

SAID ED November 30, 2014

Reverence for the Eucharist

This weekend we begin the season of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany. It's a time of preparation, anticipation, celebration and proclamation. It's also the beginning of a new church year. By now you have received a flyer in the mail which lists the opportunities for prayer and growth in weeks ahead. Please read this brochure and keep it on your refrigerator for future reference. I hope you will make this season a prayerful one as we seek a still point in our swirling worlds.

This is also a good time to renew our awareness about one of our basic beliefs – the Holy Eucharist. . I want to reinforce what we believe about the Eucharist and to share the understanding of what is expected when we gather to celebrate each week. First of all, the Eucharist is the sacrificial banquet of the Lord in which 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.

The church teaches that as we celebrate the Eucharist the Lord is present in four ways.

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

Catholics have a profound reverence and respect for the Holy Eucharist. Our ritual actions in this regard point to our belief in the "Real Presence" of the Lord in the Eucharistic species of bread and wine. We must always take care to not become too familiar with this great gift to the point that we lose our respect or act in ways that are flippant and not respectful. Remember the old saying "Familiarity breeds contempt." We need to constantly check our attitudes lest we take this great gift for granted. We need to show our profound belief in the Lord's real presence in the Eucharist by acts of reverence and devotion.

Lately I have noticed many people approaching the communion line with pyxes (the container for the host) which are worn or tattered. Beginning this weekend we are replacing those containers with more suitable and durable gold pyxes. If you bring Holy Communion to the sick after mass, please ask the sacristan for a new pyx before Mass begins. When you take the Eucharist to the homebound remember that you are to go directly to the sick person after Mass. It is not appropriate to keep the Eucharist on your person or in your home for later distribution. This is a matter of reverence and respect. I ask that we all be praying for each other during Advent; that our belief in the Lord will be manifest in our devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

Have a great first week of Advent!
