

Thoughts of the Saints

on the Eucharist

"You envy the opportunity of the woman who touched the vestments of Jesus, of the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears, of the women of Galilee who had the happiness of following him in his pilgrimages, of the Apostles and disciples who conversed with him familiarly...You call happy those who saw him...But, come to the altar and you will see him, you will touch him, you will give to him holy kisses, you will wash him with your tears, you will carry him within you like Mary Most Holy." *St. John Chrysostom*

"The celebration of the Holy Mass is as valuable as the death of Jesus on the Cross." *St. Thomas Aquinas*

"Grieve over the contempt cast upon Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and try to make amends for it by a greater and more ardent love." *St. Jean Vianny, Cure of Ars*

"Man should tremble, the world should vibrate, all Heaven should be deeply moved when the Son of God appears on the altar in the hands of the priest." *St. Francis of Assisi*

"Oh, if we could only understand Who is that God Whom we receive in Holy Communion, then what purity of heart we would bring to Him!" *St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi*

"When Jesus is corporally present within us, the angels surround us as a guard of love." *St. Bernard*

"My brethren, the food of the soul is God. Ah! What a beautiful thought! The soul can feed on nothing but God. Only God can suffice for it; only God can fill it; only God can satiate its hunger; it absolutely requires its God! *St. Jean Vianny, Cure of Ars*

Prayers Before Holy Communion

O Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you," regard not my sins but the faith of your Church, and deign to give her peace and unity according to your will: who live and reign, God, world without end.

Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, by the will of the Father, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, have by your death given life to the world, deliver me by this, your Most Sacred Body and Blood, from all my sins and from every evil. Make me always cling to your commandments, and never permit me to be separated from you, who live and reign, God, world without end.

Amen.

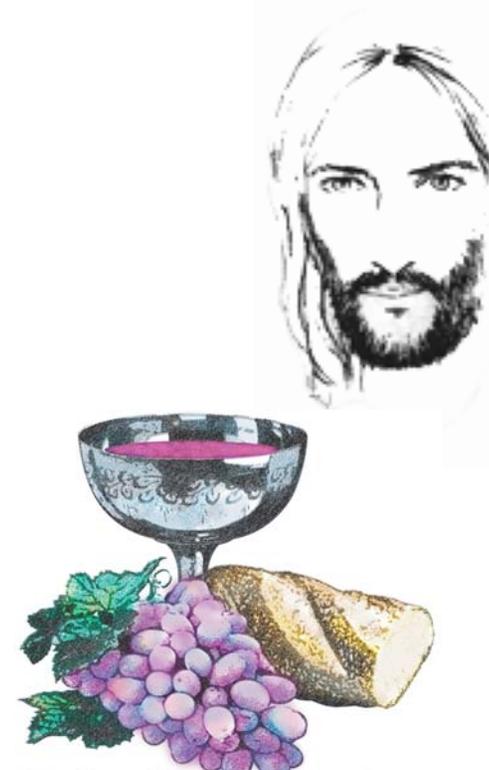
Let not the partaking of your Body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; both of soul and body. Who live and reign with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end.

Amen.

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"Q's and A's"
about
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The purpose of this pamphlet is to simply state basic Catholic teaching, understanding, relevance and the necessity for the Holy Eucharist, especially the Sunday Eucharist. It is not meant to be a substitute for a formal catechesis or education about the meaning of Holy Communion. Nor can it relate everything Catholics believe about this Sacrament of Love. After reading this pamphlet, if you would like more information about the questions discussed, please feel free to contact our office or your local Catholic priest.

1. What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is the Real Presence of Jesus, under the appearances of bread and wine. What a gift we are given—to be able to receive the Word made flesh! And what a responsibility we take on in receiving our Lord Jesus in this way! We must then promise to live, act, and speak so as to give Christ to others through our good example. That is why we pray together at Mass: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you...”.

2. What is the meaning of Christ offering Himself to us in Holy Communion?

We learn of Christ’s intent from his own words at the Last Supper on the night before he died when he said, “Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body which is given up for you. Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the cup of my blood which is shed for you and for all

so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.” We do not receive Holy Communion merely to carry out a religious ritual. We receive the Lord in this way for the forgiveness of our sins and those of the whole world. Christ’s Passover meal becomes the sacrifice that saved the human race. At Mass we are able to unite ourselves to the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. As Christ offers himself as the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of humanity, we promise to offer ourselves for this mission of redemption and salvation of the human race.

3. “Keep Holy the Lord’s Day.” Why?

A family member who consistently excuses themselves from every gathering of the family harms the unity of the family and themselves as well. The same is true for Christ’s family which is His Body, the Church. None of us are born by ourselves. We come into the world and have life through God and others. To assert one’s total independence, as if to deny even one’s membership in a family, causes mortal wounds to all involved. We are “reborn” on Sundays, the day of the Lord’s resurrection. We are bound to attend Mass on Sunday, for this is the day of our birth and rebirth as Christians. We are not able to be Christian without joining the Christian family in worship of the Creator. Religion and spirituality may be a personal matter of conscience but it cannot be a private one. We are never just an “I”. We are daughters/sons, brothers/sisters, husbands/wives. We are always in relationship to one another. Therefore, on the Lord’s Day, Sunday, we place the basic relationship of our lives, as children of God and brothers and sisters of the Lord and each other, in first place. Our faith is personal but never private!

4. Why must there be so much repetition at Mass? It seems that because Mass is always the same, it cannot keep people

engaged and interested.

The familiarity that a set ritual provides is capable of helping us more than we may think. Think of the husband and wife who deepen in their love for each other precisely because they do the same things every day for one another and with one another. The ritual of the Church has the same effect on us. When we merge our attention so as to participate in a common ritual it can help us enter a sphere beyond ourselves. In the case of the Mass, we are being lifted up by the ritual so as to enter into the very life of God. That is why we must always offer our best to the Lord. When the attention is only on the likes or dislikes of the assembly, there is the possibility of being in competition. When the attention is on the fulfillment of the ritual as prescribed by the Church, there is the actuality of many different people becoming one in heart, mind and soul in the worship of the living God.

5. What do we receive in receiving Holy Communion?

We receive a mission, i.e., a responsibility, a mandate from the Lord. If the Lord comes to us in this way to be “food” for our souls, to strengthen us, it is for the purpose of doing his work and being his witness. Not to include this aspect of the Eucharist’s meaning is to reduce the experience to a merely private one. “When the Mass ends, the mission begins!” Our Lord’s sacrifice is oriented to the salvation of souls. Therefore, our participation and reception of Jesus is oriented not only to our own sanctification but that of all we meet, work with and live with. Blessed Mother Teresa referred to this mission as being “a carrier of God’s love”! Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to the world’s Saviour. We carry Jesus within us after we receive Communion to bring him to our world today.