



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

October 15, 2021

Dear Parishioners:

From time to time I like to focus on how we celebrate the Eucharist. Along with the priests and others involved in liturgy, I try to provide well-prepared homilies, well-planned liturgies, and through the music department, music that enhances your worship experience. Liturgy means prayer of the people. It is the prayer of all of us, not just the priest. As the Bishops of Vatican II have directed us in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy." Mass is not a private devotion or an occasion for passive attendance.

In this month's letter I focus on the Liturgy of the Eucharist, specifically the Communion Rite and Procession. These liturgical practices that I will be describing are not my own creation but follow the guidelines of the pastoral on Sunday Mass, *Gather Together Faithfully, A Guide to Sunday Mass*, promulgated in 1999 by Cardinal Mahony. During the Eucharistic Prayer from the end of the Holy, Holy to the Great Amen, we remain kneeling out of respect for the great mystery of our faith, which occurs when the priest enables God to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ and invokes the Holy Spirit to come down upon our offering. After we as a community have affirmed what has occurred through singing or saying the Great Amen, we stand for the Communion rite.

We remain standing for the rest of the rite. Then when the priest invites us to come forward to receive the Lamb of God, we come forward in procession to partake of the Eucharist. Some have asked me why we do not kneel at this time out of respect for the Eucharist. This is not the time for Eucharistic adoration but for partaking of the heavenly meal. As long as people are in procession, all of us should remain standing, preferably singing as well, until the procession is over. As celebrant I look to see that everyone has received Communion. Only when the last person has received Communion do I sit down. That is the signal for you to sit as well. If you prefer, you may kneel at this time. This period of silence after Communion is your opportunity for quiet reflection on what has occurred and on what you have just received.

A Eucharistic minister brings back any portions of the Eucharistic species to the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. You do not need to wait for him or her to disappear into the Chapel before you sit or kneel. At times there are still hosts on the altar because Eucharistic Ministers, before the final blessing, will be dismissed to bring those hosts to the sick.

Let us sing, pray, and worship together as one community of faith.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor