



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

January 15, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

On September 4, 1997, on the Solemnity of Our Lady of the Angels Cardinal Mahony issued a pastoral letter: *Gather Faithfully Together: A Guide for Sunday Mass, Pastoral Letter on the Liturgy*. This guided all the parishes of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in implementation of the liturgical reforms that came out of the Second Vatican Council. When I arrived as pastor on July 1, 1999, St. John Fisher Church had already implemented these reforms under the leadership of my predecessor, Monsignor Eugene Gilb.

Although we have continued to commit ourselves to high-quality, well-planned liturgies, some of the practices have become a bit frayed at the seams. I'd like to comment on one of them: the posture of the congregation during the Communion Rite.

During the Eucharistic Prayer we remain kneeling. Then after the singing of the Great Amen and beginning with the Lord's Prayer, we all stand as a community. Previous to the pastoral letter, we 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 are called to receive the Body and Blood 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.

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 when to sit 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.

In subsequent letters I will comment on other practices that encourage our full, conscious, and active participation at Mass.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor