

October 15, 1946

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNION FAST.

1. "Does cleaning the teeth before receiving Holy Communion break the fast? I know that some water remains in my mouth."

Reply: Brushing the teeth before Communion is even recommended, not only for sanitary purposes but also as part of the preparation of the body for the reception of Our Blessed Lord. The fact that the flavor of the toothpaste or powder and the moisture remains after rinsing out the mouth does not break the fast. It is permitted to swallow one's saliva, and the few drops of mouth-rinse or water or some manufactured preparation, like Listerine, that remain become part of the saliva. Only when one is certain that a quantity of liquid, too great to become saliva, has been swallowed, must he remain away from Communion. If a doubt arises as to whether you swallowed enough water to break a fast, take advantage of the doubt and receive Communion.

2. "Do nose drops break the Communion fast?"

Reply: No, even though one is certain that a quantity of the fluid passed into the stomach. Normally the few drops taken as a treatment never get as far as the stomach, but if they did the fast would not be broken because the substance must pass through the mouth. For the same reason, food injections taken through the arm do not break the fast.

3. "The other night a group of us came in late and through forgetfulness all took water after midnight. We wanted to receive Communion in the morning too, which was Sunday. Could we have received?"

Reply: Forgetfulness does not excuse one from the law regarding the Communion fast. If you recall in the morning, with certainty, that you took something to eat or drink after midnight, you may not receive Communion. Your good intention is not an excusing cause. At Mass make a Spiritual Communion at Communion time when this forgetfulness takes place.

4. "Does smoking before Communion break the fast?"

Reply: No, but it is highly recommended that you deny yourself this pleasure, making the sacrifice part of your preparation for Communion.

5. "I have always heard that the Communion fast does not begin until 12:15 A.M. Is that true?"

Reply: The Church permits the use of any accepted means of determining time. In some localities midnight sun-time is more advantageous than midnight clock-time. But note that only in some localities does this difference exist. In some sections of the Country midnight sun-time comes nearly thirty minutes after midnight clock-time. (See a science or an engineering student if you want to know how this difference is possible.) In certain places there are no advantages in using sun-time, and the South Bend area is one of them. When you know with certainty what the leeway is in a particular district you may use it. But if you know of no advantage, or you don't know how much it is where you are certain there is some leeway, you may not set up a deadline of your own choosing. Daylight saving time gave one the advantage of a full hour. Now that DST has been discontinued, 12:00 Midnight, clock-time is the dead line. Maybe 12:15 is the dead line in your hometown all year round, but don't say that you have that freedom wherever you go.