



St. Patrick Catholic Church

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Dear Parishioner(s),

This week the Pew Research Center released the results of a survey that they conducted regarding the Catholic belief in the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which you may have seen posted on the Parish Facebook page. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation is the reality, that during the celebration of Mass, the consecrated bread and wine truly become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. So that when we receive Holy Communion we are truly receiving Jesus Himself, not bread and wine, as Jesus makes abundantly clear in Sacred Scripture such as John 6. But according to the Pew Center's survey, 7 in 10 Catholics responded that they personally believe that during Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion "are *symbols* of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ". Meaning that overall only 1/3 of those surveyed actually believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

It was while reflecting upon this survey that a Latin phrase came to mind, "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi" which loosely translates "As we Worship, So we Believe, So we Live." Meaning that the way we worship, the way we approach the Eucharist has an effect on what we believe, or put another way, one can often determine what we believe by simply observing how we celebrate, approach, and receive the Eucharist. And while I hope we are not counted among those disbelieving people in the survey, it is still perhaps an opportunity for us to personally reflect upon what our approach towards and reception of the Eucharist says about our belief. We can ask ourselves, "If someone not of the Catholic faith were to attend one of our Parish Masses, by observing our conduct, would they be convinced that we really believe that Jesus Christ is Truly Present in the Eucharist?"

In relation to this thought, it was in 2002, that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments remarked, "In fact, as His Eminence, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger [who would later become Pope Benedict XVI] has recently emphasized, the practice of kneeling for Holy Communion has in its favor a centuries-old tradition, and it is a particularly expressive sign of adoration, completely appropriate in light of the true, real and substantial presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the consecrated species." And, in *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, it states "...it is not licit [lawful] to deny Holy Communion to any of Christ's faithful solely on the grounds, for example that the person wishes to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing." Meaning that the communicant always has the choice to receive either kneeling or standing, just as they have the choice to receive on the tongue or in the hands.

And perhaps providentially, prior to and after this survey I have had members approach me about the desire to receive Holy Communion at Sunday Mass while kneeling. In addition, after making inquiries among various groups I have discovered a significant number of people who would also like this option. So, in light of our need to more fully reflect our belief in our approach towards the Eucharist, the lawful right of the communicant to choose to receive either standing or kneeling, and to bring continuity between our weekday, school, and Sunday Masses, we will begin the practice of receiving Holy Communion at the Communion rail at all Masses.

Now for a couple of clarifications regarding this change, so that there is hopefully little confusion. First, just as the communicant has the lawful right to choose to kneel, so too is the lawful right to choose to stand. In fact, I know there are some who simply cannot kneel, due to age or physical limitations and that is okay, even if it is simply out of a personal preference. Just like at weekday Masses, one can receive Holy Communion at the rail while standing. Second, you are still permitted to receive on the tongue or in the hands, that does not change and is still at your discretion.

A couple of practical notes. The "flow" at Communion will still take place in the same manner with everyone filing to the center aisle and then coming forward to spread out along the Communion rails. Also, prior to everyone coming forward for Communion I will still first bring Communion to those who are unable to approach due to age or physical limitations.

The start date for this change will be the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Wednesday, August 14th at 5:30pm. If you have specific concerns regarding this change, then please feel free to contact me. I pray that this change in practice will increase and renew our devotion to Jesus Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and influence the way we live our lives as His disciples. *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi.*

In Christ



Fr. Curtis Robertson
Pastor