

LITURGY BYTES

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION



We spend many hours teaching our young people who are preparing for their first Holy Communion how they should receive Jesus. From time to time, I am sure many of us have observed adults at Mass who come forward to receive displaying some different gestures and behaviors. Let us spend a little time reviewing how we should receive Our Lord at Mass.

Procession: Row by row we come forward to receive with our hands folded in a prayerlike way. The Communion Procession, a profoundly religious action, tells us something about the way in which we should participate in this procession. We are the Body of Christ moving forward to receive the Christ who makes us one with himself and with one another.

Reception: This is a slight bow of reverence as the minister or priest holds the host before you saying: "The Body of Christ." Our response is: **Amen**. We then either extend our hands to receive or open our mouth and extend our tongue. Once Our Lord has been received, we move either left or right to return to our seats. We must consume the host immediately and never hold it walking back to our seats. Once walking back to our seats, our hands should remain folded as they were when coming forward. Casually walking with swinging arms is not the correct posture.

After Receiving: Once we return to our seats, it is appropriate to spend a little time in prayer either sitting or kneeling (if you can). Technically, we should remain kneeling until the distribution of Communion has been completed and the remaining hosts are placed in the Tabernacle.

What ifs!: If the host falls to the ground, please do not panic. The priest or other minister knows what to do. They will give you another and then take care of the one that has fallen.

Suppose you receive only a piece of the host. Is that still Jesus? Yes it is, and please do not be concerned if it should happen. Sometimes, if more people come forward and we are running low on consecrated hosts, you might receive a half of the host. Again, please do not be alarmed at this; what you receive is still Our Lord.

St. Augustine tells us as a member of the Body of Christ, our "Amen" must be true. In other words, our Amen is saying yes it is true this is Christ!

Have a safe, healthy and blessed week!~~~~~*Michele Hall*