

Most Holy Trinity

Today at two of our masses we're celebrating first communions for the third and final time this month. I'm reviewing with the children some points about receiving communion, so I thought I would share these with you as well.

Fast before receiving communion. The Catholic Church asks us to fast one hour from food and drink before communion. The fast stretches from before receiving communion, not from the start of mass. This should not be difficult. Many people leave home more than hour before they will actually receive communion. If you avoid snacking while you are on the way here and do not chew gum during mass, you'll be fine. Fasting is one way we show respect for the sacred food we are about to receive.

When it is your turn to receive communion, bow your head as a sign of reverence. Our bishops ask only for a bow of the head, as you might do when saying the name, "Jesus." Some people do more - some bow from the waist, some genuflect, some kneel down. You are not forbidden to do these actions, but all that the church asks is a small bow of the head to show your reverence for the communion you are about to receive.

The normal posture for receiving communion in the United States is standing. If someone kneels, we will give communion, but the preferred posture legislated by our bishops is standing.

When the minister says, "The Body of Christ," you are supposed to answer, "Amen". Please say the word with a strong, confident voice. You may then receive communion in the mouth or in the hand. If you receive in the mouth, say "Amen" first, and then open your mouth to receive the host. Please extend your tongue a little; if you do not, it is harder for us to place the host in your mouth.

If you receive in the hand, place your strong hand under your weak hand. So if you are right-handed, place your right hand under your left. Let the minister place the host in your weak hand. Do not grab the host from the minister. You are receiving communion - not taking it. Place the host in your mouth immediately. Do not walk away with it. Do not dip it into a chalice. Do not bring it to your pew. You must consume the host immediately upon receiving it. If you notice particles in your hand, do your best to consume them. All of communion is sacred, even the crumbs.

We offer communion under both forms. I encourage you to receive from the cup. We are doubling the ministers to make it easier for you. Stand before the cup. The minister will say, "The Blood of Christ." You answer, "Amen." Then take the cup in your own hands and sip.

When you return to your place, thank God for the gift of the eucharist, and sing the communion song. The music and communion unite us with one another.

In today's first reading, Moses reminds the people to respect God. God led them out of slavery in Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the freedom of their own land. God spoke to them and taught them how to live. God was closer to them than to anyone else. When we receive communion, Jesus is closer to us than to anyone else. Respect him. Love him. Thank him. Listen for his voice. Do what he says. Jesus Christ will guide you all the days of your life.

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2015