

Corpus Christi 2018

Sr. Mary Margarita had been preparing the children for their first holy communion for several weeks. Finally, at the first communion mass all the children were dressed up in their white dresses and suits.

One little boy who was down on the front pew was very excited and talkative.

Finally, Sr. Mary leaned over to a boy next to her and asked him to go down there and ask him to please stop talking. So he did. And there was quite a surprise when the boy went all the way down to the front and whispered in his ear, Sr. Mary wants you to please stop talking Father.

Today is one of those Catholic feast days after which they named another town in Texas, Corpus Christi. I wonder how many people think about the Body and Blood of Christ when they talk about Corpus Christi, TX? I wonder how many of us think about the body and blood of Christ when we walk up the aisle and actually receive Him?

When we say the creed, we bow at the words of the incarnation, "and became man." That God would actually become man is profoundly absurd. Why He would become human just so we could become divine-is the highest mystery, and maybe that's why we forget. The atheist says, if we really believed that this is truly the Body and blood of Christ, we should approach the altar on our knees every time.

Maybe they are right. Maybe we don't understand what we have.

"The Eucharist is the supreme proof of the love of Jesus. After this, there is nothing more but Heaven itself,"- St. Peter Julian Eymar

We forget sometimes that when God gives Himself to us in the Eucharist we are touching heaven.

The way we approach the Eucharist can say a lot about our belief in Jesus and the True Presence.

We had 3 men ordained to transitional deacon this morning, and please God to the priesthood next summer.

Their excitement and reverence for the mass was infectious.

They can't wait to become priests and their love for the Corpus Christi is written all over their actions and movements.

If you've never been to an ordination mass, I'd invite you to attend. We have one being ordained a priest next month and then God willing, 5 men next year. The people at an ordination mass are all excited to be there.

They are really tuned in to every part of the liturgy and they are very respectful and joy filled. Joy spreads joy.

But mass is not the only place I've seen a large group of people behave so well.

If you've ever been to a thunder game and get up to leave for a break or concession, they won't let you return to your seat if the game is in play. The ushers will hold up a sign that says something like, please wait, game in play. You have to wait until a break or time-out before returning to your seat during a play, because it could distract the players or the other people watching the game. I'm going to get our ushers signs to hold up during mass. "Word of God being proclaimed, please wait." Shouldn't people worshipping God in mass be given at least the same respect? If you go to the symphony and arrive late, they won't even seat you after the curtain has gone up if the act or music is playing. You have to wait until the end of the piece or an intermission.

So if I'm late for mass through no fault of my own, then it's perfectly acceptable for me to wait in the back until after the word of God is proclaimed or after the homily, or after the Eucharistic prayer, and then be seated."

There are lots of time outs and breaks throughout Mass. Many of those are by design to sit in silence and reflect on what was just heard or received. But we should also prepare ourselves for mass ahead of time, which will require some forethought and a little planning. Maybe leaving home earlier so I don't feel rushed. The rule of fasting one hour before mass includes no coffee or chewing gum an hour before. If you forget, trash cans and restrooms are available before Mass.

Every year the Yukon Arts Association puts on the Nutcracker Suite and every year they make the same announcement, please turn off electronic devices out of respect for the actors and audience.

And then they say, crying babies are like good intentions, it is always better when they are carried out.

It gets the point across, but of course in Mass, crying babies should be carried back in when they calm down.

But after the homily or after communion. Please don't come in and crawl over people when they are kneeling.

Movies have these very creative preview clips reminding people to not text or talk during the show out of respect for others.

And Yes I too have brought my phone to mass by mistake. Which is why my ring tone sounds like church bells. It's saved me on more than one occasion. Which is why I wouldn't recommend ac/dc ring tones. As a rule, I haven't found anything yet that couldn't wait until after mass. Sometimes a prayer before returning an urgent call is best anyway. So basketball games, Christmas plays, concerts and movie, are all entertainment and can't really be compared to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Once as a new seminarian I was excited to assist Father with a baptism during mass. We went with the family to the baptism font, I was holding the book as he said the words of blessing of the water, and this man who always sat on the front pew, who was a very faithful and active person in the parish, was clipping his fingernails during Mass. Apparently this was a fairly regular thing for him, because he didn't put down the clippers when we were standing right by him as his fingernail clippings kept shooting around the pew and floor.

At another parish, a small mission, the matriarch who basically did everything in the Church, bought her newest grand baby some new shoes, because she had just learned to walk. The shoes had squeakers in them and went off every time she took a step. Baby was the star of the show all thru Mass as she ran back and forth on the pew during the Eucharistic prayer.

Couple years ago I was visiting New Orleans and went to mass in plain clothes and sat in the last row next to a well-dressed couple in their 50s who were having a baby baptized after mass. About halfway through Mass a man in his late 30's and dressed for a night on bourbon street, sat with them. I could tell none of them had been to Mass for over 7 years because they seemed surprised at the new responses. During the Eucharistic Prayer they gave the baby a silver plated rattle which he quickly achieved the level of expert in rattling and pew knocking. Somehow I was recruited to be a communion minister, and when the gentleman who provided the baby rattle came up for communion I just gave him a blessing since he didn't bow, or hold up his hands or put out his tongue, or say amen. He gave every indication that he was not Catholic. He approached the deacon after Mass and asked why I didn't give him communion and the deacon had to employ his best pastoral skills trying to explain to the man what communion is and how Catholics receive communion. The man was Catholic, at least a sacramental Catholic. We are not the judge of a person's soul when they come up for communion, but if someone receives communion with grave unconfessed sin on their soul, like missing Mass for example, or not having their marriage blessed in the Church, then they are in serious spiritual danger.

St. Paul warns us in First Corinthians

"Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died (vv 27-30).

To receive communion unworthily is a form of sacrilege. It would be committing another grievous sin in addition to the mortal sin. Some people don't understand why Catholics don't have open communion, why can't anyone receive.