

**This weekend we introduce some changes in our communion procedure at St. Regis. Changing procedures can cause some confusion so I'd like to help you understand why we're introducing some shifts.**

**The one that will affect you most is we're inviting you to stand all through the distribution of communion. Believe it or not, even though most Catholics kneel after the Lamb of God and again after receiving communion, ever since the Mass went into English the rubrics have never said to do so. At school Masses here the last year or so we've asked the children to stand throughout communion and now we'd like to extend that invitation at every Mass.**

**The most obvious reason to remain standing is as a courtesy to those who are still receiving communion. Kneeling down after communion is a little like leaving the table at home when you finish eating even though others are still being served. But standing also shows our respect for God. At Mass we stand for important parts: the prayers, the Gospel, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the blessings. The reason we do is that the first Christians thought standing was the most reverent posture for prayer. We kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer, but that was a change introduced in the middle ages when people were not receiving communion very often and came to Mass more in devotion than to take part. Standing for the important parts of the Mass makes sense when you think about our daily lives--we stand for the national anthem, we stand when someone important enters the room, and we stand to offer our seat to someone who could use it.**

**Change doesn't always feel right at first. You're accustomed to some private time after communion; you may find standing difficult. I urge you to try this and see how it feels. After the Lamb of God, remain standing. Come to communion in the normal way; return to your pew, remain standing and sing the communion song; it is not appropriate to leave Mass early. After the song, when the ministers have received communion, we'll all be seated together.**

**So, the two basic reasons for standing are these: respect for God and courtesy for one another. Sounds like the two great commandments: love God; love your neighbor. What better time to practice them than in the sacrament of our love.**

**The other changes are these: we'll use bread baked by members of our community, and we're asking the communion ministers not to combine the cups at the end of communion. By using baked bread we hope to better show that Mass is a meal, and an offering of our own gifts. And many people told us that the pouring of cups on the altar, one into another, didn't look right. So we're asking ministers to drink from the priest's chalice which we'll leave on the altar, and to consume the extra Body and Blood of Christ in the sacristy.**

**As we begin this new church year with renewed attention to our communion, may it help us share the love of Christ with a world that awaits his glory.**