

FOOD *for* THOUGHT

The very height of our worship as Roman Catholics is the reception of Holy Communion. In this sacred moment heaven and earth meet and we come into contact with the Risen Jesus in the closest way possible until we are united with Him in heaven. It is for these reasons that Catholics should **NEVER** approach our Lord in Holy Communion when conscious of mortal sin not yet absolved in sacramental confession. Many people believe that asking God to forgive mortal sin can be done by themselves without going to confession. Jesus Himself gave to Peter and those ordained after him the power to forgive sins. Mortal sin **CANNOT** be absolved without going to confession to a priest. Once in a state of grace, the Catholic approaches our Lord to receive into his or her own body the very body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ.

When we receive Holy Communion it is **NOT** symbolic. We believe that the priest during the Mass at the moment of the consecration changes the bread and wine into the **ACTUAL** body and blood of Christ. This miracle which occurs at every Mass is called "Transubstantiation." It means that the substance of the bread and wine are changed while their appearances remain the same. In approaching our Lord to receive Him, we should be sure that we have fasted for one hour prior to Mass which means; no food or drink other than water or medicine. Chewing gum or eating mints or candy is always inappropriate in church and breaks the one hour fast.

While on line to receive Holy Communion we should be preparing ourselves in a prayerful mode, not saying hello to others or talking. Once we are standing before the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister, they show the sacred host with the words; "The Body of Christ." The only response is "Amen." If receiving on the hand, both hands should be opened flat one above the other. When the host is placed on the open hand, the person receiving takes the hand below and takes the host from the hand above and consumes it **BEFORE** walking back to their seat. No one is ever permitted to take the host back to their seat or out of the church with them. If receiving on the tongue, once you say "Amen" simply stick your tongue out of your mouth. Not sticking your tongue out means the minister or Priest has to place their fingers into your mouth.

In the light of the pandemic and flu season, it is suggested that everyone receive in their hand. Finally, if you are sick **STAY HOME**. It is **NOT** a sin to miss Mass when you are sick. That is why Masses are shown on television. Sharing of ourselves is a mark of belonging to Christ, but that does not mean sharing illnesses.

Hopefully these reminders will help us all to approach our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament with the supreme reverence, respect and love that we owe Him.