

HOMILY First Holy Communion 190615 OMHRSTM

Sometimes, when people go on holiday, they buy little gifts, presents, to give their friends when they get back home. We call these gifts “souvenirs”, because they remind of a happy time or a person we like. Similarly, when people go away, move house or change job, they sometimes give those they are leaving a little present by which they can be remembered, even long after they’ve gone.

Jesus wanted to give his disciples, his friends, a very special gift when he knew he was soon going to be leaving them, at least physically. At the same time as he told them he was going, he also told his friends he would be with them always. How could this be? How could Jesus both go and stay?

Well, this is the beauty of the gift Jesus gave them and gives us. Gives us today. As you know, they were at a supper, seated around together. He took some bread, and he said: “This is my body”. And the bread became his body. How can this be? Well Jesus can do this because he is God. What is more, because he said we can, and God makes it happen, the priest can do this too, at Mass. This is because God makes this happen, by sending his Holy Spirit, as Jesus said he would.

Soon you will receive this gift of Jesus himself, for the first time. But this is a gift we can receive many times, in fact every time we come to Mass. How wonderful if the generosity of God that he wants us to share his life. This is what it means to be a Christian, to share God’s life and love. To live God’s life as best we can, by living our lives to the fullest, to the best. For the rest of our lives.

Now, I just want to say a word to the parents and guests here. Perhaps seeing these children reminds you of the day you made your First Holy Communion, so many years ago. Yes, I can see a few of you, like me, have some grey hairs, so it was **many** years ago! But now, in this Mass, you are not spectators. You too receive Jesus, so use those memories of your First Holy Communion. Remember your innocence, your enthusiasm, your sense of wonder, and that way open your heart to Jesus again.

Yes, look at the children in their lovely outfits, remember the clothes you wore. Let that memory move you to pray for a renewal of your faith, and as you pray for them, pray for yourselves. Pray that, whether we are old or young, we may treasure this gift we receive in Holy Communion. Jesus comes to us, not just to remind us of what he did so many years ago, but to help us live and love like he does, **today!**

Let this be our prayer, that we may go from here at the end of Mass, to be truly disciples of Jesus, his friends. To live and love like Jesus!

At presentation of FHC certificates 190618 OMHRSTM

At this time of year many schools have a Prize Giving ceremony. You might be thinking that is why we are gathered here this afternoon, for something like that a bit like that, Prize Giving.

No, you’ve already received your prize. The prize is Holy Communion, and it a wonderful prize. You can receive Jesus again and again, each time you come to Mass. Holy Communion is so very special, Jesus really gives us himself. And he does this not just because we try to be good, but because he loves us and he wants to help us be good. In fact he makes it possible for us to be good, better than we ever thought we could be.

Holy Communion is **the** prize. This certificate is just a piece of paper. Keep it to remind you of a very special day, the day you made your First Holy Communion. But more importantly, remember what happened that day, and keep on coming to Mass to receive the prize we can all receive, Jesus himself in Holy Communion.

Canon Paschal Ryan, Our Most Holy Redeemer and St Thomas More Catholic Church

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