

Homily on First Holy Communion

During the "children's sermon", the minister was talking about Communion and what it is all about. "The Bible talks of Holy Communion being a 'joyful feast'. What does that mean? Well, 'joyful' means happy, right? And a feast is a meal. So a 'joyful feast' is a happy meal. And what are the three things we need for a happy meal?" I turned to the guy next to me, and said, "Hamburger, fries, and a regular soft drink?" Dear boys and girls, I would like to congratulate you today. You are happy and all smiles today and your parents and relatives are proud of you. My question is why we all are happy today and why do we celebrate this day as the most important day of your life? For each of you this day should remain as the happiest and most memorable day of your life. Why this is the happiest day of your life? It is because you are receiving the biggest celebrity, Jesus our God and Saviour, as the guest of honour into your hearts and lives, for the first time, in Holy Communion. It means somebody very, very big is coming to stay with you, bless you, protect you and guide you. That is why we have all these celebrations. The next question is how does Jesus come to our hearts? Jesus comes to our hearts in the form of consecrated bread and wine. It is because Jesus said that he would be there in the consecrated bread and wine. Nothing is impossible for God. It is said about a bishop who asked one of his faithful not to receive Holy Communion because of his support for abortion rights. The bishop had also asked another not to receive Holy Communion--not because of his support for abortion rights, but because he would drink all the wine from the cup.

The next question is why Jesus comes to us as bread and wine, as food and drink? You know the reason. We cannot live many days without eating or drinking. It means food is essential for the life of our bodies. In the same way spiritual food is essential for the life of our souls. And the food for our souls is the body and blood of Jesus. That is why Jesus said that we would be spiritually dead if we don't eat his body and drink his blood. Hence you have to receive Jesus in the Holy Communion every time you participate in a Holy Mass and you have to receive Jesus after asking his pardon and forgiveness for your sins and with great reverence and respect. One day, a Pastor as he was riding his horse, he stopped to chat with a member of his parish. "That's a handsome looking animal you have there," said the latter admiringly. "But why is that your horse is so big and strong and you are so thin?" "Perhaps," replied Pastor, "it is because I feed the horse and the congregation feeds me."

A final question: What will you do after receiving Jesus in Holy Communion? First, you have to invite Jesus into your heart. Then you have to thank Jesus for coming to your heart. Then you have to tell him all your needs and the needs of your parents, relatives, teachers and friends. Finally you must remember that you are carrying Jesus to your homes and schools as Jesus' mother Mary carried Jesus to her cousin Elizabeth. It means that you have to behave well because you are carrying God Himself in your heart and soul. When you are alone tell Jesus living in your soul, about your parents, relatives, teachers, pastors, friends and their needs. Ask Jesus to make you a good boy or girl, an ideal student and a well behaving and obedient son or daughter.

I would like to thank every one who prepared these boys and girls to receive their first Holy Communion and remind the parents of these children that it is how you live and how you practice your faith in the family that is going to influence your children. Hence continue to train them in Christian faith and its practice, not by advice but by exemplary Christian lives. God bless you.