

Notes from the Liturgist...

“Blessed Are Those Called to the Supper of the Lamb” ...the reception of the Holy Communion at Mass

Procession is one of the gestures in the Liturgy especially at Mass. It signifies that we are a pilgrim Church. We, the Body of Christ, move toward the communion of the Saints. When the hour comes, we will enter into the joy of the Lord in the eternal Kingdom that God has prepared for us. Every time we celebrate mass, we, the baptized come in procession: in particular, the procession in receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. In receiving communion, we rehearse entering the path towards the sanctuary (Heavenly Kingdom).

“Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” We hear this phrase during the Mass before we receive the Body and Blood of Christ. This is Christ’s invitation to us pronounced by the priest acting in Christ’s person. As our response, we process; we move forward to share in the Divine Meal. By our sharing in the meal at Mass, we become a sign of unity and love first to the Lord and then to the community. Also, we become a sign of communion with the countless ranks of all the saints, those who have gone before us, who at their time, were also like us-believers and pilgrim people.

The communion procession is not only an ordinary walk but it is a gesture of love and prayer. We process while praying before receiving Him. Thus, our procession should be done with dignity and respect.

According to the USCCB, The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* asks each country's Conference of Bishops to determine the posture to be used for the reception of Communion and the act of reverence to be made by each person as he or she receives Communion. In the United States, the body of Bishops determined that Communion should be received standing, and that a bow is the act of reverence made by those receiving. These norms may require some adjustment on the part of those who have been used to other practices, however the significance of unity in posture and gesture as a symbol of our unity as members of the one body of Christ should be the governing factor in our own actions.

Those who receive Communion may receive either in the hand or on the tongue, and the decision should be that of the individual receiving, not of the person distributing Communion. If Communion is received in the hand, the hands should first of all be clean. If one is right handed the left hand should rest upon the right. The host will then be laid in the palm of the left hand and then taken by the right hand to the mouth. If one is left-handed this is reversed. It is not appropriate to reach out with the fingers and take the host from the person distributing.

The person distributing Communion says audibly to each person approaching, "The Body of Christ." This formula should not be altered, as it is a proclamation which calls for a response of faith on the part of the one who receives. The communicant should audibly respond, "Amen," indicating by that response his or her belief that this small wafer of bread, the wine in this chalice are in reality the body and blood of Christ the Lord.

When one receives from the chalice, the same proclamation is made by the person distributing Communion and the Communicant again responds, "Amen." It should be noted

that it is never permissible for a person to dip the host he or she has received into the chalice. If, for some reason, the communicant is not able or willing to drink from the cup then that person should receive only under the form of bread.

-Ace Tupasi