



Pastor's Column

St. Peter Catholic Church

January 13, 2019 ~ The Solemnity of The Baptism of the Lord

The Mass Explained - Holy Communion

It is interesting to note (for me personally, anyway), that whereas the most often-spoken three-word phrase that a married family man will say for the rest of his life is "I love you," to his wife (or maybe it's "I am sorry," *also* to his wife!), the most often-spoken four-word phrase that a priest will say for the rest of his life is: "The Body of Christ." A couple hundred times for Mass over the weekends, the priest will dole out Holy Communion with those four simple words, "the Body of Christ."

At Holy Communion, we meet the Lord half-way. The Lord comes to us and shows us that He wants us and loves us when the priest steps down from the altar to distribute Communion; and we come to the Lord, showing Him that we want Him and love Him when we step up out of the pew and come forward so as to receive Him in the Eucharist.

If we receive on the tongue, we are showing our total helplessness before God, that we need God for absolutely everything where our bodily and spiritual needs are concerned; and we are totally passive, being fed by him.

If we receive in the hand, our hands become, as it were, the throne of God...or, if you prefer, the manger-crib of the helpless Christ-Child Who entrusts Himself completely to us.

Should I receive Holy Communion? The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops remind us that, as Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of mortal sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged for all.

The USCCB goes on to speak to our fellow non-Catholic Christians: we welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common Baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one." Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are not admitted to receive Communion.

For those not receiving Communion: all who are not receiving Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another. (For myself, when someone comes to me in line for Holy Communion but is not receiving Communion, I offer this prayer: "May the Lord bless you and keep you. Amen.")

For non-Christians: We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

~ Fr. Lewis