

Is There Anything Sacred?

The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of the Christian life because the Eucharist is *Jesus*. He is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine after the consecration at Mass. Sadly, we have found over 20 Hosts in the past five months in the hymnal racks, Gather books, or on the floor. Here are some pictures of Hosts in the hymnal racks.

Why? Only God knows the brokenness of the human heart. Maybe some people want to appear to receive Holy Communion but know they are not properly disposed, so they hide the Lord in the pew. Some may suffer from mental illness or scrupulosity. God forbid, anyone attending Mass here is trying to intentionally desecrate Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Whatever the reason, it is a terrible offense and needs to stop. I feel compelled to issue some strong reminders that come from the Church:

“Sacrilege consists in profaning or treating unworthily the sacraments and other liturgical actions, as well as persons, things, or places consecrated to God. *Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist*, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us (CCC 2120). “Tempting God in words or deeds, sacrilege, and simony are sins of irreligion forbidden by the first commandment” (CCC 2139).

It is mortally sinful to desecrate the Blessed Sacrament, and the Church imposes its strictest penalty for such an act as the Code of Canon Law states: “One who throws away the consecrated species or, for a sacrilegious purpose, takes them away or keeps them, incurs a *latae sententiae* (automatic) excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See” (Can. 1382.1). Of course, certain conditions must be met for the penalty to be applied: The individual must be at least sixteen years old. The individual must know that his action was a violation of Church law. The individual must have acted freely without threat of force or grave fear, have the use of reason, and not have acted mistakenly.

We are supposed to receive Jesus gratefully in the Eucharist and to prepare ourselves as needed through good confessions. Remember, you can always get a blessing instead, which is more normalized now for non-Catholics, children, or those not in the state of grace to receive Communion.

If you are not ready to receive Jesus and are hiding the Hosts, don't be afraid, but be honest and get the spiritual or emotional help you need. Please talk to someone about what's going on inside you. The clergy, pastoral staff, or other faithful you know can help you. Reality is more important than image. The Lord can handle the truth and so can we, but no good comes from this sacrilege.

Some next steps:

- We are training the ushers to no longer guide people out of the pews to receive Communion. People may not be disposed to receive due to having broken the Communion fast, needing confession, have already received Communion twice that day, or some other reason. The ushers will observe to make sure people consume the Eucharist.
- We will begin praying an Act of Reparation after all First Friday Masses, when Jesus asked St. Margaret Mary to tell people about His love through the Sacred Heart devotion. Jesus lamented to her: ***I receive from the greater part of humanity only ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of Love.*** Join us on First Fridays to show Jesus that we care and have faith.

St. Tarcissus died bringing Holy Communion to the early Christians in prison who would not deny Christ. St. Elizabeth also longed to receive Jesus in the Eucharist and He helped her overcome her willfulness and anger which she was powerless to do on her own. The Lord can rekindle our love and desire for Him if we let Him. We should be glad that there is still something sacred in the world, it means that God has not abandoned us....

O Sacrament most holy, o Sacrament divine! All praise and all thanksgiving Be every moment thine.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Mike

