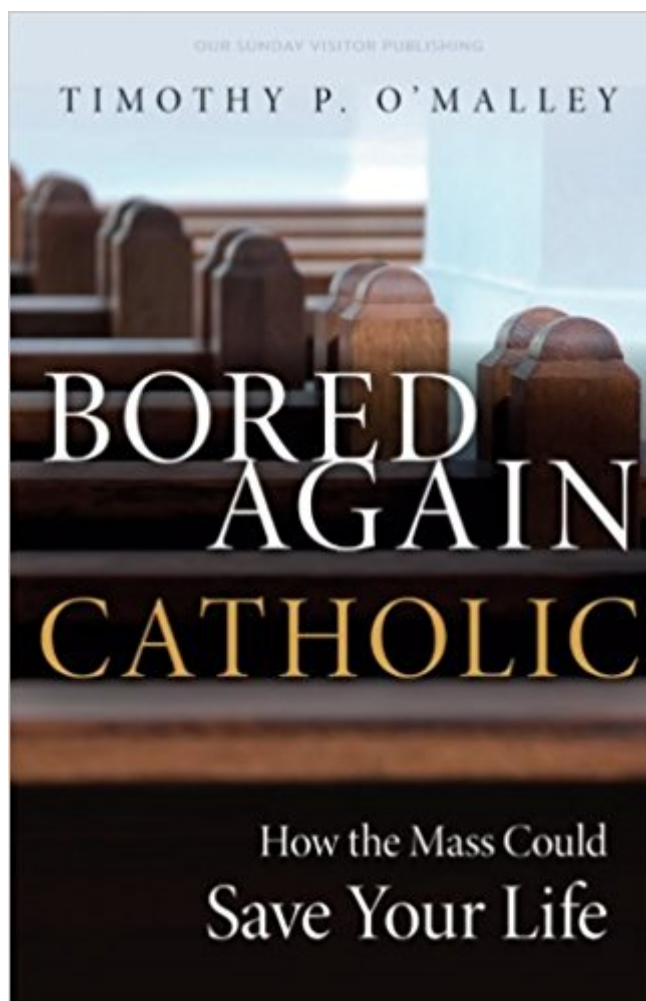


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# Bored Again Catholic: How The Mass Could Save Your Life



## Synopsis

Are you BORED? Not likely, given the endless opportunities today to see, share, post, watch, and like. So are you bored? No way! (Except maybe at Mass.) We want the Mass to entertain, make us laugh, give us foot tapping music and sound-bite theology, and get it done in under an hour. Yet every Sunday many of us tune out. Author Tim O Malley, in a series of reflections on every part of the Mass, challenges us to turn the idea of boredom on its head, calling boredom the good boredom that opens us to the quiet interior space where we can encounter God a sweet gift. It is there that full participation in the Mass becomes possible the potential to be transfixed by a ritual, to contemplate the readings, to savor the Eucharist. To be fruitfully bored again. Become a Bored Again Catholic and rediscover the power of the Mass to change your life and the entire world.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Timothy P. O'Malley, Ph.D. is director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy in the McGrath Institute for Church Life. He teaches in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. He researches in the areas of liturgy, catechesis, and Christian spirituality. He is the author of *Liturgy and the New Evangelization: Practicing the Art of Self-Giving Love* (Liturgical Press, 2014). He and his wife Kara live in South Bend and have one son.

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## Customer Reviews

Are you BORED? Not likely, given the endless opportunities today to see, share, post, watch, and like. So are you bored? No way! (Except maybe at Mass.) We want the Mass to entertain, make us laugh, give us foot tapping music and sound-bite theology, and get it done in under an hour. Yet every Sunday many of us tune out. Author Tim O'Malley, in a series of reflections on every part of

the Mass, challenges us to turn the idea of boredom on its head, calling boredom the "good" boredom that opens us to the quiet interior space where we can encounter God's "sweet gift." It is there that full participation in the Mass becomes possible: the potential to be transfixed by a ritual, to contemplate the readings, to savor the Eucharist. To be fruitfully "bored again." Become a Bored Again Catholic and rediscover the power of the Mass to change your life and the entire world.

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delicately done!

In this secretly sophisticated work, O'Malley argues that part of our problem with the approach to the Mass is that we are just looking for what we are always looking for elsewhere: entertainment, spectacle, novelty. What we need, though, is what we aren't always looking for, which is precisely what the Mass provides: the slow work of changing, refining, and expanding our desires, in the body of Christ. He wants us to be bored, in a good way. Of course, his problem is that his writing is anything but boring as his natural humor mixes effortlessly with his depth of knowledge to create an utterly delightful text. Well, that's just Tim O'Malley: wisdom made enjoyable.

What a great little book! Notre Dame's Timothy O'Malley has brought the Mass to life with a very different point of view in *Bored Again Catholic*. He speaks to a truth about Mass: "many are bored. But they do not know it is a gift that can deepen their spiritual connection to the Mass. His point of view on boredom makes this book special. Professor O'Malley teaches theology at Notre Dame and serves as director of the school's Center for Liturgy in the McGrath Institute for Church Life. He wrote this to serve as guide for participating in the liturgy and to convince those who are struggling that boredom, if good, is essential to the spiritual life. We escape into the bliss of constant entertainment and soon enough the threat of boredom is eliminated. What happens when we are no longer bored? What art will no longer be created? What novels will remain unwritten? What scientific theories will not be explored? Will young men and women cease imagining what it would be like to fall in love

with each other, to create a life together? O'Malley, after years of teaching, says, "I know how difficult it is to attend parishes where it seems spiritual vitality is absent. I know the temptation that you inevitably feel to excuse yourself from Sunday practice because, really, no one will miss you." He hopes that readers embrace boredom as a door to be used for spiritual growth, one that leads to seeing the spiritual riches of the Eucharist. In a more secular realm, Manoush Zomoradi reinforces this concept of seeing the riches in her 2017 TED talk "How Boredom Can Lead to Your Most Brilliant Thoughts". She tells us that when your body goes on autopilot, your brain gets busy forming new neural connections that connect ideas and solve problems. The connection between spacing out and growth is real. Do you sometimes have your most creative ideas while folding laundry, washing dishes or doing nothing in particular? But we live in a world filled with many sources of entertainment to distract us from the challenges of everyday living - distracting us from spacing out. There is a lot of noise competing for our attention. We fall prey to it. Many have left the Catholic Church for evangelical and non-denominational churches for services that make them laugh, entertain with foot-tapping music, and feed them with "sound-bite" theology. They do not want to wrestle with boredom. But it is this desire for entertainment that is perilous. It distracts us from the purpose of worship - a contemplative and personal encounter with God as taught by Christ and the Apostles. Boredom is a prelude to this encounter. O'Malley tells us that there are two types of boredom: "good boredom" and "bad boredom". The "good" boredom is essential for contemplation and spiritual life. It opens us to the quiet interior space where we can encounter God "a sweet gift" as the mind wanders and wonders. We look at the Crucifix; we wonder about the Eucharist; we think about a prayer or passage; we notice the Stations of the Cross and sculptures of Mary, Christ and the saints. Boredom during the Mass, in this case, opens us up for new spiritual growth. "Bad" boredom results from lyrics from hymns that fail to foster desire, to seed the imagination; homilies that are disconnected from the bible; and church architecture that makes you feel like you are in a gymnasium. There is nothing to pull you into contemplation and wonder - only distractions. "Bored Again Catholic" provides a series of reflections on every part of the mass that challenge us to "return the idea of boredom on its head." Each makes full participation in the Mass possible. O'Malley seeks to transfix us by contemplating the ritual so many find boring - the readings, the prayers and the ultimate sacrifice, The Eucharist. All of which lead us to be "fruitfully bored again." O'Malley reminds us, "The mass may be boring. The mass may not always be interesting. But it is saving us. It is sanctifying

us. It is our vocation. Go, the mass is ended. Go, renew the world. Make me a disciple. Go and make disciples. Go. Do not let the fear of boredom limit your full participation in the Mass. Become a bored again Catholic and rediscover the power of the Mass to change your life and the entire world.

This is a book intended for young adults, by a highly educated young adult but it has something important to say to Catholics of all ages about how the Mass truly relates to and enriches real life and offers opportunities for personal and communal transformation. Tim O'Malley walks you through the Mass, reflecting, explaining, and revealing its treasures in a unique way through personal witness, art, poetry, church documents and tradition as well as a little scholarship if you want to dig in. Reflection/discussion questions at the end of each chapter and proposals for personal practice make this a book to savor and to come back to.

Wow. I am really enjoying this super easy-to-read book about the Catholic Mass. It explains everything that is going on but in really short, engaging chapters. It will give you a good understanding of the Mass if you are not Catholic and just curious, or if you are an old Catholic and need a refresher.

Was not as good as I thought it would be was disappointed in it..

Great journey through the Mass and the meaning and significance of its components. The author explains things and their meanings that many have probably been missing for years.

A very accessible and reflective book about the Mass. Suitable for adults and high school kids.

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