



One In Faith ACC Communication

At our Listening Sessions, attended by less than 5% of parishioners, we appreciated the thoughtful participation of those present. Because a couple of common questions were asked at most sessions, we asked Diocesan staff, in consultation with Bishop Neary, to give us consistent solid answers. Below is one question and the response.

Question: Instead of closing parishes, can parishes offer a live-stream Mass where people would gather at their “home” parish to watch the priest on a screen and receive previously consecrated Eucharist?

Response: The Mass is not just about receiving Communion—it’s a **sacrificial offering** made present in real time. The priest acts in persona Christi (in the person of Christ), and the gathered community participates in that offering. Watching a screen, even reverently, is not the same as being physically present at the altar where the sacrifice is made. The Church emphasizes the **gathering of the faithful** as a visible sign of the Body of Christ. Being physically present fosters unity, shared prayer, and a sense of belonging that’s hard to replicate virtually. Canon law and liturgical guidelines prioritize **active participation** in the liturgy. While spiritual communion and livestreams are valuable when in-person attendance isn’t possible, they are considered **exceptions**, not replacements. The Eucharist is ideally received **within the context of the Mass**. Distributing pre-consecrated hosts outside of Mass is permitted (e.g., for the sick). However, doing so regularly for entire congregations could risk diminishing the understanding of the Eucharist as part of the whole liturgical celebration.

The Current Reality Illustrates the Trends that Inspire the Future

Fr. Matthew Crane, Vicar of Canonical Affairs for the Diocese of St. Cloud, wrote an article for the July 24, 2025 Central Minnesota Catholic titled, “Extend Grace as You Consider Priests’ Unique Duties and Burdens.” In that article, he talks about a canon regarding seminarians: “c. 247 §2 The seminarians should appropriately receive firm teachings regarding the duties and burdens lived by sacred ministers of the Church, with no difficulty of the priestly life having been left unsaid.” He then goes on to say, “This is intuitive. These men should be aware of what they are getting into. However, contemporary experience suggests that it is a very difficult obligation to fulfill. Much of the Church’s implicit assumptions regarding the pastoral structures no longer apply in the contemporary, Midwestern context. For 500 years, all the Church’s law, all of her pastoral planning and all of her exercise of pastoral care have been structured around the assumption of one parish, meeting at one church, served by one pastor. With 131 parishes in the Diocese of St. Cloud, and all of those having at least one church, this structure simply doesn’t exist for the roughly 50 priests in parochial assignments in the diocese.”

We encourage you to read this article in its entirety at <https://thecentralminnesotacatholic.org/on-canon-law-with-father-crane-extend-grace-as-you-consider-priests-unique-duties-and-burdens/>

We continue to ask for your prayers for the parishioners of the One In Faith community, ACC All Things New planning committee, parish staff, diocesan All Things New planning team, and Bishop Neary as we move forward.

