



From the Pastor
18th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - B
August 4, 2024

THE BREAD OF LIFE

DISCOURSE. Last week we began a 5-week consecutive proclamation of the 6th Chapter of **John's Gospel**: the **Bread of Life Discourse**. Every 3 years, we proclaim **Mark's Gospel**,

which is the shortest of the 4, so we enjoy a 5-week exposé on biblical **Eucharistic Theology**. Since we are also in the 3-year **National Eucharistic Revival**, our **August** bulletin articles will be on this **Eucharistic** theme.

Anyone who has distributed **Holy Communion** has had some awkward moments. We have had to offer 'just a blessing' or say a kind word to **non-Catholics** or **non-Christians** who just 'get in line' to receive what - or rather **Who** - they are not properly disposed to receive. [The **OCIA: Order of Christian Initiation of Adults** is open to all **non-Catholics** who wish to be prepared to receive the **Blessed Sacrament**.] After saying, "**The Body of Christ**," we have gotten responses like, "**And also with you.**" - "**And with your spirit.**" and "**Thank you.**" Or we just get a **blank stare**, which clues us not to even offer the Eucharist to them!

Even more disturbing is: even some **Catholics** do these things! Some do not say "**Amen**" which makes us wonder if they know what they are doing. Some say "**Amen**" AFTER the **Host** is in their mouth, which could cause it to fall out. Some 'snatch' the **Host** from us, rather than make a **throne** for us to carefully place the **Host**. Some do not fully expose their tongue and expect us to reach INTO their mouth, or bite the **Host** with their teeth, or lick our fingers. This is not a slot machine. Forgive me for being so grossly honest, but this is the sad reality.

NONE of this is why the **USA's Bishops** called for a **National Eucharistic Revival**, but the '**Bread of Life**' Discourse provides an opportunity to reflect on our '**Holy Table Manners**.' For as a liturgical mantra says: "**Lex Orandi/Lex Credendi.**" This is translated as "**the law of prayer or how we worship is the law of belief or what we believe.**" Or in plain **English**: what we do or, do not do, shows what we believe, or do not believe. Let me give you a 'host' [pun intended]

of examples of what we should - or should not do - and why.

GENUFLECTING & KNEELING. We '**bend the knee**' before **His Real Presence** in the **Eucharist**. When possible, we **GENUFLECT** or touch one knee to the floor and make the **Sign of the Cross** when we enter and leave the place where the **Blessed Sacrament** is reposed. If the **Tabernacle** is empty, the door is left open and the **Sanctuary Lamp** unlit [as it always is from before **Holy Thursday's Mass** until after **Holy Communion** at the **Easter Vigil**] and we **BOW** to the **Altar**. We **KNEEL** after the **Santus** for the rest of **Eucharistic Prayer** and after the **Lamb of God Litany**. As a common sign of reverence, the USA's Bishops direct us to **STAND** to receive **Holy Communion**, since we have already knelt twice to show our respect, and to avoid kicking or tripping others.

COMMUNION IN THE HAND. To receive in the **hand**, form a 'throne' with one hand under the other - raised high so the **Minister** can see how you wish to receive Holy Communion. **BOW** right before the **Minister** says, "**The Body of Christ Say "Amen"**" and allow the **Host** to be **SECURELY PLACED** in the **PALM** of your hand; do not reach for or pinch it lest it be knocked to the floor. **WHILE** still standing before the **Minister**, place the **Host** in your mouth, and return to your place.

COMMUNION ON THE TONGUE. To receive on the **tongue**, extend your tongue out for hygienic reasons, so the **Minister** does not touch your lips, tongue, mouth or teeth. **BOW** as the **Minister** says, "**The Body of Christ**" - say "**Amen**" - and then extend your tongue so the **Minister** can place the **Host** on it. Then return to your place.

OTHER CONCERNS. Should a **Host** fall, the **Minister** normally picks it up unless it was already in your mouth; please be kind and hygienic: pick it up, since it was in your mouth, and consume it. Making a **Sign of the Cross** is optional; no need to show a sign of reverence to the **Altar**, **Tabernacle** or **Crucifix** for **JESUS HIMSELF IS IN YOU!** Barring an emergency or if performing another **Ministry** [i.e.: hand out our bulletins, etc.], all should return to their place, join in the **Communion Chant**, and pray. In the coming weeks: **Eucharist** is the **Real Presence**.

In Christ,

Father Mark

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