

First Communion

*The school children were queuing up for lunch one day. At the beginning of the serving counter was a large pile of free apples with the sign in large print: TAKE ONLY **ONE** APPLE PLEASE - God is watching you! At the other end of the counter was a pile of chocolate biscuits with a sign cleverly posted by one of the children: TAKE ALL THE BISCUITS YOU WANT. God is down at the other end watching the apples!*

Well, we know Jesus, who is God, is present everywhere or as little six year old Mary said: "outside of Mass God is **only present everywhere**". But we believe at Mass, after the consecration, He is present with us in a very special way under the appearance of Bread and Wine.

Jesus said to the apostles in today's gospel: "I call you friends". Our friendship with Jesus presupposes that we are also trying to be companions with one another. Above all we try to cultivate forgiveness in our hearts towards those who have been less than friendly towards us. We pray for this every time we say the 'Our Father' which is always said in the Mass prior to the distribution of Holy Communion. (*'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'*). Do we mean these words?

Someone who does community work said to me recently that these days the Church is becoming one of the better places where people can experience a genuine sense of belonging to a wider family i.e. outside their immediate family. We call it the household of God.

In the church community we are all meant to be brothers and sisters of each other. That is why we shake hands with each other at Mass before we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. But, as Catholics, we're not meant to be an exclusive club. Everyone, including those who are not Christian should be the object of our love and respect.

Jesus said: "let the little children come to me and do not stop them." May there be nothing in our adult lives which would hinder these children from coming close to our Lord in the Eucharist. As they continue to receive Jesus in Holy Communion, may they grow up to live and love like Him.