

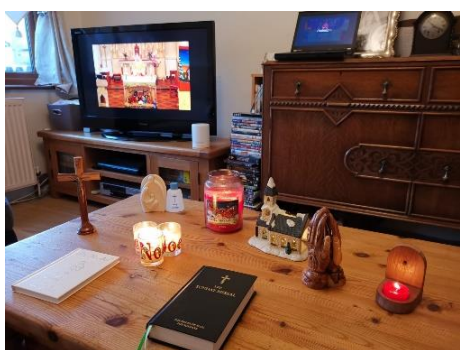
Getting the most from the experience of watching and praying Mass online

Less than 10 months ago, we would never have expected that the main way people would be participating in Mass was via YouTube! We had years to know what it meant to “go to church” – for most people, it has been part of life since we were young children.

So how do we help ourselves to participate as fully as possible in the Mass, when we are watching on an iPad, TV or phone? How do we stay focussed when the washing machine is going in the background, or people are passing through where we are praying in order to get breakfast? And what about if we are at home alone, and simply miss the other people around us, praying with us and for us, physically present. Most certainly, praying Mass from home is very different from being at church.

So here are **5 top tips from parishioners of St Edward the Confessor, Romford.**

1. PREPARE THE SPACE, IN GOOD TIME FOR MASS



This is really important – look at this picture, from a family in the parish. Find a cross, a rosary, a candle – maybe you have a family heirloom, like a rosary or Bible that Grandparents once used. Maybe you don’t have any religious objects in your house or flat, and this is a time to get some. Set them out with love and care, 10 minutes before Mass. You may also want to **have a copy of the readings for Mass** in front of you – you’ll find these at <https://universalis.com/mass.htm>. Finally, take time in the five minutes when the music plays before Mass to settle yourself into the space, prayerfully and peacefully.

2. LET OTHERS IN YOUR HOME KNOW

Not everyone in the house may wish to be at Mass – but it is good for them to know that you are, and that it matters to you. Just for 40 minutes, ask them if they would mind keeping music down, or not coming through the space where you are. And, of course, let them know they are very welcome to join you, at any time.



3. HAVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

It will be hard to keep the attention of young children – Mass is beautiful, but it is not Disney+. So take time with them to explain what is happening. Look ahead to see what the readings are, and find a simple version for them to read; suggest they create a picture about the reading. To help with this there are great resources at www.cafod.org – and Cafod also have a weekly children’s liturgy

4. BEHAVE AS YOU WOULD AT MASS

If you can, sit, stand and kneel at the times when you would do usually in the Mass. Help your home to become sacred space. Turn off the devices that you are not using to watch Mass, to be as focused as possible.

5. AND ABOVE ALL – BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU!

All of these tips are just to help; it will never be the same to watch and pray Mass at home, as it is to be at church. You are staying at home to stay safe, and it is already a stressful time. So don’t let being at Mass online be another stress! Jesus comes into the stable of our lives – that is true all the time, and it is true now. So if it is a bit messy, noisy and distracted one week, then don’t worry. Be there as best you can, and trust that Jesus understands. Be gentle with yourself and those around you – Jesus is. Plus, as it is on YouTube, there is always the chance to watch again when the house is quiet!