

*From the Pastor's Desk*

Last Saturday we distributed First Holy Communion to our Faith Formation students who were mostly from our second-grade class.

We pray that they will allow Christ to transform their lives and that they will take every opportunity to receive the Eucharist throughout their lives.

As part of the Communion process, the new members of our agape meal saw the Presider purifying the vessels used for the distribution of the Eucharist.

This activity, while it might appear to be “doing the dishes,” as one ill-informed parishioner remarked to me, it has a far more serious purpose.

We recognize that Jesus Christ is physically and really present in the Eucharistic meal. As such, we want to express the highest reverence we can for Him.

This includes not only a proper disposition and reception of Christ in the Eucharist, but a careful and mindful handling of his Body and Blood.

The ciboria that hold the consecrated hosts used in Communion have touched the Body (and Blood) of Christ and they may retain tiny or imperceptible residue of Christ's Body. Similarly, the chalice has touched the consecrated wine and may also retain residue of Christ's Blood (and Body).

After distributing Communion, the Presider or Deacon drinks any remaining consecrated wine from the chalice and, then, he purifies both the ciboria and chalice with water and a purificator, a special cloth used for this purpose.

We understand that the water and alcohol in the consecrated wine evaporates and that molecules of the consecrated bread are constantly migrating into the air, resulting in Christ's Body and Blood entering profane space.

In addition, we understand that accidents and mishaps might occur with the Eucharist and result in Christ's Body and Blood ending up somewhere other than inside our bodies.

For these situations that we cannot fully remediate (think of molecules floating in the air or consecrated wine falling on a carpet), we know that Jesus, as always, can take care of Himself.

Nevertheless, the occurrence (floating molecules) or possibility (consecrated wine falling on the carpet) of these situations doesn't mean we disregard the value and importance of the living Christ, where we know his real presence is – the residue in the vessels in which he was conveyed.

Our handling of the Eucharist expresses our love and reverence for Christ, who, in the Eucharist, is tangibly present among us. As such, we are never casual in our handling of Christ in the Eucharist!

In purifying the vessels used for Communion, something far more serious is taking place than simply cleaning the dishes.

The Presider or Deacon is actually and symbolically ensuring that the Eucharist is treated in a sacred way. He is carefully and mindfully preserving the holiness of the Eucharist by keeping it separate from profane use. (This is the reason we keep the host-form of the unconsumed Body of Christ in the tabernacle.)

There is a powerful story of a non-Catholic Christian telling his Catholic friend that, if Catholics really believed that Christ is present in the Eucharist, they would be in awe and on their knees in fervent prayer whenever the Eucharist appeared.

This holy (and Catholic!) understanding and response to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist explains our serious concern with purifying the Eucharistic vessels before returning them to storage.

-Fr. Brian Kean

Desde el escritorio del Párroco

El sábado pasado distribuimos la Primera Comunión a nuestros estudiantes de Formación en la Fe que en su mayoría eran de nuestra clase de segundo grado.

Oramos para que permitan que Cristo transforme sus vidas y que aprovechen cada oportunidad para recibir la Eucaristía a lo largo de sus vidas. Gracias a JoAnna Leon y a todos los catequistas que prepararon a los niños.

También quiero reconocer a los nuevos funcionarios del grupo de mujeres católicas de la parroquia. Que tengan éxito en todos sus eventos y que Dios las bendiga siempre.

-P. Brian