

SAID ED March 26, 2017

Eucharistic Devotion

With so many people coming to daily Mass during Lent I thought this week that I'd reflect a bit on the Eucharist. First the Holy Eucharist is the sacrificial banquet of the Lord. We gather around the Lord's Table to offer the sacrifice of Jesus to God, the source of all life. We do this in memory of Jesus at his instruction. Our actions at Mass reveal our attitudes and our belief about the Lord's presence in our assembly.

Recall: the Lord is present at every Eucharist in four ways.

- in the living Word of God proclaimed in the midst of the assembly.
- in the Eucharistic Assembly itself. Christ identifies with every one of us.
- in the presence of the one who presides, who acts in the name of Christ.
- in the real presence of the Eucharistic bread and wine consecrated by the power of the Holy Spirit at each celebration.

Because Christ is truly present in every celebration in these four ways we have certain expectations of each other. These help us to celebrate and profess what we believe about the presence of Christ.

We should always be mindful that the persons next to us, behind us, and ahead of us are all part of this Eucharistic Assembly. We do not gather just as individuals praying to Christ. We are there together as part of the assembly praying with one voice. We are called to have full, active, conscious participation. We pray at Mass not merely as individuals saying our prayers to Christ, but as the assembly of the faithful, praying as one body to God the source of all life.

We should not be walking out on the Lord's Supper before it is over. Think about this: Jesus Christ is the host of this Eucharistic banquet. United with each other at Mass, we offer his sacrifice to God. Unfortunately, before the meal is over some people regularly walk out immediately upon receiving communion. This is really an insult to Christ the Lord, the host!

Receiving communion is our delight and our joy. Our communion procession is part of our prayer. When we approach the person distributing the Eucharist, we should offer a simple bow of the head to acknowledge the presence of the Lord. When we receive communion, we take the very body and blood of Christ into our hearts. Jesus invites us to this sacrificial meal. He invites us to take and eat and to take and drink. Receiving communion under both forms – bread and wine – is the intention of the Lord. For reasons of health or other concerns, it is certainly acceptable to receive under only one of the two forms. But the norm should be reception of communion under both forms

The way we approach the communion procession reveals what we believe about receiving the Lord in Holy Communion. Reverence and respect for this great gift of the Lord's Body and Blood is part of our prayer. Please do not let yourself get too familiar and lose proper reverence. Just as parents teach their children proper respect for others, so does our whole community need to model reverence and respect for the Eucharist.

I hope these thoughts are helpful as we continue to grow in our faith and fulfill our responsibility of being good examples to our younger friends; especially those preparing to receive for the first time.

Have a great Fourth Week of Lent!
