

## Liturgy Lesson: Entrance Procession

Those who are older and remember the Mass before the Second Vatican Council in the early sixties remember when there was no opening procession to begin Mass. The priest and a couple of servers simply walked out into the sanctuary, the area around the altar, from the sacristy, the place where the priest puts on his vestments.

The only exception was when the Bishop came to a parish. Then there was always a procession, just as there always was when the Pope celebrated Mass. In 1963 the Second Vatican Council published **The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** and many things began to change. What many of us don't know is that most of the changes were not really new. They were attempts to reintroduce traditions from the past, including the entrance procession. For instance, as long ago as the year 701 AD, there is a record of a procession to begin Mass in Rome.

The entrance procession isn't just a way to get the priest to the altar. Its purpose is to gather everyone together – to begin with something unifying – a procession and singing, bring a sense of joy and setting the theme for the celebration. Our Music Director always carefully selects a processional hymn to fit the occasion.

A server carries the cross which reminds us that we are followers of Christ, our Lord and Savior. As the cross is carried through the church each person should bow his or her head as a sign of reverence for this sign of Christ. Next week we will learn more about the altar, another rich symbol of our Catholic Eucharist.