

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York 14202

Traditionally Speaking by S. Casarotto 8/9/09

NO BLESSING

A growing phenomenon in the "liturgical renewal" is giving a blessing to the faithful who have joined the Communion procession at Mass with no intention of receiving the Eucharist. They ask for a blessing as they fold their arms across their chest to receive it.

I do not give this blessing and for many reasons: **1)** There is already a blessing to the whole congregation at the end of the mass and I am always available to give a special blessing to those who request it for some special reasons (before going to the hospital, for an anniversary, before taking a long trip, etc.); **2)** A blessing at Communion time creates confusion and is a countersign about the purpose of the Communion procession; **3)** It is disrespectful to turn the attention from the Eucharist to a person to be blessed.

This innovation is nowhere to be found in the instructions for the celebration of the mass. In fact, the Holy See has said many times, "Enough with experimentation" and "Nothing is to be added or taken away from the liturgy" which is "the prayer of Christ and of the Church."

I suspect that this custom started when, as a reaction to a Jansenistic understanding of spiritual worthiness for the Sacraments, well intentioned priests and liturgical committee began to urge the faithful to receive the Eucharist. Everyone, Catholic and non-Catholic, whether in a state of grace or not, came to believe they must join the Communion line. This thinking has been introduced by the false interpretation of "active participation". As Jonn XXII pointed out, we must ask ourselves why the number of Communions (and auxiliary ministers) skyrocketed while the number of Confessions almost disappeared.

SUMMER WALK IN THE MONASTERY

"I saw the country in a light that we usually do not see: the low-slanting rays picked out the foliage of the trees and high-lighted a new wheat field against the dark curtain of woods on the knobs, which were in shadow. It was very beautiful. Deep peace. Sheep on the slopes behind the sheep barn. The new trellises in the novitiate garden leaning and sagging under a bill of roses. A cardinal singing suddenly in the radiant tree, and piles of fragrant logs all around the wood shed waiting to be cut in bad weather. I looked at all this in all tranquility with my spirit...quiet. For me, landscape seems too important for contemplation that I have no scruples about loving it. Didn't St. John of the Cross hide himself in a room up in a church tower, where there was one small window through which he could look out at the countryside?" (Thomas Merton)