



Holy Eucharist
AND REVERENCE



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THE HOLY EUCHARIST

A CONVERSATION WITH DAN BURKE
AND FATHER ROBERT ALTIER

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Dan: Thank you for joining us for this discussion on holy Eucharist and reverence. Father Robert Altier and I are grateful to have you. We decided to come together because we've been working on a private, offline project for a while on reverence and the Eucharist. We hosted a webinar recently, following the motu proprio which limited the Latin Mass.

There are folks listening, some of whom attend Latin Mass and some who attend the ordinary form, who are all trying to figure out what's going on. There's anxiety among faithful Catholics of whatever Mass they attend, those who truly love the Lord and believe and are trying to do their best to honor Him and worship Him in a reverent manner.. So, we're going to have a conversation about it. Father Altier celebrates the Mass in both forms. Father, just out of curiosity, are you still allowed to do that in your diocese?

Father Robert Altier: So far, yes. All the archbishop has required is that we would, in line with the motu proprio, ask permission from him to continue to offer that Mass. He has set up a task force to look at how we're going to implement the motu proprio in the archdiocese. As of yet, there hasn't been anything definitive from that task force. Right now, we are encouraged to continue to do what we've been doing. Just get permission to say the Mass.

Dan: It is the same in my diocese. Of course, it seems to be the predominant stance of most of the bishops in the United States. A lot of the faithful are relieved by their local response, but then, things are getting kicked up again, because of COVID, governmental issues, and requirements of vaccines.

What we want to do is to frame this in a way that'll be helpful. Our goal is to talk about things that God has given us control over, which is important because there are a lot of things that He has

not given us control over. With those things He's not given us direct control or influence over, we can pray about and make reparation for: liturgical abuse, the denial of the sacraments to the faithful, for these difficulties with people getting sick--it is no small thing.

What I'm not a fan of is getting people hand-wringing and not leading them to the solution that Jesus gave to us, that is, a place of holiness within through which we stand as lights in the darkness, rather than cowering, shaking, angry, anxious people. Can you talk a bit about the importance of disposition of the soul and how we face suffering in a time like this?

Father Robert Altier: It is necessary that we maintain our peace and that peace is only going to come from union with our Blessed Lord. He is our peace and He is the Eucharist. He is what the Mass is all about. So, if we are upset about what's going on with the holy Eucharist and with the Mass, it's more offensive to Him than it is to us. We need to stay united with Him and trust Him and know that He is going to bring about everything that we need.

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There's going to be persecution. There is going to be suffering. There is going to be trouble. We know that. We know that the day is going to come because Scripture tells us when the daily sacrifice will be abolished.

If that's the case, we need to prepare ourselves for that through prayer. We need to maintain that positive disposition to be in union with our Lord. Remember, right now, where the Church is headed is toward the crucifixion. Jesus was really, truly crucified. His apostles didn't like it. They didn't understand it. Now the

Church is going to be crucified and we might not like it very well, and we might not understand it very well.

However, we can look back and understand, as Jesus told His disciples on the way to Emmaus, that it was necessary that these things had to happen for the Messiah to enter into His glory. It is also necessary for the Church. So, this has to happen and we simply need to keep our focus on Jesus.

This, of course, is also going to lead to the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart. This is Our Lady's time, this is going to be her Triumph. Stay with her. She will keep you close to her Son, but we know who is going to win. Stay at peace, keep the focus on Jesus and Mary, and the victory will be ours.

Dan: I can just hear some of our listeners out there, some who have more militant hearts, or maybe who even think more from a political standpoint rather than seeing it as a divine battle underway, saying, "Well, are you saying, do nothing, Father? Are you serious? How can I do nothing? Can't I withhold my tithe?" Please, speak to that issue.

Father Robert Altier: Well, first of all, I certainly am not saying to do nothing. As you said, fasting and praying is doing something quite profound. Canon law says that the people of God have a right to approach their pastors, and the primary pastor in your diocese is your bishop. You have a right to approach your bishop. You can make your voice heard, you can write letters. If you do, remain respectful and keep it brief. If you write a 20-page letter, he's probably not going to read it!

Traditionally, the way of dealing with bishops is to keep it to less than one page, and maintain respect, but make your position clear. If there is an opportunity to be able to gather with some

other people, by all means, do so. We have to have a Christian response, and that Christian response is one of prayer, it is one of penance, it is one of uniting ourselves with the Lord.

Now, as far as withholding money and so on, one thing you'd have to ask yourself is, "Who is doing this?" If it's your pastor who wants to be able to offer the Mass for you, but is not being allowed to, then to withhold money from the parish isn't going to be helping anybody. If you want to make the point, you can tell the bishop, "I'm not going to support this or that," and that's fine. I doubt that it's your local priest who is saying, "Well, then I'm just not going to say the Mass for you anymore." If he's not allowed to, he's not allowed to.

Withholding money from your parish is only going to impoverish the parish, if you have a priest who really wants to take care of you, who wants to provide the sacraments, but is now being limited by a higher authority than himself as far as what he's able to do.

Dan: That's good, holy advice. I can't help but go back to this idea of prayer and fasting. One of the things we do in our community is that every time we go to Mass, we ask every member of our community who can, to kneel on the floor in reparation for sins against the Blessed Sacrament or any sins against the Lord. What do you think about that kind of activity?

Father Robert Altier: Something like that is perfect. It doesn't draw attention and it's relatively simple. It's not going to hurt anybody. It's a little bit of a penance. It's not going to cause damage, it's not going to hurt you, and it's not going to call attention.

Keep it hidden, keep it quiet. You don't have to do some huge thing, "Well, I'll not eat for the next month," for example. You might fast from a particular food that you like, or from desserts or whatever it might be. There may be a day or two in the week that you want to do some more serious fasting, maybe eat only one meal a day or something along those lines, that's fine. But again, it's not going to draw attention to yourself, nor is it going to hurt you.

They don't have to be huge, great penances. Of course, the best penances are the ones that God gives us. If you have certain ailments, certain struggles and difficulties, use that, offer that, and don't waste it. Those are the things God has given to you to be able to help you to grow in holiness and unite that with our Lord. Remember that when you go to Mass and the priest asks you to pray "that my sacrifice and yours will be acceptable to God," your sacrifice, as the lay people coming to Mass, is to put your sufferings and your sacrifices on the paten with the bread, into the chalice with the wine, and put it on the altar to united with the sacrifice of Jesus that's being offered to the Heavenly Father.

That way your sufferings, united with His sacrifice, become one. And it becomes His suffering in that way, because you are a member of the Mystical Body, offering that sacrifice to the Father. It truly is powerful. This is not just a minor little thing that we're talking about when you're united with Jesus in the Sacrifice of the Mass. It has a lot of power.

Dan: Amen. Another idea too is, as you said, offer back the penances that God gives you. One of the opportunities He gives us that most Catholics ignore, at least according to surveys, is fasting according to the norms of the Church, such as abstaining from meat on Fridays.

The central questions that I want to draw people to in this conversation are: What is going on in the Eucharist? What is really happening at the Mass? How do we participate in that? How do we draw near to Christ in this time, so that we can be a light to the world that we can be the agents of God's grace and to help more people come to know Him so that when we meet our final judgment we hear, "Well done," rather than, "I don't know you."

Let's switch gears now and jump into the Eucharist. Survey after survey reveals that most people don't understand what's going on during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If you don't know what's going on at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, you have no idea how to be reverent or what reverence is. So, what is the Eucharist? Is it just a thing we do on Sundays to help us remember Jesus? What's really going on there?

Father Robert Altier: Well, what goes on at Mass is literally the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary. It is being offered mystically and not physically, in other words, on Calvary, He was placed up on the Cross and He was physically crucified and sacrificed, but in the Eucharist, it is a mystical sacrifice. It is the same sacrifice, but being offered in a different way. We must be clear: He's not being offered again at Mass, He is being offered still. There is only one sacrifice, there is only one priest, even though there are thousands and thousands of priests around the world, there is only one priesthood and that's the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is the priest. He is the victim. The victim means the one who is giving his life so that others can live. So, He is both the priest and the victim. He is the one also to whom the sacrifice is offered, because He is God.

What is happening at Mass is that you are literally, mystically, of course, at Calvary for the sacrifice of Jesus. It is the single

greatest event in the universe. And that's the part that we have to understand. Because we offer Mass every day, or for many people, who will be at Mass once a week, we may lose the awe, the respect, and the reverence that we should have, because we think, "Oh, it's the same thing we did last week." Well, do you know why it's the same all the time? The Church is very clear about this: It's the same so that people can pray.

It's not some social media thing. It's not entertainment. You are there to pray. You are there with Our Lady, with St. John, with St. Mary Magdalene, at the foot of the Cross. And you are there to worship God. When people say, "I don't get anything out of it," I always say, "But you receive Jesus, who is all in all." He is God, you receive literally everything in the universe when you receive holy Communion. So, you receive it all, but remember, it's not about what we get, it's about what we give. We're there to worship God. We're there to love God. Our Lord is there loving us. We don't have to worry about Him. He's there to love us. We're there to love Him.

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So, that's what we have to look at as our own disposition at Mass. Are we truly praying? Are we truly loving? Are we uniting ourselves with Him in the sacrifice of the Mass? Because that is what is truly happening at every single Mass.

Dan: Amen. There has been recent speculation around changes in the Mass that some fear would threaten its validity. Let's address that, first of all by making the distinction between transubstantiation, a Catholic doctrine, and consubstantiation, a Lutheran doctrine. If we see changes toward consubstantiation, where do we get to where the Mass is not valid?

Father Robert Altier: First of all, understand, when we're talking about the Eucharist, it is the substance of Jesus. The substance is the spiritual substructure that makes something what it is. When we talk about the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord, that means the whole person of Jesus is truly present in the holy Eucharist. It is the substantial presence of our Lord, rather than the accidental presence. By accidental presence we mean the physical presence, when we look at ourselves: what our eyes look like, what our skin looks like, what our voice sounds like, the physical attributes that we have and so on.

In other words, if the Eucharist were to be, as was in Lanciano and Santarem, changed from bread into a piece of human flesh, then it is no longer the sacramental presence of Jesus, it becomes the physical presence of Jesus. It's not just the substantial presence, but also the accidental presence.

All that is a little confusing, perhaps, but it's to be able to say that when we talk about transubstantiation, that literally what that means is across the substance. So the substance is changing. The substance of bread and wine, the spiritual underlying substructure that makes bread what it is and what makes wine what it is, that is what changes. It changes into the very substance of the person of Jesus.

You receive the entire person of Jesus. You don't receive a little piece of Jesus. You receive the entire person. That's what I mean by the body, blood, soul and divinity. That which makes the bread, bread completely changes into what makes Jesus, Jesus. The outside or the external things, the accidental things, do not change. If they did, and it would become a piece of flesh, we would actually be committing cannibalism, which is a violation of God's law. Our Lord would not do that to us; He gave us Himself

in a way that we would be able to receive Him. He's the one who said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." He had to give us a way to be able to do this while not violating our dignity and not violating the law of God, so that's what He's done now.

Consubstantiation has a different meaning. "Con" means "with." What Martin Luther said is that the substance of the bread remains, and the substance of Jesus comes to be with the bread. So it's both bread and Jesus at the same time.

At Communion time we would say that the Lord is there until such a time that it is no longer recognizable as bread or wine in the accidents of those sacraments, after the Lord has been taken into your body for about 20, 30 minutes and the Eucharist has completely dissolved and would no longer be recognizable. The same would be true if the precious blood were to spill, and so, you would have to wait for everything to dry when it is no longer recognizable as the accidents of wine. Otherwise, as long as it still appears as bread and wine, for instance, when the hosts are put in the tabernacle, that is Jesus.

Martin Luther taught, no, He only remains present during the Eucharist. Now, another difference between the way that Martin Luther taught and what the Catholic Church teaches is that the Catholic Church says that only a priest who stands in the person of Jesus Christ through his ordination has the ability to be able to consecrate, to bring about that trans-substantiation. Martin Luther, misunderstanding what the Church teaches regarding the priesthood of all the faithful, (remember that every person who's baptized is baptized into Jesus and Jesus is priest, prophet, and king) said, "Well, therefore, if everyone is a priest, everyone has the ability to consecrate and so Jesus is present only if you have enough faith to make him present. It still remains a piece of bread,

but now Jesus is there too if you have enough faith to make him there."

He taught that it's not the Lutheran minister who causes Jesus to be present, but it is your individual faith that causes Jesus to be present. The Catholic Church looks at things objectively: Was there bread and wine? Do you have a priest and did he say the right words: "This is my body, This is the chalice of my blood?" If he said that with the right intention to consecrate, then it is Jesus, and you don't wonder whether it's Jesus or not. Whereas, if it's your own faith that's causing Jesus to be there or not then you have to wonder, "Gee, did I have enough faith to be able to make it happen?" It's not about your individual faith, thankfully. There is an objective element to all of the sacraments for the good of the faithful.

Dan: There were two reasons why I wanted you to bring that distinction to the fore. One is to help us understand what's really happening, because if we understand what's really happening, we would never approach the Eucharist with a lack of reverence. We would never approach in a cavalier manner. We would always be concerned about how we are approaching and receiving the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. That's one reason. The other reason is to help people understand just a little bit more of what's happening in another area of crisis in the Church.

For instance, in the German Church, they're wanting to give Communion to Protestants who do not believe and who deny, in essence, the 2,000 year old teaching of the Church regarding what's really happening at Mass. So if you have a Protestant view of the sacrament, which is not a real sacrament, it is not a big deal to give people of other faiths holy Communion.

Father Robert Altier: Right, because essentially it's just a symbol. According to Luther, Jesus is only there if you have enough faith to make Him there anyway. If you are of another Protestant faith that's further away from Luther, whether that's Presbyterians or Baptists, or Methodists, or whatever it may be, they don't even believe that it's Jesus. They would simply say, "It's symbolic." Well, if it's just a symbol of Jesus, then who cares who comes forward to receive your symbol? It's just a piece of bread. It is nothing more than that. It's just symbolic because Jesus said, "Do this in memory of me."

Essentially, they'll say, "Well, we're going to eat some crackers and drink some grape juice and we'll tell the story and we'll remember Jesus." Well, that's not what remembrance means in the Hebrew understanding of remembrance. It means "make it real" and so, that's what He's telling us to do, not just "tell the story and don't forget me after I'm gone." Rather, He promised He would remain with us. He is there, truly present in the Eucharist, remaining with us. So it's not about telling the story and not forgetting, but rather, it's living it. It is making this real still, not again, but still.

Dan: One of the reasons I finally converted to Catholicism after going through various theological traditions was 1 Corinthians 11:27, which says, basically, that if you eat and drink His flesh and unworthily, you eat and drink damnation. I think this refers back to John 6, where Jesus said, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." Meaning, that partaking of the Eucharist is necessary for our salvation. So my thought was, if it's just a symbol, then that verse doesn't belong in the Bible.

Father Robert Altier: I agree. As I always say, can you eat a sandwich unworthily? I mean, you can eat a sandwich in a way

that's maybe undignified for you, but the bread isn't worthy of being eaten in a certain way.

If St. Paul is saying, "If you eat and drink unworthily," well, what would that mean? Other than the fact that, like I said, this can't just be a symbol. There has to be something far greater that is there, and in this case, someone who is far greater--infinitely so. Therefore, again, the way that we want to dispose ourselves in coming forward in receiving our Lord is one of, first of all, recognizing His presence. Secondly, having our hearts open to receive His gift and then giving ourselves to Him as a gift, recognizing again, He is giving Himself 100% to you. He holds absolutely nothing back. You receive His entire person. If that's the gift He's offering as the fullness of Himself, then when He tells us that we are to love God with our whole heart and soul and strength, He's not asking anything of us that God isn't already doing for us. God loves us 100%. He's asking us to love 100%. That is seen most extraordinarily in the holy Eucharist and in our union with Jesus in the reception of holy Communion.

Dan: There's two elements I want to talk about with respect to receiving worthily and treating the Lord as He desires to be treated as truly present in the Eucharist and through the Eucharist. There's an external compartment that reflects an internal reality, right?

Father Robert Altier: Correct.

Dan: Let's first talk about the internal reality. What is vital for the heart of the person coming forward to receive, what is vital in terms of their disposition and what is the disposition?

Father Robert Altier: Well, number one, it has to be faith. So even though, as I mentioned earlier, your faith does not make

Jesus present or fail to make him present, you have to have faith that He is there as you come forward to receive Him and understand that your disposition will determine the amount of grace that you receive. So, this is Jesus. He is God. An infinite amount of grace is present in the Blessed Sacrament, but you must have the right disposition and openness of heart to be able to receive that grace. So your disposition will determine how much grace you receive, but your disposition does not make any difference of whether or not Jesus is there. So you have to have faith, but you also must be in the state of sanctifying grace.

“So your disposition will determine how much grace you receive, but your disposition does not make any difference of whether or not Jesus is there.”

If we receive holy Communion in the state of mortal sin, that is a sacrilege, which means it's the worst of the mortal sins that we can commit because it's a direct violation of our Lord in the Eucharist. We must be in the state of sanctifying grace. One of the problems that I hear of a lot these days is that, well, I knew I was going to be coming to confession, so I just went to Communion because I knew I was coming to confession. No, no, no--you have to get to confession first. You have to be in the state of grace when you receive holy Communion, make sure that you're in the state of sanctifying grace, and then you have to have the faith, and you have to have charity, the love for our Blessed Lord in the holy Eucharist. Obviously, with the rest of the disposition, we want to be free for instance of anger, we want to be forgiving of anybody. Our Lord told us that if you bring your gift to the altar and realize that your brother has something against you, go and be reconciled first and then come back and make your offering. Well, how much more so when the offering is our Lord Himself? And so, that disposition is there of the charity, the love of God, the love of neighbor and being at peace and in union

with our Lord, because we're in the state of grace. And then, that union is expressed most perfectly in the reception of holy Communion, our interior disposition must also be one of one of humility. We are not worthy.

We say that right before holy Communion, but we need to actually believe that in the depths of our heart. We know it in our head. The head isn't the issue. The heart in this case is oftentimes where the issue is. Do we really, truly believe number one, that this is Our Lord and number two, that we are not worthy? It is a pure gift, however, so remember, it's not something we earn. It's not something we deserve. There's absolutely nothing we can do to make ourselves worthy. It is a pure gift from God. That's why we say, "only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." Thus, when we come before Him we want the humility, we want the charity, we want the fidelity and of course, the state of grace.

Dan: You spoke about the immense graces that are available to us to the degree that we have faith and we are humble and all of these things. With a proper disposition we receive more grace, but I also want to hit on this before we leave this portion: What did Paul mean by eating and drinking damnation? That's the other end of the spectrum. That's when somebody comes forward in a state of mortal sin. What does that mean?

Father Robert Altier: What it means is that, and again, if we receive holy Communion and we are in the state of mortal sin, that is a sacrilege. It is again, the worst kind of mortal sin that we can commit. And if we do not repent of that, then that's where we're going to be in condemnation. We're going to have to answer for that on the day of judgment. We can't be flippant about the way that we're receiving holy Communion. On one hand, it's not to say, "Oh, well, who cares? It's just a piece of bread anyway." On the other hand, it's not saying, "I know it's Jesus and well, I'm

in the state of mortal sin, but that means I need Him even more. So therefore, I'm going to receive Him because I need him more.”

Dan: Folks do hear that. Folks have been hearing that from the highest levels in the Church.

Father Robert Altier: We are, and that's really sad. Granted, we need Him more because we're sinful, but we must be in the state of sanctifying grace when we receive holy Communion, because we do not want to offend our Lord anymore than we already are.

Dan: Or end up in hell, right?

Father Robert Altier: Exactly. Because if we die in that state, that's exactly where we will end up.

Dan: You said something that's so important and that it's so easy to gloss over. When I had the experience of COVID, I felt this deep spiritual darkness, like a demonic aspect to it. I was one of the early cases and folks were wondering about my experience because I had a very severe case—I was intubated and all of that. nine out of ten people die that have my condition and get COVID. So there were many requests for radio interviews and many opportunities for me to share what I had seen and experienced.

What came to me was a strong conviction that I had a unique platform to reach the laity and teach them what I'd known for so long: the sacramental theology about the Eucharist, the reality of widespread sacrilege against the Lord, and the gravity of these sins against the Eucharist. It felt like the Lord was revealing to me that I had the means at my disposal to share that the Eucharist is the air we breathe and just as COVID had literally taken the air from my lungs, the Lord could take away this sacrament as a

judgement on us. I don't know if it's safe to ask you this question, but am I crazy? Is this rational? Am I out of my mind?

Father Robert Altier: No. You can look back in the Old Testament and the sacrifices were taken away from people of God because of their disobedience, because of their sinfulness. God withdrew His presence from the Temple. That happened twice in the Old Testament--it tells us, literally, that He withdrew from the Temple. You think about that and you say, "Okay, this is how God has dealt with things in the past. God doesn't change."

"I might say, among the laity-- this is my opinion only--but the sin that is committed most frequently and puts people into mortal sin and is not being confessed is contraception."

He is going to do the same thing if we refuse to be reverent, if we refuse to believe, if we don't stop sinning. I might say, among the laity--this is my opinion only--but the sin that is committed most frequently and puts people into mortal sin and is not being confessed is contraception.

Consequently, many people are in the state of mortal sin and they're receiving holy Communion. It is one of those hidden sins that most people wouldn't see; they wouldn't know if a person is in the state of mortal sin or not, but it's a sin that we in our society seem to have justified. The Church is very clear about this. There are other sins as well, against the flesh, pornography and the violations of one's own dignity and so on. There are a number of things that people fall into and because of our society, they're not thinking it's all that bad or everyone's doing it, so it's okay. But - no, it's not, it's a mortal sin. Then when we receive holy Communion that way, we're adding sacrilege to the sin. If you're doing something like that in your marriage, you're not upholding one another's dignity. You're not approaching one another with charity. Then when you come to Mass, you're not approaching our Lord with charity and with dignity. The two of those go hand-in-

hand. Those in fact are the two sacraments most closely united symbolically: marriage and the Eucharist. When you look at the disposition one should have toward one spouse, that's the disposition one should have toward the Eucharist. One of a total self gift, one of total charity, one of seeking the good of the other, and so on.

Dan: Amen. That's the internal disposition part. The external, which we emphasize a lot in our community, is showing reverence physically, externally. Now, we don't command people to do this, we simply propose it, but we believe that if there are options in a church for how to receive Communion, how to receive the Lord, that we should choose the most humble option, and the idea of humility is a lowering of self, right?

So this is my personal conviction: I will never receive the Eucharist standing. I will never receive the Lord in any way, other than receiving the helpless Lord helplessly myself from the hands of the priest kneeling and on the tongue. Not in any way I can control, not any way that I can manipulate or potentially drop the Lord. We know that the Lord and the Council of Trent taught very clearly that every particle is the Lord and so, if we drop the Lord, it's an abuse. So is that in keeping with a reverent approach to the Eucharist?

Father Robert Altier: It is. And again, this is my own opinion, but if I were asked with all the different problems that are going on in the Church right now, if there was one thing only that you could change, what would it be? I would say, get rid of Communion in the hand and receive it kneeling on the tongue. That would be the one change that I would make, because I really believe that's where the reverence is going to come back. For the people who are watching, you may be--and depending on what parish you're going to, you may be the only person that's receiving that way--

but don't underestimate the power of that. That is the example that other people would see. When they see that, maybe somebody else will have the courage to be able to follow. They say that it's not the first person that does something that's important, it's the second one. Once the second one follows, then other people will start as well. Persevere and show that reverence. You're not doing it to impress anybody, you're not doing it to make them do it, you're doing it for the Lord. That's what you have to be focused on. This is Jesus, this is being done for Jesus. You want to do things with the greatest reverence for our Lord, but in doing that, it will influence other people. If we're standing in a bread line, we might stick our hand out. We do that for hundreds of different things, not necessarily bread. We stand in line, we put our hand out for whatever. There's only one thing that we do if we are kneeling down and putting out our tongue, and that is to receive our blessed Lord. It reminds us that, number one, this is different from anything else that we do because it is God. Number two, it reminds us, as Dan was saying, of the humility that we should have as we approach Him. Three, it puts us then in that disposition to unite ourselves with Him and helps us then to believe if this is the case, if this is the way we pray, it tells us something about what we believe, that the teaching of the Church of course hasn't changed.

If we're standing in a line and sticking our hand out, do we really believe? Can I really believe that that's God, who, as Scripture says, holds me in the palm of His hand? I shouldn't be holding Him in the palm of my hand. That's not my position to hold God in the palm of my hand. He holds me in the palm of His hand. If you can't kneel, that has always been understood by the Church. There have always been people who are unable to kneel, so instead, they would stand and reverently receive on the tongue. If that one change were made, that everybody would receive kneeling down and on the tongue, I think we would see a

huge change in the Church in general because of what that is going to start doing to people's minds and hearts. It will bring them to a greater respect and reverence for our Lord and give them a greater understanding of the teaching of the Church.

Dan: From the standpoint of a priest who's giving Communion out, is it easier? Actually, here's my opinion, and you just tell me if I'm crazy. If I truly wanted to mitigate the spread of disease in this context and I were a priest, here's what I would want. I would want you to kneel. Why? Because I don't want you to move. If you're kneeling, you're not moving as much as you are when you're standing. Now, when people hold out their hands to receive Communion, most of the time their hands are cupped. You tell me if I'm wrong, but that's what I see. This means to me that it's harder for you, without dropping the Lord, to give them the Lord without touching their hands. So it's more likely you're going to touch their hands than you would with a person kneeling on the tongue. To me, rationally, if you want to stop the spread of disease and deal with COVID and that's really your goal, (which I'm skeptical about), you would not forbid receiving on the tongue, but insist on kneeling. Am I crazy?

Father Robert Altier: No. Actually, I can tell you from my own experience. Number one, when people receive on the hand, if you want to make sure that you don't want to touch them, then you have to drop the host, and that I just can't do. So then I wind up touching almost every single hand.

Dan: Say that again. I'll say it for you, he winds up touching every single hand.

Father Robert Altier: Right. And then think of where your hands have been.

In order to put the host down on somebody's hand and your finger's underneath the host, the back of my finger hits almost every hand. It is very, very rare that my finger touches anybody's tongue.

Now one thing for people who aren't accustomed to receiving on the tongue: please just as Dan was saying, keep everything still. In other words, don't move forward all of a sudden when the priest is about to put the host on your tongue because you'll lick right up the back of his hand. Just keep your head still and put your tongue out and the priest will just put the host on your tongue. The vast majority of people at the parish where I'm at now receive on the tongue. We also receive at the Communion rail where they receive while kneeling down. It would be very, very rare that I would touch anybody's tongue, but when people receive in the hand, I touch almost every single hand. So yes, if it's about trying to make sure that you're not spreading anything then receiving on the tongue actually is much more safe that way than receiving on the hand--as well as more reverent in my mind.

Dan: I don't want to be crass or gross, but I don't open door knobs with my tongue and I don't flush the toilet with my tongue. People don't realize how dirty our hands are. Of course, the more that COVID went on, the more that there were public announcements for "please wash your hands frequently" or "use the sanitizer", because obviously that's where a huge percentage of the spreading comes from.

So let's shift now to Q and A, because you and I have talked for quite a while, and you've done an amazing job. I really appreciate your clarity and your conviction. It's such an encouragement to hear a good priest like you speaking to us about this.

Let's go to the questions. How do you get past wanting to feel something deep in the heart while attending the Mass with attention and reverence?

Father Robert Altier: Well first of all, keep in mind that it's not about the feelings or the emotions. Some people think, oh, I should be filled with so much emotion with what's going on but that's not the case. Actually, what the Lord will do is even take that away as you go deeper in prayer because the emotions are part of our body. The Lord wants us to go deeper and deeper and deeper into the depths of our soul. So He will take away the emotional reactions, the feelings, all that kind of stuff. That doesn't mean that you're losing your reverence or that you're not loving Him as much. In fact, it should mean that you're loving Him more. So it's a matter of simply saying, "I'm there to love Him."

To make this point, for most of you who are married, you don't always have deep emotions about your spouse. When you say "good morning" or whatever, it's not with a lot of emotion, it doesn't have to be, but you still love that person. You don't love the person less because you don't feel all kinds of gushy feelings. So the same would be true with our Lord. The more that we love Him, actually the less emotion that's going to be there. Once in a while there might be something the Lord will do, providing a consolation or whatever, but most of the time it's just going to be quiet and you won't feel anything. The fact that you're not feeling anything doesn't mean that nothing is happening. It's just it's happening at a much, much deeper level. Something actually much, much more profound is happening.

Dan: Yeah, you sound like a good Carmelite. St. John of the Cross says that when He wants to take us out of meditation to contemplation, it's to raise us up to a higher kind of loving that is not encumbered by our senses. It's not hindered or limited by our senses. Another analogy that I love is I had a friend who passed

away whose wife was an invalid for the last 20 years of his life. He took care of her, and she gave him nothing. I have to tell you, I love my wife dearly, but I've never seen a deeper kind of love of a man for his wife. He bathed her every day. He carried her everywhere he went, he cared for her personally, didn't hire someone, and he got nothing back from her.

That's the kind of love that the Lord is trying to teach us. If we understand that, then when we feel nothing we can rejoice and just say, "I love you for all that you are, not what you give me. I love you Jesus, my love."

All right, next question: Is it reverent to have actual loaves of leavened bread consecrated, broken and given to the parish?

So listen, I'm a converted Jew, Father. I understand there are some rites that use leavened bread. I find it outrageous because that's not what happened at the Passover. They did not use leavened bread.

Father Robert Altier: No, no they didn't. Actually in the Latin rite, that would be forbidden. It probably wouldn't cause the bread, in that case the Eucharist, to be invalid--but depends on how much stuff they put in it. It is supposed to be only wheat flour and water and nothing else. So in the Eastern rites, where they do use some leavened bread, they cut it up into little cubes and put it into the chalice. They actually use a spoon for distribution of Communion so they don't have particles. When you have a loaf of bread, you're going to have lots and lots of particles falling all over the place.

Dan: Yeah, I agree, and Jesus gets trampled underfoot. It's specifically forbidden in the Church to do that, right?

Father Robert Altier: Right, it is.

Dan: Next question is, How am I to properly respond if a priest refuses to give me the host on my tongue?

We'll give two answers. One from your perspective and one from mine, because this has happened to me a number of times because I only receive on the tongue. I'm never disrespectful to the priest. I don't cause a stir. If he says stand up, I say I can't receive that way very quietly. If he says no, then I'm not going to receive, which has happened to me multiple times. Then I just cross my arms and quietly walk away and go to my seat and pray. If it's Sunday, I've fulfilled my Sunday obligation by being present and participating in the sacrifice of the Mass without receiving Eucharist. So that's from my standpoint as a layperson. What's your perspective as a priest?

Father Robert Altier: Well first of all, the priest does not have a right to tell you that you cannot receive that way, and the Church has made that very clear. So you have an absolute right to receive holy Communion on the tongue. You have a right to receive Communion on your knees and no one can tell you otherwise. If he does say, nope, I'm not going to do that, as Dan said, the best thing isn't to make a big issue out of it because then you're just going to disrupt everybody else who's praying. It's wrong for him to do that, and it's unjust for him to do that. But at that point then again, as we were talking about earlier, the sufferings, the sacrifices, you can offer that to the Lord. You're still making a spiritual Communion. It was still your intention to be able to receive our Lord. So you can offer that to our Lord. Tragically, you didn't receive the Eucharist, but by making a spiritual Communion, you still received the grace that would have been given in the Eucharist had you received. You can still be united with our Lord in that way.

Dan: You may have to find a parish and move and change your job and do whatever you need to do to be able to worship freely, to be able to live in a safe way where you can live out your faith. Find a community that supports your desire to worship with reverence. Our community is Apostoli Viae. Go to ApostoliViae.org to find not only community but solid formation. In fact, Father has graciously spent a lot of time preparing very sound teaching that he's given to us to give away on the fundamentals of the Faith. If you want to check out that course, which is beautifully done, go to ApostoliViae.org.

There are good communities out there, such as Carmelites and Franciscans that are faithful to the Magisterium. I'm saying find one, you need one. If you don't know of one that's orthodox and faithful, or you don't have one in your area, you can try to start one or you can check out ApostoliViae.org.

All right, next question for Father: How do you bring loved ones to the Mass without them being able to receive the Eucharist?

Father Robert Altier: Well the thing with that is certainly just invite them to come to Mass, but then let them know that until they've been to confession, they wouldn't be able to receive holy Communion. Now having said that, make sure you tell them that before Mass. Don't do it at Communion time. If they're going to get up and receive Communion anyway, don't make a scene. In other words, the Church says at that point it's better just to let them receive, even though it's a sacrilege, because you don't want to disrupt everybody else in their prayer. Since they have been told and you have done your part, then that's on their conscience ultimately. It's generally a matter of inviting them to come to Mass, but then just reminding them gently and kindly, not in a condemning way, that until they've been to confession, they can't receive holy Communion.

Dan: As well if they're Protestants. Obviously they can come to Mass with you, but they can't receive Communion and they can't go to confession. This is something we didn't talk about earlier with respect to proper disposition, that is, one of being in union with the Church, with Jesus Himself, with His Church. So if you're not in union with the Church and you come forward, essentially you're committing a lot of different kinds of sin. You're lying and you're committing sacrilege.

So what we say to a Protestant brother and sister is, "I would really love for you to attend Mass, but Communion is reserved for those who agree with all of the teachings of the Church. Who've been through formal initiation, who've been baptized or their baptism have been validated. The reason for all of that is because we love you, we don't want you to eat and drink damnation. Instead we want you to receive all the grace that you could receive. So if you want to go to RCIA, I'll go with you." So you can say it in a very loving way that doesn't push people away.

Father Robert Altier: And one other thing you can do too, if somebody might feel self-conscious by sitting in the pew, tell them just come forward to the priest, put their hands up over their heart which is an indication to the priest to just give them a blessing or even ask the priest, please, just a blessing. Then the priest will give them a blessing. They can come up in the Communion line, and they don't have to stay in the pew. That would be true whether somebody's Catholic or Protestant. Anybody can come up and receive a blessing, even if they can't receive holy Communion.

Dan: Amen, very good. Next question: How long does the physical presence of Jesus stay in my body after receiving the Holy Eucharist?

Father Robert Altier: Well again, it's not the physical presence of Jesus, but I understand the question. It's as long as the accidents of the bread remain uncorrupted, so that's usually anywhere from 20 minutes to 30 minutes is what has normally been taught. Until it would break down in your stomach is really what it would come down to.

Dan: Next question. How can we most respectfully talk to priests who think that denying Communion to those who kneel to receive is promoting unity in worship?

Now that's a very interesting question. I like the heart of that person because they want to honor the priest, but they want to try to convince them of one of the central teachings of the Church. That's a tough nut to crack, but do you have some advice there?

Father Robert Altier: The thing I would do is simply say bring in the documents. Again, remember in the Church, everything is in writing. So there are documents that are there that say that the people have a right to receive Communion kneeling. A priest cannot deny them holy Communion if they're kneeling and receiving on the tongue. That way it's not your opinion versus his opinion. You're coming in with the teaching of the Church. You can approach him again with respect and just say, "I was doing some research and perhaps you're not aware of this and here's what I found." And be able to give that to him so that he knows and hopefully would then be willing to say, "Okay, I can't keep denying people this because this goes against what the Church teaches."

Dan: One of the things we tell folks in our community of Apostoli Viae is to take a month and fast for your priest. During that 30 days, make sure you send five notes of compliments. Find five things that you appreciate about that priest and send him a note

five separate times. Then by the time you're done, either you're going to be holier and figure out you may or may not be right, or you'll be ready to go in with humility and in the spirit of the Lord to honor that priest.

I've had this happen to me. I went to my bishop. In the Mass I went to, the penitential rite was omitted. I didn't go in saying, "Bishop, this priest is an idiot and he did this and he's bad." I said, "Bishop, the penitential rite was omitted in this case. This is what I think I understand the Church teaches." I was just being as humble as I could be. I said, "Maybe I misunderstood, maybe it's appropriate?"

And he said, "Are you the only one who is of that opinion?" I said, "No, I have a couple of my friends. In fact, they're converts and they didn't see it either." And he said, "Okay, well you go talk to the priest and approach him the same way you approached me and let me know what he says." So it can be done. I wasn't branded as a traditionalist wacko because I was gentle and humble. Does that make sense?

Father Robert Altier: It does, and I think that's the thing. Generally speaking, I would say the sin of the priest is pride. So if you can come in a very humble way then you're not going to be locking horns. You're not clashing pride versus pride but the humility and the gentleness with which you do it is going to bring him down rather than have his guard up. It's going to bring him to a more humble approach as well. If he sees that you're presenting something humbly, hopefully he can accept it and receive it that way and respond in a like manner as well.

Dan: There's a very reverent Mass here in Birmingham, and the priest is known for his liturgical soundness, but during daily Mass, we were not using a Communion plate.

I had already built a good relationship with him. I regularly sent him notes of appreciation and I went and said, "Hey, Father, this says that we should retain the use of the Communion plate. I'm just curious. Have you ever considered implementing that during daily Mass?" And he said, "Well, It's kind of thin with help. How would you go about that?" So, we had a dialogue about it. Then one day I went to daily Mass and it was there. I sent him a note after Mass and said, "Thank you, Father." He said, "I could tell you were pleased when you received with it." It wasn't him against me. But I think it's most important to pray because that gets your heart and mind ready.

It also prepares the heart and mind of the priest, if he's open to that, and you're going to have a much more positive experience. All right, our next question: We believe that we receive Jesus in holy Eucharist. Since the three persons are one, do we receive all three persons in the holy Eucharist?

Father Robert Altier: The answer to that is yes. You receive the body, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of Jesus. The body, the blood and the soul are the humanity. The divinity is shared equally by all three persons of the most Holy Trinity and outside of the Godhead itself, all things of the Trinity are done in oneness. So, all three persons are present wherever one is present. So, in reality, yes, when you receive the divinity of Christ, along with his body, blood and soul, you are receiving all three persons of the most Holy Trinity.

Dan: Very good. Next question: What exactly is one supposed to do if you are receiving in the hand and the host accidentally drops on the floor? Should I pick it up and consume it? First, stop receiving in the hand, but what's the next answer, Father?

Father Robert Altier: The next part of that answer would be yes, you can certainly do that. The other possibility is that the priest can pick up the host. Somebody should then come out with a purificator that is wet and then mop up the floor in case there are any particles that fell or that broke off and are on the ground. So, use a purificator, which is the cloth that is on the chalice that the priest would use to clean out the chalice.

So you could either pick up the host or the priest can pick up the host. What the priest would do is put that into a vessel with some water in it. Then it would begin to separate and after two or three days, it would be completely separated and then could be put down the sacrarium, which is the little drain that goes into the ground so it doesn't go into the sewer system, just right into the ground.

Dan: Next question: What are the best ways for parents to instill a deep reverence of the Mass and Eucharist in our children? That is a great question.

Father Robert Altier: Well, first of all, to do it yourself. Kids will do what you do, not necessarily what you say. So, you have to teach them by word, but most importantly, you have to teach them by example. Make sure that they understand, to the degree that they're able, that truly is Jesus and that Jesus is God, and that's why we want to have this reverence. To understand that this is the single greatest privilege in the universe, is to be able to receive Jesus in the holy Eucharist and consequently, the way that we approach him needs to be one of just with the greatest reverence and the greatest respect. When you have the opportunity to stand before Jesus, ask yourself, "What's your disposition going to be?" I think about that frequently. When we think of Saint John, who was our Lord's closest friend on earth, he put his head on our Lord's chest at the Last Supper. When he saw Jesus in glory, he

fell on his face. He didn't say, "Hey buddy, how are you? Great to see you again. It's been a while." None of that. He fell on his face. So if we truly recognize the Lord present, we want to have that disposition. He isn't just our little pal. He is our Lord and our God. Yes, He is the best friend we could ever have, but we must always remember that He is God, He is the King of Kings, He is the Lord of Lords. We have to have that kind of reverence and respect. If you had the opportunity to meet a king or the queen or the President of the United States or whomever, you'd put on some nice clothes. You'd have a proper comportment. Isn't that the way we should be with our Lord? So, that's what we want to look at again, teaching the kids by both by word and especially by example.

Dan: Yeah, just a few notes as a parent. Go to church early. Get moving to church early. I know a guy who taught his kids at home how to sit still. He got a little bench and he would reward them for the longer they could sit still until they would sit still as long as they normally would in church. Then they learned really young and were very good in church. Another one is to get there early to kneel and pray. Don't talk to your neighbor as if this is a social gathering. Talk to God because that's the one you're going to meet. Demonstrate to your children and teach them the prayers that you're praying. Pray the prayer of Saint Ambrose or Saint Thomas Aquinas before Mass. Show them you're praying. I have an autistic son, and he would struggle with attention. So, I would take his little index finger and I would say the words and point to each of the words as I was praying it, and that helped him to pay attention. The other thing is to stay after Mass. So, receive reverently, kneeling and on the tongue, and then stay after Mass for thanksgiving. Again, show them why you're doing that. Teach them outside of Mass. There is a great program by Brant Pitre on the Eucharist that is absolutely amazing. Listen to that with them if they're old enough and talk about how and why this is the most

important moment of every week, whether we go on Sunday, which is the most important, or we go daily. The best work you can do is preparation outside of Mass and then how you conduct yourself inside can be very powerful.

Next question: What can you do to increase devotion to God in the Eucharist when there is no Adoration and fewer Masses in Latin and vernacular? I would extend this question to the fact that the vast majority of Masses, there's some kind of abuse, whether it's of the use of extraordinary ministers or the laity or the priest, whatever. So, what do we do?

Father Robert Altier: Well, the main thing is you can certainly talk with some of the other people, some of your friends that you know, but again, it's being reverent yourself, being the example to others. Look for an opportunity to explain to them why you're doing what you're doing, when they notice, for example, "You used to come to Mass and we would chat, and now you're not doing that anymore. How come?" or whatever. If you can get to the church to pray (most churches, even if they're locked up, if you go during regular business hours or something, they'll usually let you into the church to pray), the Lord is there in the tabernacle and you can go in and pray even if there is no Adoration.

If that's not possible, there actually are a couple of places online that have live Adoration. So, even though you're not physically present there, nonetheless on your computer screen, you can actually have a live feed of an Adoration chapel. You can spend time in prayer before our Lord, even though, again, you're not physically present with Him at that point. Nonetheless, you're recognizing His presence in the Eucharist and you are worshiping Him and adoring Him as such. So the more that we can dispose of our own hearts and souls, the more reverence we're going to

have, and consequently the more we're going to be able to be a good example to others.

Dan: We'll answer a few more questions: How does one deal with the irreverence of others during Mass?

Father Robert Altier: Depending on who it is, do you know the person well enough to say something to them? Sometimes you can just, quietly, just look at them and make a sign for them to be quiet. Or if somebody wants to talk to you, you can say, "Could we go out to the foyer and talk?" Again, try to maintain as much of your own composure as you can. Make sure you're maintaining the charity, but continue to pray. Even if they're carrying on and they won't go out and so on, just continue to pray. Do the best you can. Again, you're showing the Lord by your effort that you want to be there praying, and He will reward that even if you can't pray well because of the distractions of everybody else. You're making that effort and He will bless you for that.

Dan: You can offer up your own suffering in the distraction for the salvation of souls and in reparation for the sins against the Lord. Next question: Can one still be united to Jesus mystically while watching a virtual online Mass and making a spiritual Communion?

Father Robert Altier: The answer to that is yes, because you actually are united with Jesus as long as you're in the state of grace. So, you are a member of Jesus Christ because of your baptism. As long as you're in the state of grace, there is a mystical union that is there. Then when you make the spiritual Communion, again, you're receiving those graces of Communion even without having received our blessed Lord. So, there are differing forms of presence. We can use the example of what we're doing right now. You're seeing something over a computer

screen. So, there's a certain presence that is there of Dan and myself that would be different than if we were just talking on the phone, and which would be different if we were face to face.

So, you have our Lord if you're there at Mass, obviously you are with Him and you can receive Him, but if it's watching in virtual Mass, you can still be united with the sacrifice. You can still offer yourself. You can still receive a spiritual Communion. You're not just able to receive Him sacramentally. So, you can receive a spiritual Communion. There's still a mystical union. There's not a sacramental union at that moment because you didn't receive the sacrament. It's just a different presence of our Lord.

Dan: Is it safe to say that He's just not going to deprive you? If your heart is disposed to Him and you're doing the best that you can to get to Mass and if it's not available to you in your area and you just can't go, He's not going to deprive you of the graces you need for your salvation.

Father Robert Altier: Exactly. He's never going to be outdone in generosity. So, if you're making the effort to be with Him, He will be even more so with you.

Dan: And if you want some good prayers and guidance on a spiritual Communion prayer, you can find it at ApostoliViae.org, as we've mentioned, or spiritualdirection.com. One last question, Father, and then we'll wrap it up: I've been taught as a child that I could have reconciliation up to eight days after receiving Communion as long as I had true contrition, so I've advised people to do the same. Am I in sin for that?

I think this person is asking, "I've been taught as a child that I could have reconciliation up to eight days after receiving Communion." I don't know, Father. Do you make sense of that?

Father Robert Altier: Yeah. So, let's be clear about what that means. So, the eight days, which actually has been extended to 20 now, is for the reception of an indulgence. Not with regard to receiving Communion if you're in the state of mortal sin. So, if you're in the state of mortal sin, you still have to receive confession before you receive Communion.

Dan: Every time?

Father Robert Altier: Every time.

Dan: Every time you commit a mortal sin.

Father Robert Altier: Absolutely. Yeah. So if the question has to do with receiving the indulgence, it used to be, and has been for years, that it was eight days either side, either before or after doing whatever was necessary for the indulgence, which included receiving Communion. Now it has been extended to 20 days, but that's for an indulgence, not for getting back into the state of grace.

Dan: So, the person may need to go to confession for that, correct?

Father Robert Altier: Exactly.

Dan: Yeah. I just want to conclude by saying this. I really appreciate you, Father Altier. And I will say to you out there, if you've got a priest like Father Altier serving you, giving his life for the Church and for you, love him, serve him, protect him, pray for him like crazy because faithful priests are very much under attack in our time. If you don't have a priest like Father Altier, find one and support him. I don't like the idea of abandoning parishes that have bad reputations, and maybe you're the only one who can

help, but I'm leaning more toward surviving the difficulties that are coming by being near and close to those who those who believe with all that they are and who are giving all to Christ. Because we're going to need every ounce of strength that we have to make it through the difficulties that are coming and we will prevail and we can do so joyfully in Christ as long as we're living the way that he taught us to live and we're living as authentic disciples of Jesus. Father, any last words? Then maybe give us your blessing.

Father Robert Altier: Well, I can take that other part from the priest's perspective. I can tell you that in the parishes over the last year where the priest made the effort to keep things open, to be able to continue hearing the confessions of people and get them the sacraments--those parishes are bursting. The parishes where the priest ran away and was not there for the people, the people are not coming back and those parishes are way down in their numbers. So, the people recognize, obviously, if this priest is willing to sacrifice for them, they will be sacrificing for him as well. That's the beauty of we are in this together.

Dan: Amen.

Father Robert Altier: The priest has to be there for the people of God. He's there for God first and foremost. He has to be there for the people. I have always been convinced and I have always said with regard to the priest, you take care of the people, they'll take care of everything else. You won't have to worry about anything. Just take care of the people and do what you're supposed to do as a priest, keep up your prayer life and do all the things you should do, but take care of the people. They'll handle everything else.

Dan: So, Father, there are thousands of people who registered for this webinar. If we were in a room with them, I'm pretty sure you'd

get a standing ovation. So, what I'll do is because people can't clap, I'd ask that you'd say a prayer for Father Altier and offer up something for him and for all faithful priests like him. I know many, God be praised.

Father, would you close us with your blessing?

Father Robert Altier: Absolutely. The Lord be with you.

Dan: And with your spirit.

Father Robert Altier: Commending all of you to the Immaculate heart of the blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the intercession of Saint Joseph, the protection of Saint Michael, the guidance of your guardian angels and the intercession of your patron saints. Amen.

Dan: Amen. Thank you again, Father. Great to see you. Great to be with you. God bless you.

Father Robert Altier: God bless you. Thanks, Dan.