



## SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

February 15, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

In last month's letter, when I was commenting on liturgical practices at Communion, I indicated that in subsequent letters I will comment on other practices that encourage our full, conscious, and active participation at Mass.

This month I want to discuss our reception of Communion itself. We follow the guidelines of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. They tell us that since Communion is a procession, the proper way to receive Communion is standing. There is no kneeling at this time. The bow of the head, a head nod, is the gesture that people make as a sign of reverence before receiving Holy Communion. After the person in front of you receives Communion, you approach the priest or Eucharistic minister, who then says "the body of Christ." You then make a bow of the head, answer "Amen," and receive the host (either in the hand or on the tongue). If you receive it on the hand, where you have the left hand cupped upward and the right hand underneath, you move one step to the side and with the right hand immediately place the host (consecrated bread) into your mouth. You make the same bow of the head as you approach the minister of the cup, who then says, "the blood of Christ." You answer, "Amen," and then take the cup in both hands and take a sip of the precious blood. Then you return to your place and remain standing until the last person has received Communion. Sit down when the priest sits down.

Even though you have the option to receive on the hand or in the tongue, I recommend on the hand. This is an easier and more hygienic way of receiving. It is also the more traditional way of receiving Communion. A 4<sup>th</sup> century document from Cyril of Jerusalem describes that very practice.

So when you come forward, do not come with arm extended or fingers parted. Make your left hand a throne for your right, since your right hand is about to welcome a king. Cup your palm and receive in it Christ's body, saying in response Amen. Then carefully bless your eyes with a touch of the holy body, and consume it, being careful to drop not a particle of it..... After partaking of Christ's body, go to receive the chalice of his blood...

In our Church the only time the people genuflect (go down on one knee) is when they enter or leave the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, where the Eucharist is reserved. Genuflection only takes place in those churches where the tabernacle is behind the altar. Since the Eucharist is not reserved in the main part of our Church, it is inappropriate to genuflect there. When we enter or leave our Church, we should make a profound bow not to the crucifix but to the altar where the Eucharistic sacrifice takes place.

May our participation in the Eucharist drawing us closer to Christ and to one another who are indeed the Body of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork  
Pastor