

31 Days of the Little Way: Greeting Our Children at Mass

Last week we learned that our older son would be reading a petition at the school Mass today. So even though I had to slip out of work for a little while to go, I went. It was the third grade's turn to assist with the Mass. They read and brought up the gifts and sang "The Prayer of St. Francis" as a meditation song after Communion. Leo read his petition out so clearly and confidently, praying "for the leaders of the world, that they would work together to promote peace and justice." A perfect petition for the Feast of St. Francis—or any day.



I always feel especially proud to see our children living out our faith, and attending the school Mass leaves me feeling so, so good about our decision to enroll them in Catholic school.

But I have to admit that one of the highlights for me is also having that extra chance to see our boys during the day. On my way back from receiving Communion, I spotted Daniel and winked at him—and I saw the flash of recognition in his eyes.

I wasn't sure Leo had seen me during the Mass, though, and I thought I had missed his exit. Oh, well, I thought. I'll see him this evening. He's getting bigger and probably wouldn't care that much whether I came.

It was only after Mass when I was chatting with our pastor that the third grade passed behind me. Walking outside the open church doors, Leo spotted me inside with the pastor, called to me, waved, and got my attention.

He was far enough away and he's almost 9 so I didn't want to yell anything embarrassing like "I love you, honey!" So I just called out, "You did a great job. Everyone sang so well!"

Leo smiled and waved and headed back for the rest of the school day.

As I drove away, I was thinking about how when I greet my children at the end of the day, they are happy to see me, but not exactly doing cartwheels. They are much more excited when they see me pop up somewhat unexpectedly during the day. What is it about that extra encounter—that fleeting glimpse of each other—that feels so much more special?

Then I thought, this is exactly what I'm seeking right now, the holiness in the ordinary. What is more ordinary than a mother and son seeing each other for two minutes during a busy day? We just saw each other for breakfast, and we'll be together again for the evening.

Yet those moments, those encounters, simple as they are, are absolutely extraordinary and special.

And that love, the bond between a parent and child, is a treasured gift from God.

