

St. Peter parishioner's aunt makes hosts for her first Holy Communion

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CHARLOTTE — Niyah Lang's first Communion was extra special.

The altar bread that became the body of Christ for the April 21 Masses at St. Peter Church in Charlotte was made by her aunt, a cloistered Benedictine sister who lives inside the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Vermont, and her sisters.

"It was really special for our whole family as well as the other children celebrating the sacrament," said Niyah's mom Sarah Lang.

After Sarah Lang's sister, Sister Benedict McLaughlin, suggested that her monastery could provide the altar bread for Niyah's first Holy Communion, the parish was very supportive, she said. Since Sister Benedict was not able to travel to Charlotte for the Mass, this was a way she could be present for her niece in this special moment.

"Father James Shea gave us a resounding 'yes,'" she said. "He even mentioned during the Mass where the bread came from and the importance of family to help deepen your spirituality. It helped Niyah have a stronger connection to the experience and she felt very proud."

Niyah's older sister, Tianna, was also an altar server during the Mass.

Sister Benedict celebrated her 25th jubilee last summer. The Lang family traveled to Vermont for the occasion, and Niyah and her sisters met their aunt for the first time. There Niyah was able to see some of the tools the women use to make the altar bread and learn more about her calling and the community. Sister Benedict emailed her sister Sarah to tell her she was praying for Niyah and suggested that they could provide bread for her first Holy Communion. Immaculate Heart of Mary monastery made 3.7 million hosts last year

and provided it to hundreds of parishes in 24 states.

Sister Benedict sent a really nice card to St. Peter Church along with the bread, as well. They also had a Mass said in Vermont for the children receiving the sacrament, at the same time as their first Communion Mass, Sarah Lang said.

"The sisters were wrapping their arms around the kids in prayer all the way up from Vermont," Sarah Lang said. "It was very special."

Before their first Holy Communion, the children were shown a news story video from the monastery in Vermont that shows how the nuns make the hosts.

"Niyah was really excited to know that my sister was praying with her and knew she was there in spirit," Sarah Lang said. "We're very thankful Father Shea and the church allowed us to do that."

— Kimberly Bender, Online reporter

Video: See inside the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Vermont



