

Reflections While Walking

“Amen”

By Deacon Bob Salvestrini



Among the changes Vatican II made to the Liturgy was the way the priest distributed Eucharist to a communicant. Receiving on either the hand or on the tongue became an option, and the Latin, “Corpus Domini Nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam,” (May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul unto life everlasting), became, “The Body of Christ.” The communicant’s response to the Eucharistic Minister’s words remained unchanged, “Amen.”

The reasons and merits for using Latin versus English in the celebration of Mass will be argued ad nauseam and can be a distraction from what should concern the person receiving the Eucharist. Whether in Latin or English, the words spoken by the minister of Eucharist are two-fold. They are seeking agreement on the mysteries that have occurred in the celebration of Mass, and they are extending an invitation to participate in the life of Jesus Christ. Responding honestly with “Amen” indicates belief in the mysteries that have occurred and acceptance of the invitation.

Proclaiming “Amen” signifies your belief that not only is Jesus Christ present in the bread and wine that has been transformed on the altar, but that He is also present body, blood, soul, and divinity in the bread being offered for communion.

Proclaiming “Amen” signifies your willingness to work and pray to change your life to become more Christ-like. The Eucharist is the food we need to become the kind of person God made us to be.

Proclaiming “Amen” signifies your commitment to identify as closely as humanly possible with the person of Jesus. It's a commitment to become a partner with Jesus in God's mission of spreading the Good News and doing His will.

Commenting on the Eucharist in the third century, Saint Cyprian said, “It is not idly that you say Amen. You are professing that you receive the Body of Christ.... Thus keep in your heart what you profess with your lips.” His advice is as meaningful today as it was when it was first spoken.