



## WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

This weekend, we begin our celebrations of First Communions. These are always special events for the children and their families. As children receive Jesus in Communion for the first time, it is important to remember to not get caught up in only the social aspects of the celebration, overlooking what is most important. I can never forget what one priest told me happened during one of his First Communions. As people were in line, approaching the altar to receive Communion, one of the adults was overheard making a call on their cell phone! “We are in line to get Communion. You can put the lasagna in the oven.” Can you believe it? Obviously, what was important was the party, not Jesus. How sad.

One way to capture the true meaning and significance of receiving Communion is to reflect, not on what happens after Mass, but what happens after we receive. Do we take time to pray? Do we talk to Jesus? Do we enjoy the encounter with God that has just happened?

For Holy Thursday this year, in my homily, I suggested a practice that I have adopted, and have also spoken of on other occasions. It’s not my idea, but my version of a beautiful prayer that we can say. To begin, think of yourself as a house. The physical home in which you live has many rooms, each with different purposes. Some we use more than others, some even rarely. In some cases, certain rooms may even be locked. Just like your home in which you live, you have many rooms inside of you. Some are those where you spend most of your time, the rooms of your daily activities and responsibilities, such as work and school. There are those rooms that are set aside for family. Some rooms are for storage, those where we keep our memories. Some rooms are for fantasies, daydreaming, and happy thoughts. Some may be those set aside for addictions with which we may struggle. Some are dark rooms, those we prefer to keep locked, hiding bad memories or experiences. Some may amount to torture chambers, where we keep those who have hurt us or those we don’t like. As you think about this, I’m sure you’ll realize that the house of your soul has many more rooms than the house in which you live.

After taking some time to discover the many rooms in your personal home inside of you, this is a prayer you can say after you receive Communion. Tell Jesus that He is welcome in every room in your soul. Maybe you need His light and peace in some rooms that are dark; maybe you need His healing in other rooms. For me, one of the rooms I invite Him into is the room where I keep all those people I am praying for or for whom I am concerned. Along those lines, I also have an intercession room, where I keep all of my intentions of prayer. Another room is filled with my childhood memories. Another is like a museum of images of people I have known and places I have been. Another is where I store my anxiety and concerns about the world. The more I do this, the more I embrace this prayer. It is a beautiful, healing and freeing prayer, to invite Jesus to enter every single room in my soul. He can open any door He wants. No part of me is off limits.

This prayer helps me to look forward to receiving Communion and also helps me to take advantage of this opportunity for co-union, “union with” Jesus.

There is one problem, though. There’s not enough time! Soon after receiving, it’s time to do something else at Mass and then it’s over. However, it doesn’t have to end there. The moment of receiving Communion can linger throughout the day. Let Jesus be your special guest that doesn’t have to leave, just because Mass is over. He can stay! Throughout the day, you can repeat that Communion prayer of invitation, telling Jesus that He can continue to roam throughout the entire house of your soul. The next time you receive Communion, open the door of your soul and lovingly say to Jesus, “Welcome!”

***“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst.’” (John 6: 35)***