

Fr Ryan Homily 4-30-23 – First Communion

Read: Acts of the Apostles 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:20b-25; John 10:1-10

So boys and girls, first holy communion day. Thanks be to God. A day like none other for you in your lives so far. And one of the indicators of just how special this is is how well you are all dressed this morning, right, we got some ties and a few suits, beautiful dresses that you're wearing. It's important to dress well on a day like this. We always wanna dress well don't we when we're gonna do something important or even better when we are going to meet someone important. And you guys are gonna meet Jesus in a very unique and special way in a few minutes. Cause boys and girls think about this, in a few minutes one of the most important moments in your life is about to happen. Just think, you are about to eat Jesus Christ in what looks like a piece of bread. It's not a piece of bread, right, it's Jesus' body and it sounds crazy. It's more than a little strange right; kinda off the wall. Really strange, really weird, and it's really true. Your about to eat Jesus Christ. Cause you see, boys and girls, one day Jesus started to teach His apostles and everybody that was following Him, He said to them I'm gonna have to leave you in a little while because He was gonna go back to God the Father. This is after He died on the cross, after He rose from the grave, and He was wondering how am I going to stay with My apostles? How will I stay with everyone who will come to believe in me because of them? And nourish them in their faith when I'm not around like this anymore? So you know what He started doing? He began to tell them that if you want eternal life, to live with God forever, they had to eat His body. They had to drink His blood. Jesus said that! He said My body is real food and My blood is real drink. And you know what happened then, boys and girls? Loads of people had this similar reaction to what many still do today and they just started to walk away from Jesus. Because they said that that is ridiculous language. They said how can anybody listen to this. How is He supposed to give us His body and His blood to eat and drink? They said that's intolerable language and they started to walk away. And so Jesus turned to His apostles who were beside Him and He said guys are you gonna leave Me as well? Like everybody else has? And of course we know St Peter said no Lord, we're sticking with you because we believe You speak the truth. Then do you remember what Jesus did the night before He died on the cross? It was the Last Supper. Jesus had one last supper with His apostles and just remember what Jesus did the night of the Last Supper.

He took a piece of bread, blessed it, and gave it to His disciples and said this is My body take it and eat it. And then He took a cup of wine, blessed it, and said this is My blood take it and drink it. And the apostles went now He's answered the question how we're able to eat His body and drink His blood. And then what did He say to them? He said go and do this in my memory. And so boys and girls that's what your first holy communion is all about, that is what every single mass for these past two thousand years is all about. You and me joining ourselves to Him through this holy altar and receiving Jesus' body and eating it. It's not a symbol, not the church pretending to be important or anything like that but because Jesus promised this is what it is. And He gave the apostles the same power to do that in His memory which is what this mass is about here this morning. Now that is pretty awesome! It's kinda weird but it's really, really special that Jesus did this for us. In a few minutes I'm going to offer you what looks like this little, white piece of bread in a circle and I'm gonna say the body of Christ. And then you say in response amen. And when you say amen what you're saying is that you trust what Jesus said at the Last Supper is true, that you believe what He said was true. It's really important, really beautiful what our Lord does for us. Okay so folks, maybe just a word for everyone else here - parents, godparents, everybody. Look folks, can I just ask you very simply please don't let the uniqueness of this beautiful day fizzle out in these kids' lives. Cause you look at them now, they're full of life, they're excited, maybe a little nervous, they're bright, they're beautifully dressed, they are full of awe and wonder this morning. It's this powerful sign of God's Holy Spirit stirring in their hearts because they know something incredible is about to happen. And folks you and I know the world we live in does it's best to crush any form of innocence in the world, particularly awe and wonder when it comes to God. So don't let that happen for these kids. Teach them to pray. Bring them to mass. All I'm saying is don't let their first holy communion be their only holy communion for the foreseeable future on a Sunday. Right because the joy of today is not just about today but about next Sunday and the next Sunday and the next Sunday and the next Sunday and the next Sunday. Because what we're doing here this morning, it's not a joke. This is about Jesus Christ entering these children's lives in a very real and a very unique and special way. And the power of this moment, it will fade out if you don't help them nourish their faith in Jesus. To get to know Him through simple prayer and coming to mass. Cause remember when they were baptized, guys you promised at the baptismal font when you were with

the priest and your family and friends, you promised to hand on the faith to them in its fullness in what you say and do. And if that hasn't been happening up until now, okay. Perhaps today is a new beginning for that. To start it up, to give it a go for yourselves as well. Why? Because we need hope, and we need joy, and we need faith. We need peace in our lives no matter what else might be going on. And Jesus is the only antidote to all the mess in our lives, all the mess of our world. The one who gives us peace and joy and hope even when the rest of the world might be collapsing around us. Like Jesus is the guarantee-er of that. Cause at the end of the day there is no greater gift in life then giving your children the gift of faith in Christ. It sets us up for life. It keeps us going when everything else is telling us to give up. Cause the Eucharist is the heart of our faith. Because the Eucharist is the heart of God, literally it's the Son of God, Jesus Christ. It's Jesus who says this is my body whoever eats it will have life and you'll have it abundantly. It's My life in you welling up to eternity. Let's never leave behind this most precious gift from God.

Amen