

FIRST COMMUNION HOMILY

Girls and boys, you have been waiting for today for a long time and now it's arrived. Today is a special day for you and that is why we are all here for you. I have never seen you as well turned out as you are this morning. You look like princesses and princes! You have put on your best clothes for this special day. But more important than the clothes you wear is that you have prepared well with Jacqueline, your catechist, and your parents to meet Jesus. That is why you made your First Confession yesterday. When you receive Jesus in Holy Communion, you will tell him you love him, and always do what pleases Him.

After Mass everyone will want to meet you and be photographed with you. I am sure you will have lots of dainties to eat - all because Jesus has come to you. You may get gifts from family members. But the most important gift you will receive today is Jesus Himself. Jesus is more important than all the presents or nice food. Continue to pray to Jesus and Mary every day because you are special in their eyes.

Parents, this is a great day for you also. Today your children will receive Our Lord for the first time and you will be justly proud of them. When you had your children baptized you were reminded that you are their first teachers of your child in the ways of faith. They learned their faith from you from their earliest years as you have taught them to make the sign of the cross and to say many little prayers. In the immediate years ahead, what you say and do will influence their faith and their friendship with Jesus and Mary in so many ways. No matter who their teachers were or are, or what the parish does, unless the children sense their parents' faith, they will not absorb it. The faith you hand on will be their strength through life. It is not something they need only when there is a crisis.

Teachers and priests will struggle to plant faith in the heart of your children if the parents are shying away from their part.

Today is a very happy day for everybody else here as well because relatives, friends, teachers and people of the parish have all watched these children grow in faith and supported them. I know you are praying for them today and will continue to do so.

Children, I still remember my First Holy Communion. I made it on Pentecost Sunday 1957 – to you that may sound like a century ago. I've received a lot of Holy Communions since then and I hope you will too. As you do so, may you grow in His friendship and love here below and finally be with Him forever in Heaven.