Dear Parishioners,

I need to ask a special and challenging favor of this community: we need to find a way to come to a deeper appreciation for what the term SACRED SPACE means.

Let me explain the need to ask this favor; it has to do with the number of people who get up from their place during Mass to go to the restroom. I know there are folks who have medical conditions that require the need to be near a restroom just in case of an emergency. However for most of us, if we go to the bathroom before we come to Mass, we should be able to make it all the way through the Sacred Liturgy before we need to go again. This is common courtesy, good manners, and common sense.

Our Church is on holy ground. Consider St. Peter in the gospel reading for the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. He bowed down to the Lord. He wanted to erect three booths; one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. It was as if Peter wanted to stay in that holy moment and to memorialize it as a <u>sacred space</u> he never wanted to leave.

Why can't we have a similar attitude about our beautiful church? Why can't we uphold the sanctity of the Mass in such a reverential manner that nothing else is more important? The Church is not like the shopping mall, a sports arena, or a theater where the convenience of a restroom is a necessity. The Church is, rather, a place where we bow down before the Lord in worship and praise; it is a place that demands a different way of acting than any other public building. What we celebrate at Mass is as miraculous as the Transfiguration of the Lord because we receive his glorified body in the Eucharist.

For this reason I humbly ask to please go to the restroom at home before Mass starts. We all need to be prepared to witness the glory of the risen Christ in the Mass. We all need to adopt an attitude of reverence both for the Mass and the sanctity of the sanctuary. Our Church is Sacred, it is holy, and it demands great respect from everyone.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel