



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

January 15, 2022

Dear Parishioners:

In my letter exactly two years ago, I commented on the liturgical practices in accord with the pastoral on Sunday Mass, issued by Cardinal Mahony in 1997. The presence of Covid-19 has not changed that significantly but has affected it a bit.

After the singing of the Great Amen and beginning with the Lord's Prayer, we all stand as a community. Before the pastoral letter, we had knelt after the Lamb of God when the priest invited people to Communion. Since 1997 we remain standing throughout the Communion Rite. This is because a procession is taking place in which we come forward to receive the Body of Christ. As long as people are in procession we should be standing as a community. The pastoral reminds us:

There is to be a true procession that makes sense in the configuration of the church. This processing continues throughout the Communion with singing that begins immediately after the acclamation, "Lord I am not worthy..." as Communion itself does. Great attention has to be given to the arrangement of ministers and to the flow of the procession around and through the assembly. . . .This singing of a single Communion song lasts until the procession and all the sharing of Holy Communion end.

Covid-19 did affect the reception of Communion. We must receive the host on the hand with our face covered over the nose and mouth. Once you receive the host you move to the side and briefly lower the mask to place the host in your mouth. The Eucharistic minister no longer offers the chalice with the precious blood, so you simply return to your place and remain standing.

This brings us to when we should sit or kneel for the personal post-Communion meditation. When I preside, I wait until I have seen the last person receive Communion. Only then do I sit down. This is your cue to sit down as well. This usually occurs before a Eucharistic minister carries the hosts left over to the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. When the hosts have left the Church for the Chapel has nothing to do with sitting down. Even when the ciborium is back in the tabernacle, there are often still hosts on the altar. These remain there until the priest sends forth the Eucharistic ministers of the sick from the Church.

It seems that when we think the pandemic is waning, another variant arises. Right now it is the omicron variant. Should the situation change for the better and the liturgical practices change accordingly, I will keep you informed.

Let us continue to pray for the end of this terrible pandemic.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor