

# The Year of Faith

## Catechesis on the Mass

### The Ablutions and Prayer after Communion

This week in our catechesis on the Mass, we cover the ablutions and the Prayer after Communion.

Once all have received Communion, any hosts which remain are then reposed in the tabernacle. Since even the smallest fragment of the Sacred Host or the smallest drop of Precious Blood is truly the Body, Blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, the sacred vessels which have been used are treated with the utmost respect and must be purified with water either at this time or after Mass. This act of purifying is called the ablutions, which means “washings.” While purifying, the priest says the following prayer:

What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,  
may we possess in purity of heart,  
that what has been given to us in time  
may be our healing for eternity

The quiet time which occurs at this part of the Mass is essential. We are given time to reflect upon the great mystery that we have been allowed to eat the Body of Christ and to drink His Blood. To leave Mass at this point is *gravely disrespectful* and *completely incoherent* if we truly believe in the sacred mysteries which we have received.

This quiet time of prayer culminates in the Prayer after Communion which, like the Collect at the beginning of the Mass, places our own private prayers in the context of the specific celebration which is occurring at the Mass. In the Prayer after Communion, the priest “prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated” (GIRM 89). For example, at the Easter Vigil he prays:

Pour, out on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love,  
and in your kindness make those you have nourished  
by this paschal Sacrament  
one in mind and heart.

Next week, we discuss the Concluding Rites and the Recessional.

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