

The Gravest of Sacrileges

Today, contrary to all tradition, we often see the Sacred Host treated in a common and careless manner. Therefore, Catholics need to be made aware again of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas's, teaching on this subject:

...the sin of sacrilege consists in the irreverent treatment of a sacred thing. Now reverence is due to a sacred thing by reason of its holiness: and consequently the species of sacrilege must needs be distinguished according to the different aspects of sanctity in the sacred things which are treated irreverently: for the greater the holiness ascribed to the sacred thing that is sinned against, the more grievous the sacrilege. ... Among these the highest place belongs to the sacraments whereby man is sanctified: chief of which is the sacrament of the Eucharist, for it contains Christ Himself. Wherefore the sacrilege that is committed against this sacrament is the gravest of all (Summa I-II, 101, 3).

For this reason, St. Thomas also teaches that the Church's immemorial tradition requires:

...out of reverence towards this Sacrament, nothing touches it but what is consecrated, hence the corporal and the chalice are consecrated, and likewise the priest's hands, for touching this Sacrament. Hence it is not lawful for anyone to touch it, except from necessity, for instance if it were to fall upon the ground, or else in some other case of urgency (Summa III, 82, 3).

This gives us reason for pause. Should any layperson, then, receive Communion in the hand? The practice was introduced through disobedient bishops. In response, the Vatican insisted that the practice of receiving Communion on the tongue, "based on a most ancient and venerable tradition," be maintained. For, a change in this practice "carries certain dangers with it...: the danger of loss of reverence for the august Sacrament of the altar, of profanation, of adulterating the true doctrine" (Letter of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship *Memoriale Domini*, 1969).

The highly respected American Jesuit, Fr. John Hardon (RIP) once proclaimed: "*Behind Communion-in-the-hand ... is a weakening, a conscious, deliberate*

weakening of faith in the Real Presence." Thus he said: "*Whatever you can do to stop Communion-in-the-hand will be blessed by God*" (1997 Call to Holiness Conference). And, when Mother Teresa was asked what she considered was the worst problem in the world, she quickly replied: "*Wherever I go in the whole world, the thing that makes me the saddest is watching people receive Communion in the hand*" (Catholic Family News article, March 2003).

Make Eucharistic Reparation

The offenses against the Eucharistic Lord have become commonplace today: talking in church, lack of genuflections, mishandling of the Sacred Species, *slovenly and immodest dress*, etc.* For the love of Our Eucharistic Lord, let us have the courage to always act appropriately, however we may stand out. It is certainly to repair for these foreseen offenses that over a century ago the *Fatima* children were taught the following three prayers for us to use:*

❖ *My God, I believe, I adore, I trust and I love Thee. I ask pardon for all those who do not believe, do not adore, do not trust, do not love Thee.*

❖ *Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly, and I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the same Son Jesus Christ, present in the Tabernacles of the world, in reparation for all the sacrileges, outrages and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. By the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.*

❖ *Most Holy Trinity, I adore Thee; my God, my God, I love Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament.*

* For more on proper dress, download sicutincaelo.org's free booklet, "*Those Who Serve God Should Not Follow the Fashions.*" Learn more about the Our Lady of Fatima and Her crucial message to the world at Fatima.org.

**PLEASE LEAVE COPIES IN
CHURCHES WHEREVER POSSIBLE!**

Free download of the original PDF
(and other good Catholic booklets & leaflets) at:

sicutincaelo.org

WHAT IS YOUR CONDUCT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD?

By Robert T. Hart

Strong Words from Jacinta Marto of Fatima

What is your attitude, dear soul, as you enter the church? Today we often observe people sitting around chatting while they wait for Mass, just as though they were in a coffee shop waiting for their order. Is this correct? Let us listen to what that holy child of Fatima, Jacinta Marto, who saw Our Lady, has to say about the matter. The following episode — related by a religious superior — happened shortly before her death while she was staying in a Catholic orphanage run by religious sisters:

*Jacinta spent every possible moment in the chapel kneeling, or when she could no longer kneel, she sat in the choir, her eyes riveted on the tabernacle. But in her ardent love for Jesus, she could not overlook the little discourtesies of visitors. "She saw some people who did not show proper reverence in the chapel," the Superior mentioned, "and she said to me, 'My dear Mother, don't allow that. They must act before the Blessed Sacrament as it is proper. Everyone must be quiet in church; they must not speak. **If these poor people knew what is waiting for them!**' I went downstairs to speak to the people who were misbehaving in the chapel, but I did not always have success. When I returned she said, 'What happened?' I told her they would not listen. 'Patience,' she replied, her face showing her sorrow over the irreverences of the people, 'Our Lady is pleased with you. Will you tell the Cardinal? Yes? Our Lady does not want us to talk in church'" (Sr. Lucy and Fr. John Marchi, IMC, Mother of Christ Crusade, Ch. 12. Billings, MT [Out of Print] — Emphasis added).*

Those are very strong words for a ten-year-old girl, yet they are to be expected since Our Lady Herself had taught her the grave necessity of proper

reverence for Our Eucharistic Lord. And, we find her words confirmed by a religious in Purgatory, who in the late 1800's, manifested herself to one of her sisters still in the convent:

...those faults which attack Jesus directly, Jesus present in the Tabernacle, are punished with terrible severity in Purgatory (AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT ON PURGATORY, p. 37. The Reparation Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Inc., 1998).

The Instruction of the Stigmatist Padre Pio

We can learn still more on proper and fitting conduct in the church from that saintly Capuchin friar who bore the stigmata of Our Lord for 50 years, Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. In a letter dated July 25, 1915 to his spiritual daughter Anita Rodote, he had this to say on the subject:

In the house of God, in the church, which the Divine Master likes to call "house of prayer," I exhort you in the Lord to practice the following:

Enter the Church in silence and with great respect, considering and holding yourself as unworthy to come before the majesty of the Lord. Among the other devout considerations, think that our soul is the temple of God, and that as such we have to preserve it pure and clean in front of God and His angels.

Take then the holy water and make well and slowly the sign of our redemption: the sign of the Cross.

As soon as you see God in the Blessed Sacrament (there is an altar where the Eucharist is preserved: it is marked by a burning lamp), devoutly genuflect, bending your knee to the ground; first greet Him, your Lord — living and real in the tabernacle — then the Blessed Mother and the saints.

After you find your place, kneel down and render to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament the offer of your prayer and your adoration. Disclose to Him all the needs of yourself and others, talk to Him with filial abandonment, freely unburden your heart and give Him complete sovereignty to operate in you as He pleases.

When attending Holy Mass and the sacred liturgies, use much propriety in standing up, in

kneeling, and in sitting down, and make any religious action with the greatest devotion. Be modest in your gazes; do not turn your head here and there to see who comes in and who goes out; do not laugh, in reverence to the holy place and also in regard to your neighbors; refrain from exchanging any word with anyone, unless demanded by charity or by a true necessity.

If you pray with others, pronounce distinctly the words of the prayer, make the pauses proper, do not use a high tone of voice, never rush, and follow the pace of the priest who leads and of the others.

In summary, behave in such a way that all the bystanders may be edified and may be led by you to glorify and love the heavenly Father.

As you go out of the church keep an absorbed and calm behavior: first take leave from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, ask Him forgiveness for the faults committed in His divine presence, and never depart from Him before asking and obtaining from Him the fatherly blessing.

After exiting the church behave as any follower of the Nazarene should (THE LAST MASS OF PADRE PIO, pp. 190-1, by Alessandro Gnocchi & Mario Palmaro. Angelus Press 2019).

Words from "The Apostle of the Eucharist"

St. Peter Julian Eymard, the 19th century "Apostle of the Eucharist," gives this instruction:

Watch a saint enter a church. He goes without concerning himself with those who are already there. He concentrates on Our Lord and forgets everything else. In the presence of the Pope we hardly give a thought to cardinals or bishops. And in heaven the saints do not idle away their time honoring one another; to God alone they give all honor and glory. Let us imitate them; Our Lord is the only one in church.

Remain quiet for a moment after you have come into church; silence is the greatest mark of respect, and the first disposition for prayer is respect. Most of our dryness and lack of devotion in prayer is due to our lack of respect for our Lord on entering the church; to our disrespectful posture (St. Peter Julian Eymard, THE REAL PRESENCE, pp. 162-3. Cleveland, OH: Emanuel Publications).

The Importance of Bodily Posture

Today, many think bodily posture is unimportant and thus they assume the most casual and relaxed posture in prayer. St. Peter Julian Eymard teaches otherwise:

You owe Our Lord exterior respect, which is the prayer of the body. Nothing helps so much the prayer of the soul.... He [Jesus Christ] gave us the example of exterior worship by praying on his knees; tradition tells us He prayed with arms outstretched in the form of a cross and lifted up to heaven. The Apostles have handed down to us this manner of praying; the priest uses it during the Holy Sacrifice....

Our piety is agonizing because we lack this external respect. I know that we should not tremble with fear before God, nor be afraid to come into his presence; but, on the other hand, neither should we seem to be despising him.

This same Saint goes on to say:

An austere posture helps us to pray better; but we refuse this help in order to satisfy our sensuality. We imagine we are tired; how often our imagination deceives us! ... And even supposing that we are really tired, why are we so afraid of suffering, which gives wings to prayer? We should at least have even then, a becoming and grave posture. Let the lay people sit down if they are tired, but in a becoming manner; they should not slouch in their seats. Let them not take any position that would tend to weaken the soul's energy and render it unfit for prayer. We religious, however, should remain on our knees; that is the correct position for an adorer (THE REAL PRESENCE, pp. 164-5).

Make Frequent Visits

Take great care to visit Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament often, and to do so with the greatest respect and love. His Eucharistic Heart is burning with desire to pour out graces lavishly on those who do. St. Alphonsus Liguori promises: "You may be sure that of all the moments of your life, the time you spend before the Divine Sacrament will be that which will give you more strength during life and more consolation at the hour of your death and during eternity" (JESUS OUR EUCHARISTIC LOVE, p. 64).