**Liturgy Matters Lesson #35**

**Receiving the Gift of all Gifts – We Sit in Silence**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

I am Bishop Chad Zielinski, serving the Diocese of New Ulm. Thank you for joining me and asking the Holy Spirit to guide us as we continue our lessons on "What Happens at Mass."

Now we have received, we have been given the manna from heaven, the food of angels; what a gift, what a grace. As we sit in silence, in contemplation of the wondrous gift we have received, we are struck with awe at the fact that God should speak to us; our response can only be silence. But now our silence is even deeper, for we are struck with awe at the entire mystery of our faith concentrated into what has just happened, namely, that the eternal Son should become incarnate and share himself with us in this most intimate of ways.

There are two prayers in the large book from which the priest prays, which are printed there just to aid his own devotion at the moment of receiving communion. And so they are not generally known among the faithful. But those prayers can be a wonderful indicator of how we might speak to Jesus in this moment of silence.

“With faith in your love and mercy, I eat your body and drink your blood…” Or, “By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins, from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.”

The closing prayer, or prayer after communion, brings together all of the liturgical units of the whole mass. The priest says, “Let us pray,” and the assembly as one stands again. Using some phrase or image from the feast or the day in question, the priest prays that the sacrament bear fruit in us and that we remain faithful to all that we have received. The “Amen” of the people is said immediately in response to this prayer, but it is an Amen that closes the entire unit that began with the Lord’s Prayer.

Thank you for joining me today in this lesson on "Receiving the Gift of all Gifts - We Sit in Silence." I look forward to sharing Lesson #36 with you next week as we continue our lessons on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.