

Sacrament, interrupted

By [Laura Kelly Fanucci](#)

July 29, 2013

I jostle one boy on my hip and nudge the other a step closer to the front of the line. *Herding cats*, I think as he wanders into the neighboring line of communion-goers.

Using my one free hand I gently guide him back by the shoulder and whisper in his ear about trying to stay near mama. We're only a few people from the front when the toddler in my arms lunges away and starts kicking his feet in protest, demanding to walk, informing me in no uncertain terms that he does it himself.

When we reach the priest at the head of the line, I ready myself with a smile – maybe even an apologetic one for my motley crew – but he's nowhere to be found.

Instead he's already crouching low to smile at my boy and ruffle his hair before he blesses him, in words just at his level and his own name added at the end as a kicker.

Then he stands up again and does the same for the child in my arms: a welcoming grin, words of love and blessing.

Only then does he turn to me, the one waiting with outstretched hands, to offer another broad smile and the Body of Christ. I gratefully accept both.

I love that this is our parish's practice, to bless the babies and offer words of communion to the children before they are old enough to receive. But once in a while I find myself restless, wanting the minister to hurry up so we don't delay the line behind us, or wanting to get communion myself and get on my way.

Exactly the moments it does me good to have this sacrament interrupted.

What is grace if not given freely, not deserve by the one who waited patiently but poured out on every face that comes forth to a welcoming table?

What is sacrament if not shared first with the least, the forgotten, the neglected?

Maybe all sacrament is interruption. God breaks into what's most ordinary – bread, water, love, forgiveness – and blesses human attempts to make holy. We're jarred into remembering that wine and oil and candles and rings clasp truth to our hearts in ways more powerful than words. We need the ritual, the rite, the action, the sign. We need it spoken to us personally, like [Christ pulling one child onto his lap](#), and communally, as a church trying to re-member ourselves back into one body.

And we need it to keep interrupting our expectations: that we are in charge, that we control faith, that this life is ours for the taking.

Every Sunday now, as I herd the cats back to our crayon-strewn pew, I hear them plead with a hungry look back towards the line we've just left: "I want Communion next time! Why don't I get bread, too?"

This is how our restless hearts come home, I think.

Learning to long for the love they see extended.

Wanting to receive the blessing they are promised.

Originally posted at [Mothering Spirit](#)