

First Communion

I am coming down to your level to remind you of the importance of this day. All of us remember our first Communion. It is something engraved on our memory. I did my first Communion in a boys school run by nuns. We were dressed up with a white tunic and a rope as a cincture, like little monks. The nuns wanted us to become religious friars. It is an important day because today you are going to receive Jesus for the first time in your life, with his body, soul and divinity. 20 centuries ago there was a big problem in heaven. Jesus wanted to stay with us on earth, because we needed him and enjoyed our company, but the angels wanted him to go back to heaven. They went to complain to God the Father telling him that Jesus belonged to heaven. God, like always, managed to solve the problem. Jesus stayed on earth and went up to heaven at the same time. Because God is Almighty, he could do it.

Jesus stayed in a piece of bread for us to be able to eat him. He could have stayed with us in a more showy way, with special effects, fire works, beautiful music and amazing colours. But he preferred a more intimate, discrete way, to be able to become one with us, because he loves us with divine love. People in love want to be with each other; they would like to become one, and if it could be done, eat each other. Mothers tell their babies: "I'd eat you with kisses." This is what we do when we go to Communion: we eat Jesus with love.

When we eat him, he doesn't become us, but the other way around: we become Him. Normally when we eat food, the food becomes us. But when we eat Jesus we transform ourselves into him, taking part of his divinity, because he is God. It is like when you put a piece of metal on fire, it becomes hot, red like the flame. During Communion we become a bit like him. It is like when the priest during Mass pours some drops of water into the wine, the water becomes wine. Only few drops. In every Communion we become more like him. That's why it is important to go often to Communion. It takes a long time for us to become him, and the more we receive him, the faster we go.

A girl did her first Communion and her mother asked her what did she tell Jesus: "I've told him that today is the first time I received him." The following day she went to Communion again and her mother asked her the same question: "I've told him that today is the second time I received him." After a week of going to Mass her mother said: "I suppose today you told Jesus that it was the seventh time you received him?" "No, now we have other conversations." Saint Teresa of Avila used to say that we should take advantage of the moment of Communion; it is the best moment to get what we need. We have him all to ourselves, ready to listen to us.

When I was a chaplain in a girl's school, I used to ask them about what they told Jesus after Communion. This was more or less my conversation: "Do you talk to Jesus when you go to Communion?" "Yes, Father." "Do you tell Jesus all your secrets?" (Girls have secrets) "Yes, Father." "Is Jesus your best friend?" "Yes, Father." They answered me with a bored tone, trying to tell me that these were silly questions, stressing the sound of the "f" at the beginning of Father. But one girl answered me a bit annoyed: "Father, Jesus is much more than my best friend!" I liked her answer.