

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday (A)

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017

'Practical faith in the Eucharist'

2K4: Elisha & Shunemite woman      Ps 88:

Rom 6: *Death has no power over Him any more*

Mt 10:37–42: *Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me ...*

We celebrated 2 weeks ago the wonderful feast of our Catholic faith in the Eucharist, *Corpus Christi*, and it was also the first of two, lovely, First-Holy-Communion Sundays. This weekend we continue the theme of devotion to the Holy Eucharist with our 40 Hours of Adoration over 3 days; a Thanksgiving Mass for 1<sup>st</sup> Communicants; the Blessed Sacrament Procession. Each year, I find these 3 days of prolonged prayer before the Blessed Sacrament a most peaceful time, and am always glad to see that many parishioners come out of their way to spend extra time here in prayer, adoring Jesus in His most Sacred Body which He has given for us and to us. This 40 Hours' Adoration give me a chance to reiterate some practical advice regarding our faith in the Eucharist, ways in which we express with our attitude, posture and behaviour the reverence that is due to the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. Many of these things you probably know, but it's always worth being reminded, so as to make sure that as a parish we are expressing properly our belief, including to those who come as non-Catholics and visitors to our church and the celebration of Mass.

1. The first thing is always to remember that **Jesus is present** here in the church. The Holy Eucharist is permanently reserved in the Tabernacle of our church — as in every single Catholic church across the world. We should make a practice of coming in for a visit to Jesus every time we are able to, when passing the church. Luckily, we're able to keep our church open all day every day: parishioners and visitors can come in to be truly in the presence of Jesus the Lord. This belief determines how we behave when we enter the church, and why we keep our chatting inside the body of the church to a minimum, for we are in the presence of the living God — who better to talk to, in prayer, than Jesus Himself? Whenever we enter the church we should be conscious of the Lord's being here, and turn to Him first.
2. An important expression of this belief and attitude is the action of **genuflecting**. When we come in to church, usually as we enter our pew, it is right to genuflect in a dignified, reverent way to Jesus in the Tabernacle. It is our way of acknowledging that the King of Kings is here: we are bowing low before His majesty, we are going down on our knees before the One who made us. So, when we enter and leave church, and whenever we cross in front of the altar

here, let's make sure that we always genuflect carefully, and teach our children and grandchildren to do the same.

3. A few things about how we receive Holy Communion itself:
  - a. We should keep the **1hr's fast** prior to Holy Communion — this means not eating or drinking (water excepted) for at least 60mins prior to receiving Holy Communion. On a Sunday this isn't normally very difficult, as long as you aren't eating or chewing gum as you walk in to church. By abstaining from food and drink in that hour before Holy Communion, we are stating with our bodies that we are preparing for a very special guest.
  - b. We should be **recollected and reverent** as we come up to receive Holy Communion, at prayer and putting aside any distractions. As we come up the aisle to receive Our Blessed Lord, our whole mind should be on Jesus Himself who died and rose again, and who feeds us with Himself.
  - c. When we receive Holy Communion, we can do so either **on the tongue or in the hand**; but if we are to receive Holy Communion in the hand then both hands have to be held out in a careful fashion so that on one hand can be placed the Sacred Host, and with the other the Host can be placed in the mouth. For those who for some reason have one hand otherwise occupied (e.g. walking stick, assisting

a child) then they should receive on the tongue in the traditional manner — I note that many of you have taken to doing this anyway, naturally, and this is good to see.

4. We should remember also that **coming to Mass each Sunday** is expected of each and every Catholic once they have reached the age of reason, and that missing Sunday Mass for anything other than a grave reason is a sin. It means that if we do habitually miss Sunday Mass then we should receive God's pardon in sacramental Confession prior to coming back to Holy Communion.
5. Finally, it's important that time after receiving Holy Communion is a very sacred: one of the most special moments in the week, when we have just partaken of the Body & Blood of the Lord. We should make good use of the time between Holy Communion and the end of Mass, to **make a prayerful Thanksgiving**, and to bring to the Lord the many needs and prayers of our hearts. Let's not waste those holy minutes after Communion with a wandering mind but set a good example to each other, and to our children, with a devout heart, set on the Lord whose profound love for us has led Him to give us His very self in the Blessed Sacrament of the Mass. *O Sacrament most holy, etc. ...*