

Father Dave's Weekly Homily

06/10/12 Corpus Christi B

-- Peter Feldmeier, who's now at UT (Catholic Studies prof), tells a story about taking communion to a nursing home in another parish a few years ago. Priests, deacons, and communion ministers who go to nursing homes most likely can relate to this.

-- He knocked on the door of a room of a man who had dementia. He said *I'm here from the parish*. The man answered with curse words, telling him to get out. As he turned away, the man said *What do you want?*

-- Peter replied *I'm here to bring you communion. Well, in that case, come in!* was his response. He then prayed the Our Father and received communion very reverently. After a short closing prayer, the man said *Now get out* once again uttering a curse word.

-- That man was wounded by his dementia, but he still recognized the importance of the Body and Blood of Christ for his spiritual nourishment. This was his time with the Lord, in the temple of the holy of holies, so to speak.

-- When we come to receive the Eucharist, we enter the powerful presence of the Lord of Lords. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies only once a year. It's said that he tied a rope to his waist, so in case he died in the holy presence, other priests could pull him out without entering the Holy of Holies.

-- But we are invited into God's awesome presence each time we come to Mass. We enter the Holy of Holies, not alone, but as a redeemed people. And we partake of the Body and Blood of the One who saved us through shedding his own blood.

-- We are once again in the presence of the Lord Jesus, as surely as the apostles were when they ate with him on the night before he died. As the priest pronounces the words of consecration, we hear what they heard, and we partake as they did.

-- When we really think of it, this is amazing! We should have attitude of that man in the nursing home—minus the spicy words that came from his disabled condition.

-- As we approach to receive communion, we are asked to make a slight bow of the head. This small but powerful gesture reminds us that we are in the presence of something special, something that should never become routine.

-- Yet there is always that danger when we do this so often. We can take the gift of the Eucharist for granted. We can hold out our hands without thinking of the great gift that is being placed there.

-- Thirty four years ago this weekend, I stood at the altar of our Cathedral with Bishop Donovan and seven classmates to pronounce the words of consecration for the first time. Through God's grace and the Church's mandate that bread and wine was transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

-- It was not my personal doing, though I was God's unworthy instrument. I still am, as I will be in a few minutes when I do this once again for what must be somewhere around the 13,000th time.

-- In fact, we are all God's unworthy instruments, whether we give the Eucharist to others or simply receive it ourselves. That doesn't matter. God shares his life with us—God shares his very body and blood with us.

-- May we never take that gift for granted. And may that gift be our strength to go out to serve the Lord in our brothers and sisters.