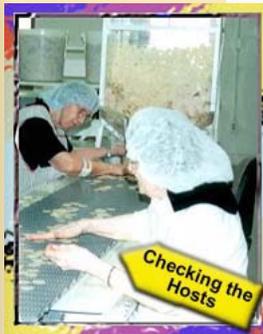


Where Do Hosts Come From?



Each day people all over the world attend Mass. Most of these people receive the Eucharist. Have you ever wondered where all the Communion hosts come from? The pictures in this story show a very special bakery.

The bakers here are religious sisters. These sisters have chosen as their special work baking the Communion bread that is used at Mass. The only thing they bake here is Communion hosts—but they make 80,000 of them every day!

The large metal vat in this picture is really a giant mixing bowl, something like the blender in your mom's kitchen. But this mixer holds 90 pounds of flour at one time! The flour can be either whole wheat or pure white. In the bowl, the flour is mixed with about 16 gallons of water to make a batter.

The batter is spread on long pans which are set on a slowly moving belt. The belt goes through a large oven for two or three minutes. What comes out of the oven is large squares of baked dough. The squares are placed on a stack of racks shaped like an upside-down V to cool.

Then the squares go through a special room where misty water is sprayed on them. This makes them soft enough to be cut into hosts with special cutting machines. The machines also press a shape into the host—usually the shape of a cross.

After the hosts have been cut, another important step is checking every single one. The religious sisters remove any host that is not perfectly round or that got slightly overbaked in the oven.

Now the hosts are carefully packed into small plastic bags. A sealing machine seals the bags tight to keep the hosts fresh.

Then the bags are packed in boxes that will be sent to churches all over the country.

The sisters do this work because they love the Eucharist.