

Father's Notes

August 25, 2024

Starting Friday, Sept. 6th, our daily Mass at St. Philomena will shift to 8:30am (currently 7:30am). This will allow our parish school students to attend. I remind you that we also have a 9:00am Mass option on Friday at St. Thomas.

Among the differences at our two parishes is that at St. Philomena the Precious Blood is not distributed to the faithful as part of the Rite of Communion. As I understand it, it was distributed regularly at Masses prior to the pandemic, but never was reinstated. In 2022, Archbishop Etienne asked us to begin bringing it back, and I believe most parishes have, including St. Thomas.

At my previous parish, our two challenges were, first, trying to remember how we did it: calculating the amount of wine to consecrate; how to set the altar with the additional vessels; lining up the ministers and distributing the cups, etc. The other challenge was getting volunteers to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. We had a difficult time to get the number of volunteers we had hoped for, but we managed to get enough so that we could at least have one cup of the Precious Blood at every Mass for those who wished to receive. That got us started and we built from there.

I've been told by at least a couple people at St. Philomena that "the people here aren't missing it." If that's true, on one hand, at least it's one less unmet need or desire—Ha! On the other hand, I find myself asking, Why don't the faithful of St. Philomena desire it?

The only two answers I can come up with are apathy and irrational fear. So, regarding irrational fears, we all have them. It's only a matter of what each person's irrational fears are and to what extent they are governed by them. For some people, there may be a fear of infection from receiving the Precious Blood. By the way, I acknowledge that some people are of particularly frail health and the risk is great. But for the rest of us, that nearly all of our parishes are distributing it without the spread of infection, should alleviate that fear. For sure, you should not receive from the cup if you have indications of an illness, but otherwise, it's shown to be safe.

If the reason is apathy, then there's an underlying spiritual concern. Please help me understand. While the fullness of grace exists within either species, Jesus' Body or Blood, it is fitting, like the disciples at the Last Supper, to receive both. "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" (John 6:53). We'll soon make the appeal for ministers.

Yours in Christ,
Father Todd Strange