I have incorporated so many different thought processes about different religions in my mind it is difficult to decipher what is right and wrong. Attending the Catholic Church is an experience I do not think I will forget. I had heard so many details about this religion before going that I did not know that the services were similar to any other church I had attended. Again, as a Christian if the significance is to help someone or to teach someone about the creator I am all for it. I believe in heaven, as it is on Earth, there will be diversity.

I know that all religions have a basis that is the same. I also know that the worship of the one God is also essential. If these principles are applied the ending will be the same. Hopefully my presence had as much of an effect on

the people around me at service as it had on me. I did not talk to anyone, but I hope that they were amazed by me as much as I was in awe of the type of service I attended. I know it was not as shocking to them as I had hoped it would be because of the blending of cultures and religions. I recently completed Western Civilization. I learned a great deal about the Catholic Church's history from that.

I learned the difference in the Catholic and Protestant religions. Politics, I believe, takes part in an important role in how the Catholic Church is portrayed. The media and history books correspondingly provide a stereotypical view of the Catholic Church. During the service I did not have as negative of an interpretation as I thought I would. Maybe it was because I did not go there wanting to point out what was wrong. I went because of the assignment that I had to complete for this class. I left with a feeling that you cannot judge a situation based on someone else's beliefs.