



During the parish's recent Liturgical Survey, someone addressed why our EMHCs and clergy no longer bless the children coming forward during Communion. While not outright ignoring the children coming forward with their parents during Communion, this practice was discontinued at our parish-level in light of clarifying guidance from the Church's Congregation of Divine Worship (and forwarded to us by our bishop) on the subject of the appropriateness of giving/receiving blessings during Communion (*On Giving Blessings During the Communion Rite*, 11/22/08). In short, we come forward to reverently receive the gift of the Eucharist: the very Body and Blood of Christ, not a blessing.

Specifically, the Congregation in their published guidance has reminded us:

"The liturgical blessing of the Holy Mass is properly given to each and to all at the conclusion of the Mass [not during the Communion procession], just a few moments subsequent to the distribution of Holy Communion. Lay people, within the context of the Holy Mass, are unable to confer blessings. These blessings, rather, are the competence of the priest.

Furthermore, the laying on of a hand or hands—which has its own sacramental significance, inappropriate here—by those distributing Holy Communion, in substitution of its reception, is to be explicitly discouraged. ...

While the intention of blessing the child may be good, it should be made clear to all that the priest's blessing at the conclusion of the Mass involves everyone, and that there should not be separate blessings for any person [coming forward] during the Communion Rite."

We hope and pray that this information helps you to better understand why the practice of blessings during the Communion procession has been discontinued at the Ave Maria Parish by the EMHCs and the clergy.

(SR: http://www.adoremus.org/0209CDW_Blessing.html)

(In the Peace and Love of Christ, Fr. Don and Fr. Bob)
(09/07/09)