Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 18, 2026

Brothers and sisters, today we conclude our homily series on the Mass to grow in a deeper understanding of the holy sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist. Over the past few weeks, we have discussed important aspects about the holy sacrifice of the Mass. First, why do we go? We go to worship God. The sacrifice offered at the Mass is Christ's true sacrifice offered on Calvary in the appearance of bread and wine - the same presentation that was done at the Last Supper, by the way. The Sacrament of the Eucharist is not merely a symbol; it is not merely symbolizing Christ. It truly contains him. And we are to actively participate in this worship through our prayers, in our petitions, in our offering ourselves united in Christ's mystical body being offered up to God. We can do this by placing ourselves on the patten and consecrating our good work at the offertory. We continue to offer ourselves at the Consecration after the priest tells us, "*This is my body, this my blood*." We pause.

Now this week we look at receiving Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. After we receive our Lord, we say, "Amen." Our Amen means, 'I believe, I belong, and I desire to be gently molded into the image of Christ." More to come on that a little bit later.

But first, I want to talk about today's Gospel. We hear Jesus asked "Whose inscription was on the coin? And they answered, 'Caesar.' To which Christ responded to the question, 'Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.'" This is more encompassing than just what is on the coin. Why? Recall that in the first book of Genesis, the first book of Bible, Chapter 1, Verse 27: *"God created man, male and female, he made them in his own*

image." Therefore, while the coin bears the image of Caesar who belongs to the government of Rome, every human being is the image of the Lord's Savior, thus we belong to God, the Father Almighty.

Now, worthy, and reverent reception of Holy Communion is not merely receiving Jesus. It is also renewing our union with God in whose image we were made and whose inscription is written on our hearts, and this is one of the easiest ways that it is expressed that we belong to God. Communion has been referred to this sacrament of the Eucharist. It is, more specifically, receiving the body and blood of Christ, but then in a greater sense, in a general sense, communion also means with union, 'come with' union. Union with Christ, union with his church and with his sacraments, union with all our Lord Jesus, through Holy Mother Church. That's what we do. And what you're expressing when you receive it in the fullness, in the blessed Sacrament.

Importantly, we have to speak of 'receiving' rather than taking of Holy Communion. But if you view this as a sacred gift from God this means that it is not something Catholics take for themselves, rather it is Christ who offers his body and blood to the faithful in his church. Receiving Christ, underscores the reverence and humility with which Catholics approach the blessed Sacrament, the same reverence and humility at Communion, or during the exposition when he is on the altar in the Monstrance or when Our Lord is resting in the Tabernacle. Brethren, we need to have humility for the same Lord.

Therefore, it is important for us to manifest appropriate behaviors which promotes the reverence for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and

Holy Communion to unite ourselves to what's being offered. Now, this includes dressing appropriately. There is a saying in our culture, perhaps in European culture, 'that clothing makes the man.' But a better understanding of this is that clothing 'presents' the man or woman. Who are we presenting ourselves to? We're presenting ourselves to our Lord. This is all I want to say on this matter. We can talk about it later if you would like.

We are also make a reasonable effort to be present and be on time. If you are late, please quietly come in. Also, we want to fast from food and drink, except water and medicine for one hour before the reception of Holy Communion.

Importantly, worthy reception of Holy Communion requires a clear conscience. Saint Paul teaches in his 1st letter to the Corinthians, *"Whoever, therefore, 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."* This is no small sin. Receiving the Eucharist is an act of sacrilege and self-condemnation when done in a state of serious sin. Moreover, for Paul, to sin against the body and blood, in this way is to be liable for the Lord's final death. This comes from scriptures, and the Church has always held that we have to have a clean conscience. We belong to Christ.

As a reminder, lesser sins are forgiven at Mass. However, the Sacrament of Confession is required for all grave sin before one can worthily receive Holy Communion. Very quickly, grave sins are offenses against the Ten Commandments and the precepts of the Church. The most common grave sin committed is the failure to go

to Church on Sunday or Holy Days of Obligation by one's own free will.

There's a need for a person to examine him or herself in depth, and anyone's conscious and in grave sin, regardless of how she or he feels cannot receive the holy body and blood of our Lord without Confession. I cannot tell you how many times in my short stint as a priest, I have heard, not in the confessional, but outside, "I am very sorry anyways, Father. I know what I did is wrong. I told God I'm sorry." The Holy Mother Church says to first, please do not receive the receive the Lord in an unworthy manner. It risks an even greater sin against the body and blood of Christ. And true, we are not going to hurt him, he is in heaven. The damage comes to us.

If we have a grave sin, we may also receive spiritual communion. It is very comforting. "Lord, come into my heart." You cross your arms. When the ministers, ordinary or extraordinary ministers will pull up the blessed Sacraments and say, "Receive Jesus, in your heart," and you say, "Amen."

Now, when you come up to receive Holy Communion, we bow our head before Sacrament as a gesture of reverence. You can also genuflect or kneel as a gesture of reverence. The norm, the traditional method for receiving Holy Communion is on the tongue. But the Holy See grants some countries to allow you to also receive on your hand. If you receive his precious blood, everyone receives it on their tongue. Be aware that not all countries have received permission to allow reception in the hand, so they will only allow it on the tongue which is right and true.

Our Lord may be received in our country either standing or kneeling on the tongue or in the hand. The important part is that in this position of our interior soul. And for those who receive on your tongue, please, please, please, keep your head still and present a level tongue. And avoid moving your head forward as if taking a bite. One person let me know that they close their eyes as a way of staying still and avoid trying to help – I offer that up.

Now, when we receive the Lord on the hand, first of all, it should be clean. And this is written in the USCCB guide - one clean hand or another. The fact that I have to say that from here is distressing. How many times I've seen people come up to receive our Lord God, with that are hands that are not even washed.

Now one clean hand on top of the other. If one is right-handed, it should rest the left hand, the non-dominant hand goes on top. You receive Our Lord. This is to prevent dropping Our Lord. We have to have one clean hand on top of the other. If you are left-handed, it is reversed. Now brothers and sisters this part is important to you. It is never appropriate, or permissible to reach out and try to grab the host from the priest's hand. And I've seen this many times. You are not to take the Lord. You are receiving the gift.

Now, some might be wondering, what about those who have only one hand, or need a walking system for stabilization, or carrying a small child? Our Holy Mother Church teaches that there are two ways to receive our Lord. One is one with one clean hand on top of the other, and the other is on the tongue. So, if you can't put one clean hand on the other, you still have an option to receive Our Lord worthily and reverently. I am not aware that the priest being able to

dispense the prescribed way of receiving Our Lord worthily and reverently. In fact, to do so would be an act of sacrilege. I am not going to do that. Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are to receive Communion as a gift and not take it for ourselves. We are members of his church.

Now, what do you say to someone who has only one working hand and unfortunately, they also do not have a tongue? Come see me prior to Mass and we will address that special condition.

When receiving Holy Communion - the body of Christ, the blood of Christ - followed by the recipients' response, “Amen”, this “Amen” personally, for me, “Yes, I believe this is truly the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ.” And this “Amen” also declares our unity with the Catholic Church and her teachings. Be aware that some of us don’t believe that. If you're not there with this belief, ask for his help but just receive him sacramentally.

The third effect of our “Amen” is that we are agreeing to be transformed to reflect Christ. Every time we say Amen, we are also answering questions for today's Gospel regarding ourselves. “Whose image is this?” And our answer is, “I belong to Christ.” The Holy Spirit and his laws are inscribed in my heart. Holy Communion is asking something of us all. It's not really Jesus on our own terms. We are united in Christ, in the Church, and one another, even when things are not always done exactly as we would prefer.

After the reception of Holy Communion, we spend time with Our Lord, thanking him for all that he has given us. The same Lord is truly present in the blessed Sacraments, whether he is exposed on the Monstrance on the altar, resting in the Tabernacle, or when we have

just received in Holy Communion, and adoration is the love of the gift of God. The best time for prayer is right after we receive Holy Communion. Our Lord sacramentally is present, and for around fifteen minutes we become a living tabernacle. And in some small way, I think we become like Mary with Christ is dwelling in us in a real, physical way.

Now, one day, Saint Phillip Neri was celebrating Mass when a man, after receiving Holy Communion left the church early. Good thing that only happened back then, right? So, Saint Phillip Neri sent two altar boys, with lit candles to follow the man around town. Imagine that. But after a while, the man returned to the church and asked Philip Neri, why did you send the altar boys? To which the Saint replied “We have to pay homage to Our Lord. Since you were not adoring him, I sent two acolytes to do so.” The man was stunned and resolved to be more aware of God’s presence.

I would never say this, but another priest said that Jesus left before the Last Supper was finished. Don't be a Judas. But I don't say that to you, another priest would. Don’t be a Judas.

Our Amen ending, “I believe, I belong, and I desire to be more in the image of Christ.” Through Holy Communion you are united to Jesus Christ, his physical body, the Church, our Holy Father, the Pope, the bishop, and our pastor and all the people who profess the same thing and worship the same Lord - one body, one Christ in unity.

And brothers and sisters, I am deeply grateful for the many parishioners throughout in our parish family who genuinely support one another. They sacrifice for the good of the Church and live in this communion in spirit of faith and charity. Thank you all - the blood of

the Church. Thank you for all who are doing this in union with Christ and his church.

I want to point out that Jesus gave up his life to sustain our life. And the greatest story in this world is communion with the very life of God. The Mass is the essential worship of the Catholic faith, and the Eucharist is essential to the worship of the Mass. We go to Mass, we worship God, with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all strength because we love Him above all things.

Brothers and sisters, the nobler the gift the nobler we must become to receive it well. The Holy sacrifice of the Mass calls for reverent and worthy reception of Holy Communion.

God Loves you and so do I.