

 CHOSEN | THE MASS



# ALTARATION

THE MYSTERY OF THE MASS REVEALED

FAMILY GUIDE

*Live!*

*Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed Live! Family Guide* is a faith formation resource of Ascension.

Copyright © 2020 Ascension Publishing, LLC. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Material on pages 17-18 is adapted from *Behold the Mystery: A Deeper Understanding of the Catholic Mass* by Mark Hart. Copyright © 2014, The Word Among Us, Frederick, MD. wau.org. Used with permission.

Ascension  
Post Office Box 1990  
West Chester, PA 19380  
1-800-376-0520  
ascensionpress.com

---

# ALTARATION

THE MYSTERY OF THE MASS REVEALED

---

Live!

**FAMILY GUIDE**

with

MARK HART *and* EMILY WILSON

  
ASCENSION

West Chester, Pennsylvania



---

EVERY TIME I SAY  
THE MASS, THE  
UNIVERSE IS  
CHANGED.

---

FR. MIKE SCHMITZ

---

# More Than Meets the Eye

## SESSION ONE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Watch each video segment, then discuss the questions below. Online video access for Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed can be purchased at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com).

#### Segment 1: I Was Bored, Too

- 1: We have all been bored at Mass at one time or another, even if we are embarrassed to admit it. Can you think of a time when something about the Mass really “hit” you? Share about it. *(Need some prompts? Maybe a homily, a song, a guest speaker, a special Holy Day, a procession)*
- 2: What are one or two things you could do to be more attentive at Mass? Grade yourself on how well you pay attention at Mass. Then come up with suggestions on how to improve going forward.

#### Segment 2: I Will Follow

- 1: Have you ever experienced God calling you to do something? Big or small? If so, how did you know? If not, what role do you think prayer can play in helping us figure out what God wants *for* us and *from* us?
- 2: Do you believe that God truly loves you, even in the midst of your brokenness? Do you think your weaknesses and failures make you “less” lovable or unlovable to God? Why or why not?

#### Segment 3: The Power of the Priesthood

- 1: Why is there no Church without the priesthood?
- 2: Why is it so important to pray for our priests, every day? What do you think is the most difficult part of their vocation?

### WEEKLY CHALLENGES

**CHALLENGE 1:** Forbid the word “bored” from being used in the house this week. Whenever someone says he or she is “bored,” he or she needs to do an act of service for the family.

**CHALLENGE 2:** Everyone must think of one thing they can do this week where they use their God-given gifts to help or serve another member of the family. Each person must say what they are going to do so they are held accountable.

### PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, thank you for our Church and especially our priests. Please bless and guide our Holy Father, our bishops, and our priests, especially Father(s) [NAMES]. Grant them wisdom, humility, and boldness during this difficult time. May young men be open to hearing your call to Holy Orders. Please send us holy priests, servants and shepherds who desire only to love you and to love your flock. Amen.*

GOD SHOWED US, IN  
THE FLESH, WHAT

LOVE

LOOKS LIKE.

*Mark Hart*

# Our Father's Plan

## SESSION TWO

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Watch each video segment, then discuss the questions below. Online video access for Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed can be purchased at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com).

#### Segment 1: The Incarnation

1: Why did Jesus come to earth? Discuss the four reasons that are presented.

2: Do you believe that God wants to dwell within you? Why or why not?

#### Segment 2: A Father Who Loves Us

1: How do you feel about the obligation to attend Mass every Sunday? Why does God command us to go to Mass? What is he inviting us to experience?

2: Is God on the throne of your heart and mind? Is he your priority throughout the day? What other things can easily take his place in your mind and heart?

#### Segment 3: Priorities

1: Break down how much time you spend every day doing different tasks, such as school or work, sleeping, eating, cleaning, exercising, looking at a screen, etc. Now add up the hours and compare it to the time you spend praying or at Mass. What did you discover?

2: How do you prepare your heart, mind, and body for Mass? What do you do differently from preparing for other activities?

### WEEKLY CHALLENGE

**CHALLENGE 1:** Memorize the Ten Commandments, in order, if you do not currently know them by heart. Quiz one another throughout the week at random, spontaneous times.

**CHALLENGE 2:** Scripture is God's love letter to us. Write a note of affirmation to each member of your family telling them what they mean to you and things you love about them. You might also do this for a friend.

### PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of your Holy Scriptures. Thank you for giving our family such a clear guide on how to sacrifice and love one another more deeply. Place within us a burning desire to read and pray your Word every day and help our family to have a deeper hunger for Scripture so that we can share your truth with all whom you put in our path. Amen.*

*We set the  
Table.  
God  
is the one who  
comes and does the  
Work.*

-MARK HART-



# The Mystery Revealed

## SESSION THREE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Watch each video segment, then discuss the questions below. Online video access for Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed can be purchased at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com).

#### Segment 1: Lean In

- 1: What are some of the movements and moments at Mass that catch your attention? Start with the entrance, and walk through the different parts of Mass as best as you can. Try to identify moments where the priest or people “move” or respond. Discuss the meaning of each part as a family. What are some ways you can intentionally “lean in” to God during the Mass?
- 2: Do you think God is disturbed by our “messiness” because he is perfect or does he desire to help us through our “mess” from the inside out? How does the Eucharist help us in this way?

#### Segment 2: The Greatest Gift

- 1: Do you feel like a spectator at Mass or an active participant? Discuss why you feel this way.
- 2: Since you have been away from the Eucharist for a while, how do you think you will feel when you receive the Lord again in Holy Communion? What can you do to be better prepared for that moment?

#### Segment 3: What If?

- 1: Have you ever asked yourself “what if” at Mass? Why is this question so essential for us?
- 2: Did you ever have a moment where you truly experienced God’s presence?  
Are you willing to ask for this type of experience?

### WEEKLY CHALLENGE

**CHALLENGE 1:** Make a meal together as a family at least two times this week, in which everyone contributes—from the preparation to setting the table to clearing and dishes. Perform each step with joyful gratitude, praying for those who go without food each day.

**CHALLENGE 2:** Brighten someone’s day! Call a family member or family friend you have not seen or spoken to for a while. Have everyone in the family take turns saying hello and sharing something fun or interesting he or she has done recently.

### PRAYER

*God our Father, thank you for the gift and sacrifice of your Son, Jesus, and for the sacrifice of the Mass. Help us to appreciate more deeply what our Lord did for us in the Upper Room and upon the Cross at Calvary. Help our family to understand more deeply the wonder and mystery of the Mass as we wait in longing to receive your precious Body and Blood again. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

---

YOU ARE SENT.

---

CHRIS STEFANICK

---

# What is Our Response?

## SESSION FOUR

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Watch each video segment, then discuss the questions below. Online video access for Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed can be purchased at [ascensionpress.com](http://ascensionpress.com).

#### Segment 1: I Do

- 1: How is the Mass like a wedding? Come up with as many ways as you can.
- 2: Why do you think Christ chose to compare himself to a bridegroom and the Church to a bride? What does this tell us about his love for us? What does it tell us about the love between a husband and wife?

#### Segment 2: Sent Forth

- 1: How can you go into the world and share God's love? Do you believe you are "sent forth"?
- 2: Even when we cannot attend Mass in church, how can we still "go forth" and share the love of God with others?

#### Segment 3: Will You Let Him?

- 1: (At the four minute mark of the video, Mark begins to outline the effect of what can happen when the Church comes together, strengthened by the Eucharist). All of the saints participated in the same Mass that you do. Why is this important? Why is it so important to be a member of the universal Church founded by Jesus himself?
- 2: We are all called to be saints. Have you ever thought of yourself as a "saint in the making?" What would you say to Jesus if he told you that he wanted you to be a saint?

### WEEKLY CHALLENGE

**CHALLENGE 1:** Each night, everyone shares one thing he or she is grateful for that day..

**CHALLENGE 2:** Offer a prayer (or a Rosary) for a specific person each day. At the end of the week, text or call that person and let him know you have been praying for him this week.

### PRAYER

*Come, Holy Spirit. Be with our family. Make us living witnesses to God's love and light to a world so desperately in need of it. Empower us. Strengthen us. Fill us with boldness and joy as we look to share Christ's goodness and truth with the world. Mother Mary, pray that we can see Christ's face in all whom we encounter this week. Amen.*



## The “Whys” Behind Our “Whats”

Take time to watch the bonus “fifth” session of *Altaration* (“A Walk Through the Mass”) and tell everyone in the family to raise their hand if they hear something they didn’t know. Pause the video whenever someone raises their hand and take a moment to discuss before moving on.

---

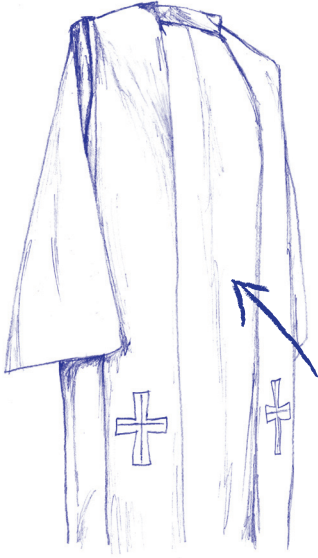
**EVERYTHING** WE DO  
MEANS  
**SOMETHING.**

---

-FR. MIKE SCMITZ

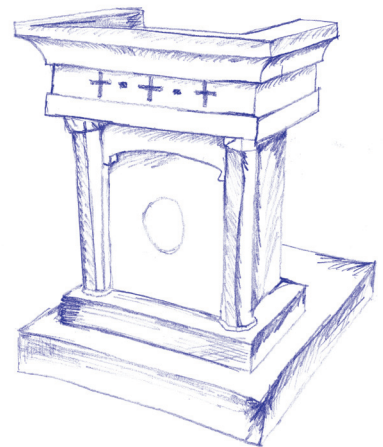
# Bonus Material

## Altar Servers 101: An Introduction to "Holy" Stuff



**Alb** (from the Latin *albus*, meaning “white”) – the white robe the priest wears underneath his outer vestment (see “Chasuble”). It is a symbol of baptism and was typically worn by adult catechumens when they were baptized by immersion in the early centuries of the Church. The white garment placed on infants today during baptism flows from this earlier tradition. You will usually see a deacon assisting at Mass wearing an alb with a stole (see “Stole”) worn diagonally across his body.

**Ambo** (from the Greek word for “step”) – the elevated platform (or lectern) from which the Scripture readings and homily are proclaimed.



**Book of the Gospels** – the usually decorated and oversized liturgical book that contains the Gospel readings for Mass. It is typically carried by the deacon in the opening procession.

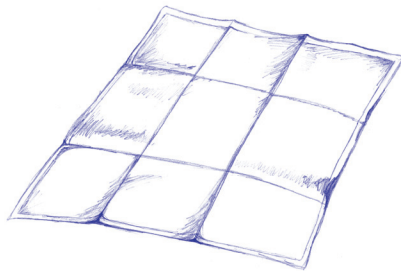
**Ciborium** (from the Latin *cibus*, meaning “food”) – the bowl that holds the consecrated hosts used during the distribution of the Eucharist at Mass. Hosts not consumed during Mass are reserved in *ciboria* (the plural of *ciborium*) in the tabernacle for veneration and distribution of Communion to the sick.





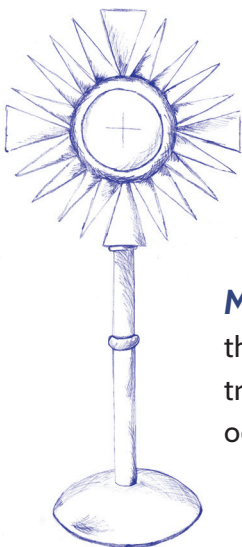
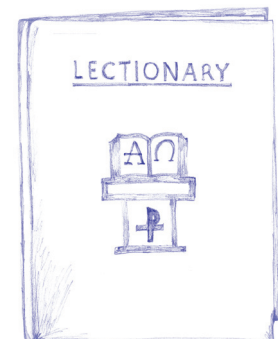
**Chalice** (from the Latin *calix*, meaning “cup”) – the sacred vessel, usually made of precious metal, which holds the consecrated wine, the Lord’s most Precious Blood.

**Chasuble** (from the Latin for “hooded cloak”) – the colored, outer vestment the priest wears over his alb and stole (see “Stole”). The chasuble is sleeveless, and its color varies according to the liturgical season or feast day. The chasuble is a symbol of the priest’s charity, as well as of the authority he has acting *in persona Christi* (“in the person of Christ”) as celebrant of the Mass.



**Corporal** (from the Latin *corpus*, meaning “body”) – the thin white linen cloth that is unfolded and placed upon the altar on which the sacred vessels are placed.

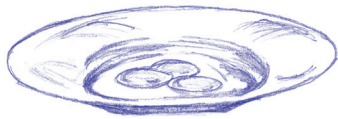
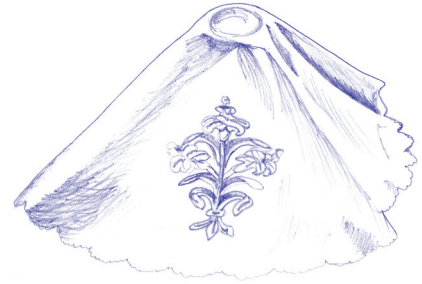
**Lectionary** (from the Latin *lectio*, meaning “reading”) – the official liturgical book that contain the Scripture readings for Mass. If the Book of the Gospels is not used, the lector or deacon carries the *Lectionary* in the opening procession.



**Monstrance** (from a Latin word meaning “to show forth”) – the sacred vessel that holds and displays the Eucharistic host during Adoration. Monstrances are traditionally made of precious metal and have an ornate design (though you may occasionally see a wooden monstrance used as well).

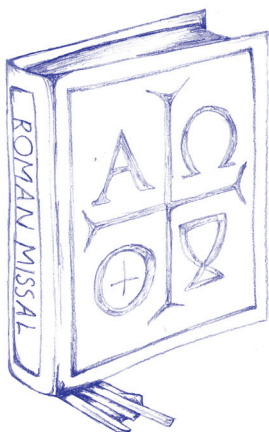


**Pall** (from the Latin *pallium*, meaning “covering” or “cloak”) – the square, white cover that is placed over the chalice. It symbolizes Christ’s burial cloth and his victory over death in his passion, death, and resurrection. Its practical purpose—believe it or not—is to keep dust and insects from falling into the Precious Blood.



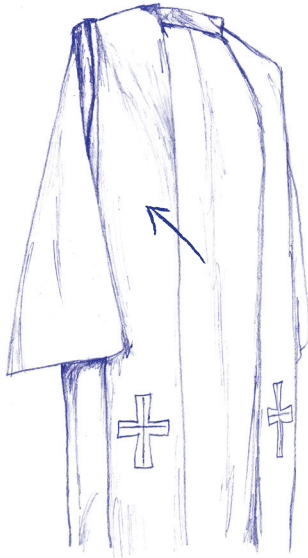
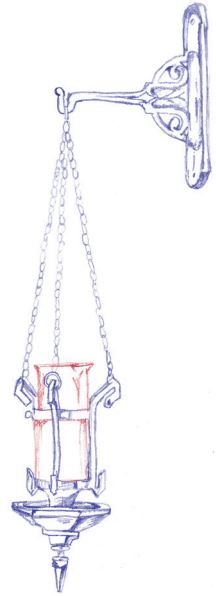
**Paten** (from the Latin *patina*, meaning “pan” or “shallow plate”) – the round plate, made of gold or silver, that holds the bread that becomes Christ’s Body in the Eucharist.

**Purificator** – the white cloth used by a priest or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist to wipe the chalice after people receive from the cup at Communion.



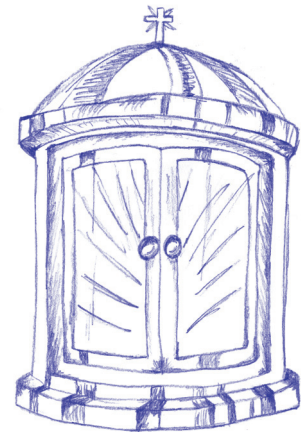
**Roman Missal** – the official liturgical book used by the priest (and deacon) that contains all the elements of the Mass except the Scripture readings (which are found in the *Lectionary*). This includes the opening and closing prayers, prefaces, Eucharistic Prayers, and blessings. (Also known as the *Sacramentary*.)

**Sanctuary Lamp** – a large candle placed near the tabernacle (see “Tabernacle”) that always remains lit to remind us of Christ’s abiding presence in the Eucharist.

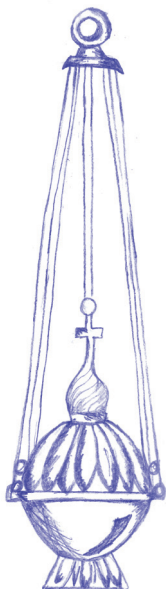


**Stole** – the long, narrow strip of colored fabric worn by a priest around his neck with the ends hanging down in front. It symbolizes his priestly authority. A deacon also wears a stole, but his is placed over his left shoulder, and it lays diagonally over his chest, secured on his right side. It symbolizes that he shares in the sacrament of holy orders. As with the chasuble, the color of the stole reflects the liturgical season or feast day.

**Tabernacle** (from the Latin *tabernaculum*, meaning “tent” or “hut”) – the fixed, locked box, usually behind the altar or in a side chapel, where the consecrated Eucharistic hosts are reserved.



**Thurible** (from the Latin *thus*, meaning “incense”; also called a “censer”) – the metal holder in which incense is burned during Mass. It is typically carried in the entrance procession and used to incense the cross and the altar at the beginning of Mass. It is then used to incense the Gospel prior to it being proclaimed, the gifts offered on the altar, the elevation of the consecrated host, and the priest (usually by a deacon) and the congregation.



# Tips for Getting More Out of Mass

## 1. Get the “lay of the liturgical land.”

In other words, get to know the Catholic community that is your parish. Stop by your parish church when Mass is not being celebrated. Slowly and prayerfully take in every element of the church. Contemplate the crucifix. Look closely at the stained glass windows. Stop to appreciate every statue. Approach the sanctuary and kneel at the altar rail, taking in all the sacred architecture. Pause at the baptismal font and thank God for the gift of your own baptism. Kneel in humble appreciation for the Lord’s perpetual Eucharistic presence, symbolized by the sanctuary lamp burning brightly beside the tabernacle. The more intentionally you “see” the church’s environment (and understand what each element signifies), the more deeply you will be able to enter into the Mass with your mind and heart.

## 2. Read the Scripture readings *before Mass.*

Read all four readings—the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, the Second Reading, and the Gospel—ahead of time. (They can be found at [usccb.org/bible](http://usccb.org/bible)—the official website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Just click on the calendar for the upcoming Sunday, and the readings will come up.) Read all four on Monday and then again over the course of the week (or read one reading each day). If possible, get a good Bible commentary and see what it says for each reading. This will help draw you more deeply into the context and meaning of the reading. Take advantage of free audio and video podcasts that are available. That way, if a baby cries or your mind wanders, you need not worry; you will have already read and studied the day’s Scripture and will understand what is being proclaimed.

## 3. Pack your bags.

Many people claim they don’t “get anything out of” Mass, but maybe this is because they fail to bring anything to it. God wants us to bring our issues, stresses, anxieties, fears, and concerns—our personal “baggage”—with us to Mass. So check your “bags” at the altar. Bring a special intention with you, someone or something you want to offer up to the Lord upon the altar alongside the gifts. Remember that at Mass, Jesus offers up his very life for you. Are you willing to offer up to him those things that may keep you from following and loving him more perfectly?

## 4. Get wet.

Dipping your fingers into the holy water when you enter and leave the church can become just a habit. Make this profound gesture intentional. As you reach toward the font, thank God for the gift of your baptism, by which you became God’s son or daughter and entered the life of faith. As you trace the Sign of the Cross on your body, contemplate how water brings both life and death, and consider how important it is to be filled with God’s grace through the sacraments.

## 5. Sit up.

That is, sit up closer—to the front. Why is it that people want front-row seats at concerts and sporting events but prefer sitting in the back row at Mass? The closer you are to the sanctuary, the better view you will have to witness heaven visit earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. While you are at it, do not just sit closer to the front, but change seats frequently. Many Catholics seem to gravitate toward the same seats or have “their pew.” Changing seats gives you a different perspective and may help you get to know other parishioners in your community of faith.

## 6. Strike a chord with God.

While many Catholics may open the hymnal at Mass, too many take the word “refrain” literally—as in, they *refrain* (keep) from singing! If God gave you a beautiful voice, then praise him with it. If God gave you a horrible voice, sing anyway. Remember that singing at Mass lifts your voice, mind, and heart to your heavenly Father. St. Augustine said that when we sing, we pray twice. “Set the tone” for others through your example. The Mass, of course, is more than music, and many parishes could undoubtedly “do music” better, but you can help improve it by participating. If you sing well or play an instrument, consider joining the choir or music ministry.

## 7. Go through with your “heart transplant.”

Are you really offering your heart upon the altar along with the gifts of bread and wine? Are you giving God permission to have his way with your life, entrusting him with your entire life now and your future? Do you pray like Christ on his knees in the Garden of Gethsemane, asking that the Father’s will be done, or are you one of the disciples who falls asleep? At Mass, Christ is offering you redemption, a time to exchange your tired, sin-tattered heart for his exuberant, Sacred Heart. Take him up on his offer. Give God permission to transform your heart along with the gifts offered upon the altar.

## 8. Say it like you mean it.

Extend a hand during the Sign of Peace to those around you as though it were your last chance to right a wrong. Offer genuine forgiveness to any family members or friends who have wronged you, and humbly seek the forgiveness of others. This is

a great warm-up for heaven. It is for the dads who yelled in the car on their way to Mass and the moms who ran out of patience an hour before the opening prayer. This is for the kids who talked back that morning and the friend who upset you greatly the night before. The Sign of Peace is not just a time to “get right” with one another but also an opportunity to give others permission to hold you to a higher standard. It demonstrates your humility as well as God’s grace actively at work in you.

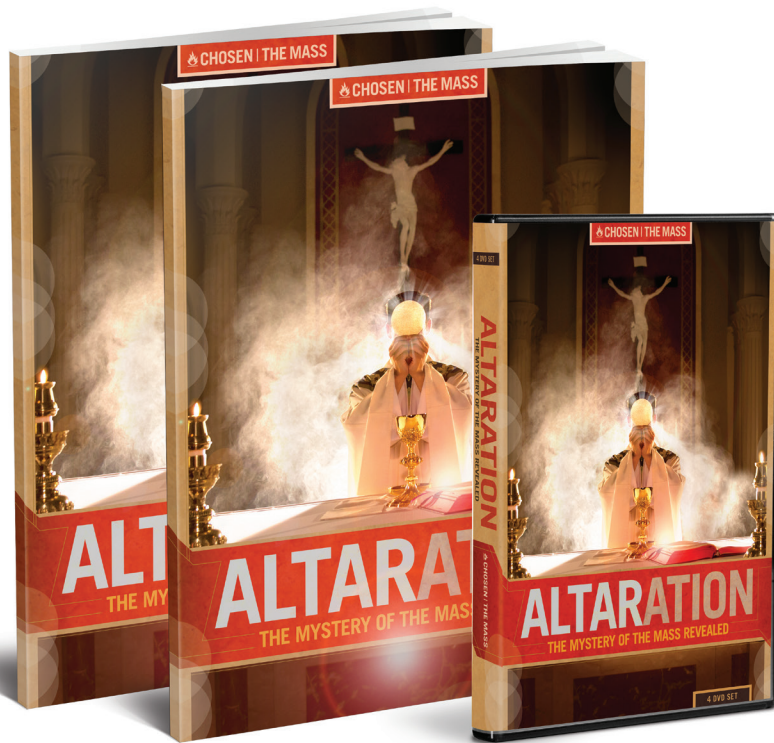
## 9. Relish the silence.

Relish the silent moments at Mass. Silence, properly understood, is God’s gift to us. It gives us an opportunity, like the Beloved Disciple at the Last Supper, to draw near to Jesus and rest our heads upon his chest. The Mass’ silent breaks are chances to “get quiet” with God, to take a break from all the noise and distractions of our media- and electronics-filled lives. The saints remind us that it is in these moments that we can be closest to God.

## 10. Go forth with purpose.

Do you leave Mass with a mission? There are people who desperately need what you have! Before you exit the pew and genuflect, have a purpose and a plan. Who are you going to invite to Mass next Sunday? Who are you going to reach out to at work or school? What areas of your life do you need to work on? How can you unleash the gift of grace within your soul you have just received in the Eucharist over the coming week? The question is not whether you have been empowered at Mass but whether you comprehend the power that exists within you—and what you plan to do about it.

# The Mass as Teens Have **Never** Seen it Before



## ***Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed***

*by Mark Hart*

*Altaration* addresses head-on one of the biggest problems we all face: how do we get Catholic teens to appreciate the awesome beauty and mystery of the Mass...and to actually look forward to attending and participating?

Through a unique learning experience, including powerful cinematography and workbook resources, teens will come to see the Mass and the priesthood in a dramatically new way. *Altaration* is designed to stir thought, create conversation, dispel myths, and inspire young souls to a deep and lasting love for the Mass. The goal of *Altaration* is not to fill teens' heads with information but to pierce their hearts with transformation.