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# COMMUNION CRUSADE

*By*

FATHER LAWRENCE G. LOVASIK, S.V.D.

*Divine Word Missionary*

Sacred Heart Mission House

Girard, Pennsylvania

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## FOREWORD

This booklet is an appeal for frequent Holy Communion. It is but an echo of the appeal that came forth from the Heart of Jesus the night He instituted the Holy Eucharist, "Take and eat, this is my body . . . Abide in me, and I in you," and which continues without ceasing from His tabernacle home. It only repeats the appeal of Holy Mother Church addressed to the faithful by her zealous Pontiffs, especially Pius X and his worthy successors, and more recently by Pope Pius XII in his radio address to the National Congress at New Orleans: "*May we not discern, however, a promise of better things for the Universal Church in the reflowering among you and among all peoples of Eucharistic love and the daily increase of an ardent love and devotion for the august Sacrament? While we exhort you from our paternal heart to most holy zeal towards the Blessed Sacrament, we fervently pray with you that, strong in youth, your people, who stand for the wealth and power, may also be a shining example of Catholic faith and Christian virtue.*"

Some of the marvels of Holy Communion are set forth in these pages to encourage you to join the Communion Crusade of Catholics who wish to receive Jesus frequently, even daily, in order that He may be King in their hearts and lives and homes—King also of all mankind.

Let this appeal enter your heart by a careful and repeated reading of these pages. Then, having seen how much an infinite God can really love you, His creature, in this Holy Sacrament, return your poor love for His great love by receiving the Bread of Life often, even daily, if possible.

I choose Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament as Patroness of this Crusade, for She is the surest Way to Jesus. May She bless these pages that those who read them may be stimulated to an increase of true piety towards Her Eucharistic Son by a frequent, even daily reception of Holy Communion!

FATHER LAWRENCE G. LOVASIK, S.V.D.

Feast of the Assumption, 1949  
Sacred Heart Mission House,  
Girard, Pennsylvania



## CHAPTER I

### WHAT THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS

*The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament which contains the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.*

In this Sacrament Christ becomes present so that (a) He may renew the Sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner on our altars, (b) nourish our souls in Holy Communion, (c) and abide bodily among us by His Real Presence in our tabernacles. Unlike other sacraments, the Holy Eucharist has a twofold nature. It is at once a sacrament and a sacrifice.

#### A. THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

*Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice in which His Passion and death would be renewed for all men until the end of time.* “And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you’ ” (Luke 22, 19).

These words signify that at the Last Supper the bread and wine were changed into His Body and Blood—His Body that was to be offered for mankind on the Cross of Calvary; His Blood which was to be shed in remission of the sins of all men.



We read in the Acts of the Apostles how *the first Christians* understood these words of Christ and how they persevered in the practice of so renewing the Sacrifice of Calvary. "And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers" (Acts 2, 42).

*St. Paul* describes the Apostolic practice, and after renewing the account of the institution of this Sacrament, he adds, "For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1 Cor. 11, 26).

*The Catholic Church* has continued this practice of the Apostles. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the "breaking of bread" which is renewed daily on our altars. In this act of Divine worship the priest, acting in the name and person of Christ, changes bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood, offers Christ's Passion and death to God the Father in atonement for the sins of mankind, partakes with the faithful of Christ's sacred Flesh and Blood in Holy Communion.

*Holy Mass is consequently the highest act of Divine worship.* It is the renewal of the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary which merited the infinite grace of Redemption. In measure as you unite with the priest in offering this Sacrifice to God and nourish your soul with its fruits in Holy Communion, to that extent you apply to yourself the graces of the Redemption. Through the priest and Christ, whose power has been given the priest, Christ's marvelous

act of Redemption is continued. It is the act most pleasing to God, the act which appeases Divine justice and merits Divine mercy for all humanity. It is as such the highest act of prayer and adoration possible.

#### B. THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT

The fruit of the Sacrifice of Holy Mass is applied best to your soul in Holy Communion. It is *the partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.*

By a sacrament you are born again to a new life (Baptism); by a sacrament you are brought to full spiritual stature (Confirmation); by a sacrament the wounds of your soul, though they be mortal, are healed (Penance); so likewise you are fed and your spiritual life is sustained by a sacrament, which is called the Holy Eucharist, and contains the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Our Lord Promised The Holy Eucharist

Five thousand men, not counting women and children, followed our Savior, eager to hear His words. When Jesus had miraculously multiplied the five barley loaves before their eyes, their enthusiasm for Him increased to such a pitch that they desired to make Him their King. They soon changed their minds, however, for when they gathered round Him on the next day at Capharnaum, secretly hoping to witness another miracle in evidence of His divine mission, our Savior promised them another kind of bread, more wonderful than that which Moses gave

the Israelites in the wilderness, namely, His own most sacred Body. "You seek me . . . because you have eaten of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you."

They said to Him, "Lord, give us always this bread."

He answered, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, and have died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that if anyone eat of it he will not die. I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews argued with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" And many began to go away. Our Lord did not call them back or change the meaning of His words. Instead He said what He meant with even stronger words: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and as I live because of the Father, so he who eats me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread that has come down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eats this bread shall live forever."

Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?"

He then turned to His Apostles and asked, "Do you also wish to go away?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of everlasting life, and we have come to believe and to know that thou art the Christ the Son of God" (John 6).

This incident reveals plainly the behavior of two kinds of Catholics: those who have deep faith and those whose faith is weak. *Those of weak faith* know the doctrine of Christ about Holy Communion and yet seem to walk away by the very fact that they make no effort to get to Holy Communion frequently. As soon as the following of Christ costs them some sacrifice, even though eternal happiness is to be its reward, they act like the five thousand in the wilderness and abandon our Lord. With a threat of spiritual death, Jesus has said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6, 54). And yet many are satisfied with a Holy Communion only a few times a year. Our Lord has said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting," the greatest benefit that even God can give us, but some Catholics, like many of the Jews, say, "This is a hard saying, Who can listen to it?" They keep away from Holy Communion because they lack faith.

On the other hand, *Catholics with deep faith* say with St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of everlasting life." They cannot under-

stand this mystery, yet they believe in the word of Christ Who cannot deceive them, and believing they receive Holy Communion frequently as the most powerful and most necessary means of salvation.

#### **Our Lord Kept His Promise**

On Holy Thursday, when Jesus ate supper for the last time with His Apostles, He took bread into His hands, blessed and broke, and gave it to them, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." And taking a cup of wine, He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, "All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins . . . Do this in remembrance of me" (Matt. 26, 25).

In this way Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist, for the bread was changed into His Body and the wine into His Blood. Nothing of the bread and wine remained except the appearances; that is, the color, taste, weight, and shape. The Apostles saw, tasted and touched only bread, but they still believed that what seemed to be bread and wine was really the Body and Blood of Jesus.

By His command, "Do this in remembrance of me," Jesus gave the Apostles and those who followed them (bishops and priests of the Church) the power to do at Holy Mass what He Himself has done. Thus Our Lord continues to keep His promise to give His Body and Blood. At the words of Consecration spoken by the priest, "This is my body . . . This is my blood," the greatest miracle takes place. Jesus Christ, God Himself, becomes present in the



bread and wine, for He changes them into His Body and Blood through His priests. Only the appearances of bread and wine remain.

#### His Last Will

Our Lord's Last Will is expressed with the words: "Take and eat . . . Do this in remembrance of me!" These words were addressed not only to the Apostles who were to consecrate the Eucharist, but also to the faithful who were to receive It.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered more than 380,000 times every twenty-four hours. This is a glorious fulfillment of Our Lord's Last Will. If His Last Will was that the Apostles should offer Mass and receive Holy Communion, why should not the laity fulfill this Last Will by offering the Mass with the priest and receiving Holy Communion daily? Like priests, they too are in need of God's help for the sanctification and salvation of their souls. The Sacraments are meant for all, because Jesus died for all!

Since the salvation of souls is the great desire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *He certainly wants you to use the means He gave to save your soul.* Without grace there is no salvation. The channels of grace are the Sacraments and prayer, especially the Sacrament of the Altar. The Sacraments remain useless to you unless you receive them frequently; otherwise the Last Will of Jesus remains unfulfilled as far as you are concerned. He left this Gift for the very end as a death-bed Gift of love, so that you might appreciate it all the more and take His words

to heart by partaking of His Body and Blood as the daily food of your soul.

The Holy Eucharist is the greatest of the Sacraments because Christ, the Divine Redeemer of the world, the Author of Grace, gives you His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity under the visible appearance of bread and wine. In giving Himself Christ bestows upon you the highest pledge of salvation and the best means of attaining it. He nourishes your soul with His own life and unites it with God, which is the highest purpose of all religion. The Holy Eucharist is the very gift of God to you, the reward of heaven granted to you on earth. The early Christians could only refer to it as the "Good Gift," which is the meaning of the "Eucharist" in Greek.

After having gone so far to establish this means of grace, *it must hurt the Heart of Jesus to find Catholics who do not care to use it.* The best proof that you are grateful to Christ for having died for you is to receive Communion frequently that you may be assured of the salvation of your soul, for He said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6, 55).

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT HOLY COMMUNION DOES

#### 1. HOLY COMMUNION PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF YOUR SOUL

##### **Christ the Mediator of Grace**

God is the source of Life. From all eternity the Father gives Himself to the Son. Together the Father and the Son give themselves to the Holy Spirit, sharing with Him Their One Divinity.

God wants to give you a share in His divine life. Before doing so, however, He gave His life in all its fullness to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus because of its union with the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. This divine life then extends from Christ, the Head, into the body of the Church. The members of this body are the faithful who in turn share in that intimate life of the three Divine Persons.

*Christ is the Mediator through Whom grace comes to all men.* By His sacrifice on the cross He has merited this divine life which mankind had lost by sinning. Jesus pours His divine life forth on you and unites you with God through the Sacraments, especially in Holy Communion, for It is the Sacrament of union. Holy Communion preserves and increases this divine life in you.

##### **Living by Jesus**

Should you ask Our Lord to tell you why He willed to give you this wonderful Sacrament, He would repeat what He said to the Jews when He promised

the Eucharist. "I am the *living* bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall *live* forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the *life* of the world. As the living Father has sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eats me, the same also shall *live* by me" (John 6, 57).

Jesus might have said in so many words: My desire is to share my Divine life with you. I hold my being, my life, from my Father, and thus live only for Him. I desire intensely that you likewise, holding all from Me, live only for Me. Your bodily life is preserved and developed by food; I want to be the food of your soul, so as to preserve and develop its life. *I am the life of your soul. He that eats Me, lives by My life.* I possess the fullness of grace, and those to whom I give Myself as food partake of this grace. I am the Living Bread, the Bread of Life, come down from Heaven to give you eternal life.

The sharing of divine life means that God lives in you and you in Him, and that as God the Son has by nature the same life as the Father in its infinite fullness, so you share it by grace.

#### **Eucharistic Manna**

Our Lord compared the most holy Sacrament of the Altar with the manna given to the Jews, because the Holy Eucharist was intended to be the daily spiritual food of Christians, just as manna had been the daily food of the Israelites in the desert.

It is in the midst of a meal, under the form of food, that Jesus chose to institute the Eucharist. He

gives Himself to you as the nourishment of your soul: "My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6, 57). Our Lord was referring to a means of grace as necessary and as indispensable as bodily food. In the "Our Father" He taught us to say, "Give us this day our daily bread." This refers to Holy Communion. Like the manna, the Eucharist is bread come down from Heaven, which gives life by nourishing grace within your soul.

*The life of your soul is supported and developed by eating the "Bread which came down from heaven," much in the same way as the life of your body is supported by eating your ordinary meals.* Just as it is necessary to supply your body with food every day, so you must nourish and feed your soul, since obviously the soul has no less need of spiritual than the body of material nourishment. In the same way as you weaken, without destroying your bodily life by stinting the supply of nourishment, so you can weaken and cause partial paralysis of the soul by unduly prolonging the interval between your Communion. As the lack of food for a prolonged period results in death, so to deprive the soul of its heavenly food for a long time causes spiritual starvation or the loss of life.

Furthermore, regularity of meals will keep your body up to its work and in condition of vigorous health; in a somewhat similar way frequent Communion tones up your soul gives it strength and health. Excellent food is best adapted for assimilation; the food prepared for you by Christ is well



assimilated in such a way that you are transformed into Him. Food that is well assimilated is profitably eaten at frequent intervals; so Holy Communion must be received frequently.

Therefore Jesus comes not only to visit you in Holy Communion, but to be the food of your soul, that receiving Him you may have life, the life of grace here below, the life of glory hereafter.

### **The Vine and Branches**

Sometime after having given the Holy Eucharist to the apostles at the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I am the vine . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn" (John 15, 5).

*Jesus compared grace to the vital sap circulating through the vine.* The stem and the branches are one same being, nourished and acting together producing the same fruits because fed by the same sap. In the same way Jesus and the faithful are united in one body. He makes the sap of His grace to spring up within you especially by means of Holy Communion and thereby increases and develops the divine life of your soul. Thus the Eucharist is the instrument for uniting all men to His own Mystical Body. Salvation is utterly impossible for any one not

so united. Christ is the head of that spiritual body, men are the members. He is the vine, we are the branches. Severed from the head, the life-giving center, a member must necessarily die. The branch cut off from the trunk can receive no sap; it can only wither in death.

### The Marvels of Sanctifying Grace

*Sanctifying grace is that grace which gives your soul new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself.* Sanctifying grace: (1) makes your soul holy and pleasing to God; (2) makes you an adopted child of God; (3) makes you a temple of the Holy Ghost; (4) gives you the right to heaven.

Just as your soul is the life of your body, so sanctifying grace is the life of your soul. You need sanctifying grace to save your soul. Mortal sin brings death to your soul because it takes away sanctifying grace, and this means losing God Himself and becoming a child of the devil. This is the greatest evil that is caused by mortal sin.

*Holy Communion not only preserves the life of your soul, but increases it,* just as the body is not only supported by means of natural food, but increases its strength. Holy Communion also preserves and increases all the various virtues, which are bestowed upon your soul together with sanctifying grace. By increasing the *theological virtues* (faith, hope and charity), you enter into closer union with God, and by strengthening the *moral virtues* (prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude), you regulate better

your whole attitude towards God, your neighbor, and yourself. By rendering the *Seven Gifts and the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost* more abundant, you make your understanding and will open to the inspirations and promptings of the same Holy Spirit.

Grace then is the life of God. All the other Sacraments bring this to you in so many streams, but Holy Communion is the living fountain. While the other Sacraments bear this life of God to your soul, Holy Communion bears Jesus Christ Himself. In other words, it is a Person to person communion, a sublime traffic in human and divine life.

Surely you ought to be anxious to go to Holy Communion often in order not to lose life everlasting. This is the greatest loss possible, for *the smallest degree of sanctifying grace is worth more than anything that the world can offer*. Even the greatest earthly happiness is nothing in comparison with that of possessing sanctifying grace and eternal life in God. Look into your soul, for heaven's beginning is there in the form of grace. Heavenly life in essence is grace multiplied to an infinite degree. But by the same token, do not look for Holy Communion in Heaven. There you shall *see* God but not receive Him. He left that reception to this world alone that He might give you a foretaste of what is to come.

## 2. HOLY COMMUNION UNITES YOUR SOUL MORE CLOSELY WITH CHRIST

### **Union with Christ in God**

Jesus gives you this heavenly Bread not only to preserve and increase His divine life in your soul, but

also to unite Himself with you. "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him."

A wonderful union takes place at Holy Communion. Even the most intimate unions of the world cannot be compared to it. It is a union of love between Christ and your soul.

(a) *Jesus comes to you as man.* The Sacred Host represents to you Bethlehem and Nazareth, Gethsemane and Golgotha. It contains the *Body* of Christ, which He took of His most pure Virgin Mother, and which arose in glory from the tomb. It contains your Savior's precious *Blood*, with which He redeemed you, and one drop of which would have been enough to redeem a thousand worlds. It contains His most sacred *Soul*, the abode of graces and virtues in absolute perfection. In the heavens the sight of His glorified Humanity fills the angels and saints with joy. This glorified Body, animated by a Heart which is an abyss of love, and by a Soul unspeakably beautiful, radiating light, life, grace, peace and joy, becomes your Banquet.

(b) *But Jesus comes to you even as God.* He is the Word, eternally begotten in the bosom of the Divinity. You share in His divine life as the Divine Word, as the only Son of the Father. You receive the life which the Father gives to the Son from all eternity. Therefore, Holy Communion gives you the whole Christ — His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity.

The primary purpose of Holy Communion is to give you the Humanity rather than the divinity of Jesus Christ. You can possess His Divinity in your soul at all times by remaining in the state of grace. But it is only at the time of Holy Communion, and then only for several minutes—as long as the species of bread last—that you enjoy the great privilege of being intimately united with the human nature of Our Lord.

Therefore at the moment of Communion you are really in possession of God Himself. You have within you the Incarnate Word, with all He is, with all He does; Jesus, God and Man; all the treasures of His Divinity, all the graces of His Humanity.

(c) But the Son of God does not come to you alone. Where Jesus is, His Father is also, and where the Father and the Son are present, there also is the Holy Spirit. Consequently, *the adorable Trinity dwells in your heart at Holy Communion*, as Jesus said, “If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him” (John 14, 23). By sanctifying grace, the entire Trinity is the Guest of your soul. Yet this is, if possible, more true at the moment of Communion because Jesus comes to you as the Bread of Life, expressly to bestow upon you that life which He receives from His Father. At Communion your soul becomes, as it were, the heaven of the Blessed Trinity.

*From the Blessed Trinity to Holy Communion:* such was the route Christ took to give you His



Divine Life, the path made by Divine Love in descending to you whom He wished to save. *From Communion to the Blessed Trinity*: is the ascent by which you, purified and strengthened by union with Christ, must make to the eternal possession of God. Holy Communion is the ascending way of human love to God.

### Transformation into Christ

*Not only do you abide in Jesus through Holy Communion, but He also abides in you by His grace and the action of His Spirit.* He says, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15, 5). "To abide" expresses perfect union. Jesus comes to you to live within your soul, to be the life of your soul, so that He may transform you, little by little, into Himself.

The special effect of Holy Communion is to make you Christ-like, not only by giving you sanctifying grace, but also by giving you actual graces to preserve His divine life in your soul.

*Actual grace is a supernatural help of God which enlightens your mind and strengthens your will to do good and avoid evil.* Actual grace lasts only during a certain action. It is a free gift which God bestows upon you when you need it. Actual grace helps you to "act" as you should. It enlightens your mind that you may see the good that you should do and the evil that you should avoid; it makes your will strong so that you may want to do good and keep away from sin. You receive actual grace by every good work that you do, but especially by prayer and the holy

Sacraments. You cannot do good unless God helps you with His grace, for Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing" (John 15, 6). It is especially through the Sacraments, and above all through actual graces given during and after Holy Communion that Jesus helps you to practice virtue and become like Him.

*This union is truly transforming.* Little by little your thoughts, your ideas, your convictions, and your judgments undergo a change. Instead of weighing the worth of things with the world's standards, you make the thoughts and the views of Jesus Christ your own; you lovingly accept the maxims of the Gospel; you continually ask yourself the question: "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" The Coming of Christ to you tends to establish between His thoughts and yours, between His sentiments and yours, between His will and your will, such an exchange, such a oneness, that you have no other thoughts, no other sentiments, no other desires than those of Christ, as St. Paul says, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). Inasmuch as you are united with Christ, they are common to you and Him. His love and yours, His thoughts and yours intermingle. Together you adore, love, give thanks. Jesus purifies, uplifts, sanctifies, and transforms, as it were, all your faculties, so that you love God with the Heart of Christ, you praise God with the life of Christ, you live by His life. The Divine Presence of Jesus and His sanctifying virtue penetrate so intimately your whole being, both body

and soul with all their powers, that you become "Another Christ".

Therefore, *when Jesus unites Himself with you in Holy Communion, He means to take possession of you and to direct your whole life and reshape it on new lines, according to His great ideal.* He lives in you by grace. This life of grace does not mean just your religious practices; it is your whole existence, directed and vivified by a new life. He lives in you in order to work through you, not only in church, but in the home, at school, in the workshop or office, at recreation, so that you may be Christlike in your thoughts, desires, words, and actions. Wherever you are, you are a member of Christ, a Christ-bearer. Through you He continues His life on earth, for you represent His life in the world. Through you His light must shine, His example must radiate, His life must spread for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

#### **The Power of Love**

The only obstacle to this complete reign of Christ in you is your selfishness. This you must immolate. You must die to your selfish life in order to live in the divine life. The Christ-life in you is a life of self-surrender, of love. Love yields your will to Christ, and through it, your whole being and all your energies. Christ gives Himself to you according to the measure of your love. *If you are detached both from yourself and creatures, if you give yourself to Him unreservedly with a pure heart, Jesus in exchange gives Himself to you as only God is able to do.* St.

John has said, "God is Love, and He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (John 4, 16). Without love you receive Christ with the lips; but He wants you to be united to Him with mind and heart and will and all your soul, in order that you may share His divine life. By the faith you have in Him, by the love you bear towards Him, he wishes that His life and no longer your own may animate you.

There is no real "communion" without true love. The absence of this disposition also explains why some advance so little in holiness, despite frequent Communion. Christ does not find in these souls the willingness to permit Him to act freely in them. Their vanity, self-love, touchiness, selfishness, jealousy and sensuality prevent the union between them and Christ being made with that intensity, that fullness by which the transformation of the soul is effected and completed.

Therefore, *remain closely united to Christ*. These words sum up not only the whole Christian life, but also all holiness. "Abide in me, and I in you . . . He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither" (John 15, 5). Holy Communion tends to realize ever more this gift of God, for He says, "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him" (John 6, 57).

### 3. HOLY COMMUNION PRESERVES YOU FROM MORTAL SIN AND REMITS VENIAL SIN

#### A Heavenly Remedy

Your life is a continual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil—those enemies of your soul that lead you into mortal sin—but Christ has given you Holy Communion as the most powerful safeguard against them. *The main effect of Holy Communion is to preserve and increase the life of sanctifying grace in your soul and to guard it against mortal sin.* “This is the Bread that comes down from heaven, so that if anyone eat of it, he will not die” (John 6, 49).

*Mortal sin* is the greatest evil in the world because it drives out of your soul the divine life of sanctifying grace and turns you away from God, the source of all life, peace and joy. But Our Lord protects your soul from mortal sin by giving you more *sanctifying grace* in Holy Communion, God’s very life in your soul. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you” (John 6, 54). Through Holy Communion you also receive *actual grace*, which gives you the light to see what is evil and the strength you need to fight against it. In this way your soul is strengthened against temptation.

In its Decree on Frequent Holy Communion, Holy Mother Church expressly declares: “The desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred Banquet is directed chiefly to this end, that the faithful, being

united to God by means of the Sacrament, may derive from It strength to resist their sensual passions, *to cleanse themselves from the stain of daily faults, and to avoid those graver sins which they may commit through human weakness*; so that the main purpose of Holy Communion is not that the honor and reverence due to Our Lord may be safeguarded, nor that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue bestowed on those who receive It. *Holy Communion is the remedy whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from mortal sin.*" (Council of Trent)

Just as bodily food repairs what you lose by daily wear and tear, so likewise this Divine Food is a remedy for the spiritual infirmities of each day. Ordinary food is medicinal as well as nourishing, and so is Holy Communion. Its medicinal action secures you against the poison of mortal sin. By strengthening the soul's stamina, It bestows the power of resisting evil. In the same way it guarantees the soul against smaller faults, as the well-toned body is preserved from the common slight colds and similar small ailments. By means of the Eucharistic Sacrament you are united to God Himself. The weakness of our tainted nature needs association with the Strong. Consequently, Pope Pius X insists upon it that Communion is not reserved for the pious and devoted. As those who are ill should visit the doctor and take his medicine, so also the Catholic who feels his own weakness and is fearful of being unable to persevere in well-doing, is the one person above all



others who has need of frequently, even daily, receiving the Body of Jesus Christ.

### Safeguard against Impurity

*Holy Communion is needed most of all by those who are weak and struggling to break some sinful habit.* It is the most powerful remedy against temptation and the greatest influence in freeing one from the evil tendencies of human nature. The Council of Trent says, "In the holy mysteries is such efficacy as to preserve us pure and unhurt from sin and from the attack of temptations, and prepare the soul as it were by a *heavenly medicine*, against the easy approach and infection of deadly disease . . . *It also restrains and represses the lust of the flesh*; for whilst It inflames souls more with the fire of charity, It necessarily puts out the fires of passion." An increase of sanctifying grace—and of the graces, virtues, Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Ghost connected with it—produces a weakening of the low and sensual appetites in man, and of the domination and influence of the body. Hence spiritual directors advise those to receive Communion often who are tempted to break the sixth commandment.

When you recall that in the Holy Eucharist you receive the Body of Christ—a Body in which all the human passions and tendencies were ever under the full control of His will—you will understand why *the Church recommends frequent Communion to the young who are tempted to sins of impurity.* The Sacred Body which was born of the Virgin Mary sanctifies you and in times of temptation It helps

you to keep your passions under control. The Blood which washes away the sins of the world is your refreshment, and by Its Divine power you are protected from mortal sin. Everything that surrounds this Sacrament is clean, white and spotless—reminding you that you must war against all sin and impurity. When you receive Jesus into your heart, you become like a tabernacle which contains the Blessed Sacrament. How chaste your body should be! How can you defile your soul with impure thoughts and desires, much less with sinful actions? Jesus will make your words and conversations clean, kind and proper, for your tongue touches the most pure Body of Christ and serves as a paten on which He rests.

#### **Youth's Salvation**

There is abundant evidence available on all sides to prove that Satan and his helpers on earth are making a systematic effort to corrupt the morals of the young. Sex mania is prevailing in our country today, and all friends of decency realize that something must be done quickly to protect our young people from this menace. Priests, parents, and teachers are alarmed over the growing immorality of the young. The Church is the only institution which offers the means to that moral recovery, and her greatest means is frequent Holy Communion. The coming of Jesus in Holy Communion awakens new love in the hearts of youth and encourages them to love purity and sinlessness, which is a necessary condition in happiness. Cardinal Newman wrote: "It is the boast of the Catholic Church that it has the

gift of making the young heart chaste; and why is this, but that it gives us Jesus Christ for our food, and Mary for our nursing Mother?" St. Don Bosco made splendid men of some 200,000 boys, of whom 6,000 became zealous priests. He used to say: "I know only two educational instruments—Holy Communion and the rod, and I have given up the rod and use only Holy Communion."

If you are young, it is a matter of supreme importance for you to strengthen your character and deepen your virtue and piety by receiving Communion frequently. You stand in need of greater spiritual reinforcements during the plastic days of your youth than you will after your character is formed. During adolescence new passions are awakening within you. Your experience is very limited and offers but little help in restraining the forces striving for the mastery. *Holy Communion is the most effective remedy and protection against the temptations that press round about you on every side.* The habit of frequent Communion will tide you over the critical years of adolescence and plant so deeply in your young soul the seeds of piety and virtue that the after years will bring an abundant harvest. You need fear nothing if Christ is with you. By His actual graces He will strengthen your soul that you may courageously resist all evil. He will not permit any serious sin ever to separate you from Him. He will strengthen you against even lesser sins which would weaken your friendship if you let Him work in your soul by the sacramental graces of Holy Communion. No wonder then that daily Holy Com-

munion is the ideal placed before us by the Sovereign Pontiff for the youth of every school and college in our land. Christ knocks on the door of your heart, but it is only you who can admit Him.

### Remits Venial Sin

*Holy Communion not only protects you from mortal sin but also takes away venial sin* provided you are sorry for it and you have no affection for it or desire to commit it in the future.

After mortal sin nothing is more terrible than venial sin. It really offends God's infinite majesty and brings upon you the punishments of purgatory. It banishes true joy from your heart because it draws you away from God, your Highest Good. Venial sin is an ugly stain which makes your soul displeasing in God's sight. It hinders Him from enriching you with so many more graces which could help you to love and serve Him better.

The Holy Eucharist was not instituted to forgive sins; Christ gave us other sacraments for that purpose. Yet this Sacrament can and does remit venial sin, being, as the Council of Trent calls It, "a remedy by which we are freed from our daily faults." Venial sins can be forgiven by Holy Communion—not directly, but indirectly—by the power of the acts of love which this Sacrament inspires. In the same manner, some of the debt of temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven is taken away by a worthy Communion. Even your daily deliberate venial sins become less numerous with frequent Communion.

One Holy Communion should be enough to make your soul holy and sinless, and yet, after so many Communion, you may not have succeeded in correcting your faults. Perhaps it is because you have not received Holy Communion with greater fervor and more frequently.

#### 4. HOLY COMMUNION INCREASES YOUR LOVE FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR

##### **Bond of Charity**

Holy Communion increases and preserves love for your neighbor. It is the Banquet of Love which Christ has prepared for the children of God. It is not surprising, then, that Our Lord immediately after having given the first Communion to His disciples declared the great commandment of love: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13, 34).

Even the outward species of the Eucharist remind you of brotherly love and kindness. Many grains of wheat are ground and mingled together to make one bread, and many grapes are crushed to fill the Eucharistic chalice; you must likewise become one with your neighbor through love and Holy Communion.

*The Eucharist is the bond of charity that unites all Christians as members of one spiritual body, the Church, even as the soul gives life to each member*

of the human body. St. Paul says, "The Bread that we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord? Because the Bread is one, we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one Bread" (1 Cor. x. 16). Jesus is that Bread in Holy Communion. By giving you a fuller share in the life of Christ, Holy Communion unites you more intimately to all the members of His Mystical Body the Church—Our Lady and the Saints, the souls in purgatory, your friends, and all Christians on earth. You are made one with them; they are made one with you. Through Holy Communion you realize that blessed state for which Christ prayed to the Father, "That they may be one, even as Thou and I are one." You would not dare to hope that your union with your fellowmen might be so strong and close as to be compared to that of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. But such was Christ's prayer. Therefore you can only try to understand how deep is His desire that you should love your neighbor and use the Holy Eucharist as the source and bond of this love.

Nowadays, when so much stress is being placed on the development of the social virtues, Catholics should remember that the basis of all social virtue is the oneness of all men either actually or potentially in the Mystical Body of Christ. In my own body my hand does not wound my foot; no one member tries to get the share of nourishment that belongs to another. The health of the body is the health of the member, and the health of the member is the health of the body. This is equally true of the Mystical



Body of Christ. If Catholics through the world were fired with these convictions, hatred would cease. The most effective means of fostering this oneness is the reception of Our Lord's real Body in Holy Communion. St. Augustine calls the Holy Eucharist "the Sacrament of affection, the Sign of unity, the Bond of charity."

Holy Communion is a bond of union and a source of strength in any community. Faith brings people together, and Holy Communion bridges over the gulf between rich and poor, high and low. Assembled around the altar, all are equal, all being God's children, brothers of Christ and joint-heirs of heaven. Holy Communion has influence upon the world. If the spirit of Christ is to dominate the masses, and peace, happiness and charity are to prevail in each family, then let them go often to Holy Communion, and their example will work wonders. *A complete transformation of society is possible only if Catholic men, women, and children, receive the Eucharist in greater numbers.* If they fall off from receiving the Sacraments, all the bonds of family and social life give way. Unless Catholics gather together and kneel shoulder to shoulder at the Communion rail, they run the risk of being scattered by the revolutionary spirit of the age.

#### **Source of Brotherly Love**

Through frequent Holy Communion Jesus will give you help to carry out His great commandment of love for your neighbor and to put away all unkindness. He will give you the grace to love your

neighbor as yourself for His sake; to respect and love him as God's image and likeness, as a child of your heavenly Father, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, as one to whom He gives Himself in Holy Communion, as one whom He identified with Himself when He said, "As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25, 40). You cannot be unkind to one whom Christ loves and for whom He died on the cross.

Communion must therefore be a source of sincere love for your neighbor and of union with him. If you fail to manifest this power of the Eucharist though you receive Holy Communion frequently; if you come from the Lord's Table, not radiant with love but still pettily self-centered, unkind, jealous, peevish and resentful—it is because you do not really understand the full meaning of Communion and fail to realize your supernatural oneness with all men in Christ. The least wilful coldness and resentment harbored in your soul towards your neighbor forms a great obstacle to union with Jesus. If you make the resolution of correcting yourself of your bad habits, and make serious efforts to overcome them, you may be assured that Our Lord will look upon you with kindness, bless your efforts and reward you abundantly. By frequent Holy Communion learn to overcome your selfishness, to resist your natural feelings and reactions such as hatred and bitterness; develop kindness and sympathy, forbearance and forgiveness; learn to think kindly of everyone and to find your happiness in making others happy, and thus you will unite yourself by charity with Christ

and with His members in His Mystical Body. By uniting all the faithful with Jesus, Holy Communion unites them with each other in charity.

## 5. HOLY COMMUNION INCREASES THE POWER OF PRAYER

### **The most Effective Prayer**

*No prayer can be more effective than that said after Holy Communion* when Jesus is present in your heart as God and Man, as your best Friend, ready to help you by means of the many graces He wishes to grant you. He helped people in His day because they had faith. Receiving Holy Communion is the best evidence that you can give of your faith. If God is to hear prayer, it must proceed from an innocent heart, and a person is never more careful to keep his soul free from sin than when Christ comes to complete the purification of his heart.

Jesus Himself said that your heavenly Father will give you whatever you ask in His name, "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16, 23). Then there is nothing that you may not hope to receive when at Holy Communion Christ prays in and with you to His Father in heaven. But at the Last Supper Jesus has expressly promised to hear your prayer on the condition that you abide in Him through Holy Communion, when He said to the Apostles, "If you abide in me, and if my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you" (John 15, 7). It is especially by Holy Com-

munion that you abide in Him, for He also said, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (John 6, 57).

*Therefore, the greater your trouble and the heavier your cross, the more often should you approach the Lord's Table.* You are not likely to receive at any other time a favor withheld from you then. God will keep His word. After placing all your difficulties in your Savior's hands, you may look forward to the future with firm confidence. There is no friend so faithful, no one so ready to help you as our Lord, and He is the Author and Source of all graces. He loves you more than anyone else ever can. He is interested in giving you the graces you need to save your soul because He died for it. If you fail to receive Jesus often, you are like a hungry man who will not accept an invitation to a rich banquet, or a poor man who rejects the means offered him by some wealthy person to help him in his need.

Daily Communion should be your ideal. In early Christian times hearing Mass meant that everyone was to communicate with the priest who celebrated it. That privilege is yours now, just as much as it was theirs. What can God refuse you when He makes Himself your own? Can you fail to persevere in doing good when your heart is made one with the valient Heart of Christ? Your prayers are never more powerful than when they are presented to Jesus at Holy Communion.

When offering your Holy Communion for some one else, either a living person or a soul in purgatory,

remember that this does not mean that you can transfer to another the sacramental effects of Holy Communion, for these are always restricted to the one who receives the Sacrament. But the prayers that you recite before and after Holy Communion possess the power to move God to grant favors and the power to make satisfaction for temporal punishments, and these values can be transferred to others. Moreover, by Holy Communion you can always gain indulgences which may be applied to the souls in purgatory.

#### A Novena of Holy Communions

It should be clear then that since the Sacraments are a God-given means of grace, and the Holy Eucharist the greatest and holiest of the Sacraments, *no Novena can be more fruitful than a Novena of Holy Communions*. You may receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive days of the week, that is, one after the other, or on nine Sundays (when you surely go to Mass) or any other days of the week in *petition* for a special favor. Then if you care to, you may make another Novena of Communions immediately afterwards in *thanksgiving*, even if you have not received the favor you prayed for. Though your prayer was not answered, you will have drawn closer to God and received the graces which accompany each Holy Communion. The sanctification of your soul is the greatest favor you could obtain through your Holy Communions. Sometimes God will not answer your prayer at once in order to test your faith. Perhaps He chooses to grant you some-

thing else which He considers more necessary for you, or He may grant you something better. You will never go wrong letting God grant an answer to your prayers *His* way, not *your* way, for He knows what is best for you.

It is well to remember that if you are receiving Holy Communion on nine Sundays, you need not go to Confession before each Holy Communion (though it is very good to do so) unless you are sure you have committed a mortal sin. Venial sins should not keep you from receiving, make an act of perfect contrition and approach the Holy Table without fear. It is advisable, however, to go to Confession at least every two or three weeks.

## 6. HOLY COMMUNION FILLS YOUR HEART WITH JOY AND CONSOLATION

### Source of Joy

*One of the effects of the Holy Eucharist is to fill your soul with supernatural sweetness and joy that renders it prompt and devoted in the service of God.* Nothing is so joyous as a feast. Holy Communion is the feast of the soul, that is to say, a source of deepest joys. As bread imparts to the body strength and a feeling of contentment, so does the Bread of Life bring peace and joy to your heart because of the wonderful fruits of grace which It produces in your soul. At Holy Communion there is opened to you a world of life, light and love, a gracious outpouring of the treasures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Fount of all grace, holiness and Christian joyfulness.



Holy Communion is the foundation of your faith, the support of your hope, the nourishment of your charity, for It inflames your heart with the love of Christ. It is the most efficacious means you have of sanctifying and saving your soul. At this fount of joy you find the strength and courage to undertake great things for God's glory and the welfare of your neighbor.

*But this joy is above all spiritual.* Since the Eucharist is the "mystery of faith," it may happen that God will not permit this inward joy to react upon your feelings. Do not be surprised or discouraged if you may remain in a state of great dryness after having received the Bread of Life. If you have brought all the good dispositions possible for receiving Christ and still feel helpless, remain in peace. Christ acts in silence, but surely, in the innermost depths of your soul in order to transform it into Himself. That is the most precious effect of this heavenly food. The more often you receive Christ in the Sacrament of His love, the better will you understand how sweet the Lord is (Ps. 33, 19). Jesus has encouraged you to pray for this spiritual joy: "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16, 24). His words to the Apostles are fulfilled in you through Holy Communion: "You therefore have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you" (John 16, 22). At Communion you see Him with eyes of faith and your heart rejoices. This is the true and lasting joy which neither the world nor the powers of evil can take from you.

*The moments of union with Jesus in Holy Communion are the happiest of your life, for this union of love is the climax of God's love for you. Your heart is filled with heavenly bliss because God Himself makes it His little heaven of delights when He visits you in Holy Communion. Since God has made your heart for Himself, give it to Him generously. Yearn to be with Him and to possess Him here on earth through frequent Holy Communion, and you will prepare yourself for an eternal union with Him in heaven. At Holy Communion you enjoy a foretaste of heaven, for you receive Christ's glorified Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.*

#### **Fount of Consolation**

*The frequent reception of Holy Communion will afford you great consolation in all the sorrows and sufferings of this earthly life. No matter how great your need and your trouble may be; no matter if all forsake you, Christ will never fail you. How could you doubt Him Who became Man and died on the cross for you and Who gave Himself to be your daily Food? During earthly life Jesus was ever kind and compassionate. He went about doing good. You may hope for everything from Him in Holy Communion, since you do not merely touch Him, but take Him into your heart. He will be your best comforter and helper. That is the reason why He invites you to Holy Communion with such gentle tenderness and touching piety: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11, 29). If you are miserable, go to Christ and He*

will give you the repose of a good conscience. He will bestow that love which lightens labor. He is the Physician of your soul. He watches over you in your daily work, steadies your steps again when you stumble. He is ever by your side, cheering you by pointing to the great reward and showing the tried affection of a true Friend.

Holy Communion is the surest way to true consolation, because it unites you in Divine love with Jesus, your greatest and most lovable Good. If your heart is often sad it is because you may be looking for consolation and happiness in creatures, forgetting for the moment that lasting peace and comfort come from God. True peace and consolation spring from Divine love. Sin is the cause of all unhappiness and misery in this world, since it deprives souls of God's friendship. Therefore strive to tread underfoot all that is low and earthly so that you may find your rest in God alone. St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts were made for Thee O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in Thee." You cannot rest in God more surely than through Holy Communion.

## 7. HOLY COMMUNION IS A PLEDGE OF FUTURE GLORY

### **The Seed of Immortality**

One hour will inevitably come to you—the hour of your death. God gave you your whole life to be a preparation for eternity. He offered you His holy Body to be your daily bread and refreshment as you wearily toil along the path of life. What consolation

will you derive at the point of death from the thought of having received Communion frequently! Your soul being brought so closely into contact with your Savior, has shared in His divine life, has eaten His Flesh and drunk His Blood, so that you enjoy a pledge of everlasting life, for He said, "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever" (John 6, 51). You will be filled with peace. It will not be hard to die. Even though at the last hour of your life the devil will do his utmost to make you lose courage and force you to rebel against God, you may depend upon the graces of Holy Viaticum, the heavenly Food of Holy Communion. Jesus will be your strength.

Though your body will die and be changed to the dust of the earth, it will be reunited to your soul and share its immortality. Jesus said to Martha who mourned the loss of her brother Lazarus, "Thy brother shall rise." Martha answered, "I know that he will rise at the resurrection, on the last day." And Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die" (John 11, 25). St. Paul says, "What is sown in corruption, rises in incorruption . . . What is a natural body rises a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15, 44). Now the seed of immortality, which according to divine promise will germinate at the end of time, is sown in your living body by Holy Communion. *The glorious resurrection of the body is an effect of Holy Communion.* It confers on you the right to a

glorious resurrection which Christ promised to those who eat His Flesh and drink His Blood: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6, 55).

The bodies of your dear ones have been laid into the horrid stillness of the grave where your own will be laid someday; nevertheless you may see them face to face with the very same eyes and clothed in the self-same bodies you saw upon earth. This thought should induce you to receive Christ in Holy Communion frequently, even daily. Frequent Communion will multiply and strengthen your own hopes of seeing God in heaven, with glorified eyes of flesh, and of there sitting down forever with your friends to the everlasting banquet prepared from all eternity for the true and faithful lovers of Christ.

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St. Thomas Aquinas (13 c.), the prince of the Church's theologians, thus sums up the far-reaching effects of Holy Communion: "The Sacrament of the Body of the Lord puts the demons to flight, defends us against the incentives to vice and to concupiscence, cleanses the soul from sin, quiets the anger of God, enlightens the understanding to know God, inflames the will and the affections with the love of God, fills the memory with spiritual sweetness, confirms the entire man in good, frees us from eternal death, multiplies the merits of a good life, leads us to our everlasting home, and reanimates the body to eternal life."

Since the effects of Holy Communion are so great and so wonderful, you will understand why Christ and Holy Mother Church urge you to receive frequently, even daily, so that you may unite yourself intimately with God, keep from sin, and save your immortal soul. And Jesus said, "What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8, 36)



## CHAPTER III

### THE WISH OF HOLY MOTHER CHURCH

#### 1. HISTORY OF FREQUENT COMMUNION

##### (a) *The Early Church*

In order to show you how earnestly Holy Mother Church wishes you to receive Holy Communion, take a brief glance at the history of Holy Communion. In the early days of the Church it was the common practice for the whole congregation to receive communion at every Mass. We read in the Acts of the Apostles: "They *continued steadfastly* in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers" (Acts 2, 42). "And continuing *daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses" (Acts 2, 46), wherever the Sacred Mysteries were celebrated. During the trying days of the Roman persecution, even when Mass could not be celebrated every day, the faithful enjoyed the privilege of keeping the Holy Eucharist in their homes, communicating themselves every morning. *To assist at Holy Mass and to receive Holy Communion were at that time identical.* Every church resembled the cenacle, and the example of the Apostles was followed closely. Just as they, at the first Mass, received our Savior's Body from His own Divine hands, so in the infant Church Communion was inseparable from the Mass. This shows how intensely eager the faithful were for

Holy Communion. All their thoughts seemed to center upon the Blessed Sacrament. This was the practice which produced martyrs who would rather die than sell their religion to the pagans around them in spite of relentless bloody persecution.

This went on for *three centuries*. Like the Christians in the apostolic age, those living in the immediately succeeding centuries approached the Holy Table daily. Gradually, however, this ardent zeal for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament disappeared, and people began to communicate less frequently. At first they did so every Sunday, then only a few times in the year. But at once voices were raised in protest, urging all to return to the original custom of the Church, to communicate frequently or even daily.

(b) *Arianism.*

Arius in the fourth century attacked the divinity of Christ. Catholics then, in a bitter struggle against the Arians, preached the divinity of Christ so strongly that they placed very little emphasis on His humanity. Now when you think of the divinity of Christ, you are naturally impressed with fear and awe. When these *fourth century Christians* began to think of Holy Communion in terms of awe and fear only, they came to be very hesitant about receiving. They felt unworthy to receive God, and so they stayed away from the Sacrament.

(c) *Jansenism.*

From that time many attempts were made to revive the practice of frequent Communion. In al-

most every century God raised up saints like St. Catherine of Siena, St. Philip Neri, and St. Vincent Ferrer, to preach this means to spiritual health. To some extent they were successful, but we have never since reached the devotion of the early Christians. Beginning with the fifteen century, the practice began steadily to advance, but then came Jansenism in the *seventeenth century*. It was a heresy from within, which in spite of condemnation by several Popes, influenced the minds of almost all Catholics. The Jansenists, exaggerating again the dread in which we should hold the Eucharist, laid down such strict regulations for frequent reception that almost no one was considered worthy to receive often. Under their influence piety grew cold and in many places the average rate of reception fell quickly to the minimum of once a year and less.

(d) *Pope Pius X.*

Although after the first condemnation no one would claim to be a Jansenist, yet the excessive strictness had infected many, and even learned Catholic teachers and writers disputed among themselves concerning the conditions under which the faithful might be permitted daily or weekly Communion. Then there came a Pope who will be known forever in history as the "Pope of the Blessed Sacrament." He was born a poor peasant boy and became successively a humble parish priest, a bishop of a small diocese, the Patriarch of a populous See, and then Pope of the Universal Church. He had lived in close contact with his people. He knew their needs;

he understood their difficulties; he could discern the approaching clouds of danger that hung over them. Pope Pius X was a practical man. He knew the remedy which the first Christian used in the Catacombs, but which had been forgotten by many. He appealed to the Christian world to turn again to the Blessed Sacrament as the surest hope in this conflict. Hence in December, 1905, and again in August, 1910, he "ordained, commended, counselled, and commanded" two great principles and practices, namely: *early Communion for little children and frequent Communion for adults*. The quarrel was settled once and for all when Pius X issued the famous decree on daily Communion in which he repeated the official teaching of the Church in the Council of Trent, which had declared: "*At every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally, by the actual reception of the Eucharist.*" The decree went on to say, with a great deal of proof, that it was ". . . the wish of the Church that all Christians should be daily nourished by this heavenly banquet and should derive therefrom abundant fruit for their sanctification."

(e) *The Church today.*

*Daily Communion is the wish of Christ and His Church.* Our own day has seen a marvelous increase in frequent Communion. In fact, we are nearer now to the custom of the first three centuries than at any time previously. Regular monthly reception of the Sacraments which is required by various societies, as well as Holy Communion on the First Friday in

honor of the Sacred Heart encouraged frequent Communion immensely. But we have still a very long way to go. Perhaps in the not too distant future a great Eucharistic Age may see every good Catholic at the Holy Table every week, if not daily. But you do not have to wait till then to do what is right. You can begin at once to make Holy Communion your "daily Bread".

## 2. THE MIND OF THE CHURCH

### The Writings of the Saints

The writings of the Saints in every century bear out the fact that frequent Communion has always been the true spirit of the Church. *Origen*, who died in 251 A.D. addresses careless communicants in the following words: "You tell me that you come to church only on feast days; — are not the other days festivals too? Are they not also days belonging to the Lord? Among the Jews it is the practice to observe only a few days as festivals . . . but Christians receive the Flesh of the Incarnate Word of God every day."

*St. John Chrysostom* (d. 407) advised the faithful of his day as follows: "The time for Communion is not the feast-day nor the day for celebrations, but when you have a pure conscience and your life is purified from sin."

*St. Augustine* (d. 430) stated, "Receive daily what profits you daily; and live so that you may be worthy to receive daily."

*St. Francis de Sales* (d. 1622) says, "Among those who wish to serve God devoutly, the greatest interval

between Communions is a month. If worldlings ask you why you receive Holy Communion so often, tell them that it is to learn to love God, to purify yourself from your faults, to free yourself from your miseries, to console yourself under your afflictions. Let two classes of people receive Communion often: the strong, that they may not become weak; and the weak, that they may become strong . . . Those who have not much worldly business ought to receive often because they have time to do so, and those who have much worldly business, because they have need to do so. Receive Holy Communion often—as often as you can, with the advice of your spiritual father.”

*St. Therese* (d. 1897), perhaps the greatest saint of modern times, writes: “It is not to remain in a golden ciborium that Jesus comes down *each day* from heaven, but to find another heaven—the heaven of our soul, in which He takes His delight . . . It is necessary that the Bread of Angels come like a divine dew to strengthen you and to give all that is wanting to you.”

#### **The Council of Trent and Pope Pius X**

*The true spirit of the Church is daily Mass with Communion.* The Council of Trent declared it to be the express wish of the Church “that at every Mass the faithful who are present should receive Communion.” This is the Church’s ideal, set forth in her history in the pronouncements of the Popes and Councils, in the writings of the Saints, and in the Liturgy itself.

Holy Mother Church earnestly wishes that you



go to Holy Communion often, even daily, if possible. She speaks in the name of Our Lord through the voice of Pope Pius X, the Pope of the Eucharist: "*All the faithful, married or single, young or old, even children from their first Communion are invited to go to Holy Communion frequently; yes, daily.*"

Reminding us again that the obligation of the precept of Confession and Communion rests, next to the child, on parents, confessors, teachers and pastors, Pope Pius continues in his encyclical on early Communion for children: "Those who have the care of children should use all diligence, so that after first Communion *the children shall often approach the Holy Table, even daily if possible, as Jesus Christ and our Mother the Church desire.*"

In 1905, Pope Pius X states: (1) "Frequent and daily Communion, being most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank or condition of life, so that no one who is in *the state of grace*, and who approaches the Holy Table *with an upright and devout intention*, can be lawfully hindered."

(2) "*A right intention* is had by him who goes to Holy Communion, not out of routine or vain glory or human respect, but in order to please God or to be more closely united with Him by love, and to make use of this divine remedy for his weakness and faults."

(3) "Although it is more suitable that those who

receive Holy Communion frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully willful and from all attachment to them, *nevertheless, it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin*, and resolved never more to commit mortal sin; and, if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible that daily communicants should not gradually free themselves from even venial sins and from all attachment to them."

(4) Pius X advised a worthy preparation and thanksgiving.

(5) And finally, if necessary, each one should ask his confessor's advice concerning frequent and daily Communion.

### 3. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FREQUENT COMMUNION

The wonderful effects of Holy Communion are not wrought in your soul unless it is prepared to receive so many graces. It is true that the Sacraments produce fruit of themselves, the fruit for which they were instituted, but on condition that no obstacle be opposed to their action. There can be none of Our Lord's part—in Him are all the treasures of the Divinity, and He infinitely desires to communicate them to you in giving Himself. The obstacle may then be in you. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of union, and the fewer obstacles to the perfection of this union with which Christ meets, the more the grace of His Sacrament acts in you. Grave sin which causes the death of your soul is the greatest obstacle.

As food is given only to the living, so the Eucharist is only given to those who already possess the life of grace. Another obstacle may be the lack of a right intention.

Consequently, Holy Mother Church requires only two things for frequent Communion: (a) *The state of grace*—you must be free from every mortal sin; (b) *A right intention*—You should not go to Holy Communion out of mere habit or to be seen by people, but to please God, to be united with Him by love, and to receive this divine medicine for your sins and faults.

### (1) *The State of Grace*

Sanctifying grace gives life to your soul; it is the sharing of the life of God Himself. It makes you holy and pleasing to God, a child of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Mortal sin brings death to your soul because it takes away sanctifying grace. You lose God Himself.

The state of grace is necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Communion. This means that you must be free from every mortal sin and must have made up your mind never to commit a mortal sin again. Let nothing but a mortal sin keep you from receiving Holy Communion.

### **Mortal Sin**

*Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God. It is called mortal because it takes away sanctifying grace which is the life of your soul.*

Three things are necessary for a sin to be mortal: (1) *Grievous matter*—the thing must be very bad; (2) *full knowledge* that it is against God's law—you must know what you are doing; (3) *full consent of your will*—you must really want to do it. If one of these three things is missing, there is no mortal sin.

The following are some instances of mortal sin:

(a) Missing *Mass on Sunday* without sufficient reason; knowingly *eating meat on Friday*.

(b) *Sins against the sixth and ninth Commandments*: Sexual pleasure outside marriage, alone or with others, that is directly willed or desired, intentionally procured or permitted in thought, word or action: for instance, sexual intimacy with others, intimate and passionate kissing and embracing with the intention of arousing sexual pleasure, self-abuse, reading a book or looking at pictures or movies in order to arouse passion, immodest conversation with the intention of exciting the hearers to lust, coarse language which would scandalize and excite the young and innocent, to listen to obscene conversation for the sake of the sexual pleasure that it excites, to entertain a bad thought willingly for the purpose of enjoying it, not avoiding persons, places and things which are a near occasion of mortal sin and generally lead one into it (modern burlesque, very obscene literature). The practice of *birth control* in marriage commonly understood to mean the prevention of conception. Pope Pius XI says, "Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to

generate life, is an offense against the law of God and nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin.”

(c) *Excessive drinking* which causes one to lose the use of reason; *heavy gambling* of money which one cannot afford.

(d) *Serious scandal* caused by parents in the presence of their children.

(e) *Serious injury of another's good name or property.*

(f) *Blasphemy* of a deliberate *abuse of God's Holy Name* in violent anger.

### Sacrilege

Christ presupposes life in the soul of the one who receives the Holy Eucharist because Holy Communion is a Sacrament of the living. In other words, Holy Communion *increases* but does not *give* sanctifying grace to the soul after this grace had been lost. Our Lord always sets the Eucharist before us as a principle of life, the food for our souls. But souls dead through sin, like dead bodies, cannot take nourishment.

A person who knowingly receives Holy Communion in mortal sin receives the Body and Blood of Our Lord, but he does not receive His graces. He commits a very grave sin of sacrilege. A sacrilege is the profanation of sacred objects—and what could be more sacred than Christ Himself? Hence it is that unworthy Communion often harden the hearts of sinners and cause them to resist grace.

Never go to Holy Communion with a deliberate,

unrepented, unforgiven mortal sin on your soul. If you are conscious of being in the state of mortal sin, however contrite you may think yourself to be (even if you are, in fact, contrite), you may not receive Holy Communion without previous sacramental confession. However, if there is urgent need to receive the Sacrament *and* if no confessor is available, reception is permissible after an act of perfect contrition is made.

Should you remember a grievous sin which you have forgotten to confess, you need not confess that forgotten sin before receiving Holy Communion, if at confession you had sincere sorrow for all your sins, because you are in the state of grace. That sin must be confessed in the next confession if it is remembered. You may continue to receive Holy Communion until the next confession.

### Venial Sin

Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God. *You commit a venial sin when you knowingly and willfully disobey a commandment of God in a less serious matter; or if the matter was serious, but you did not know that what you were doing was seriously wrong; or if you did not want to do it.*

Excluding anything that is serious, ordinarily such sins as these are *venial*:

- (a) Lying;
- (b) Speaking of the faults of others without sufficient reason;
- (c) A show of anger or impatience, slight cursing;



(d) Using God's Name out of habit;

(e) Disobedience in smaller matters;

(f) Half-hearted resistance when tempted by bad thoughts or desires, curious and imprudent looks and reading, pondering on dangerous thoughts through idle curiosity unduly prolonged, repeated frivolous kisses that may lead to sin, immodest conversation which is merely suggestive or slightly objectionable, listening to obscene conversation out of curiosity or laughing at obscene jokes from human respect, to think about (but not willingly enjoy) sexually-stimulating things without a sufficient reason.

*If you are conscious only of venial sins, an act of contrition suffices for the worthy reception of Holy Communion.* A thousand venial sins do not render a Communion unworthy. On the contrary, contrition with Communion remits venial sins; and frequent Communion is the most powerful medicine to reduce their number.

### **Temptation**

A temptation is not a sin. It is an invitation to sin, a fight between your duty to obey God's law and your evil desires. As soon as you decide to *give in* to your evil desire and *want* to disobey God's commandments, the temptation is over and you have committed a sin. You must *know* what you are doing and you must *want* to break a serious commandment of God's before a mortal sin can be committed. No temptation can harm you as long as you are sincerely seeking to remain in the friendship and love of God.

### Doubts

Doubts may come as to whether you have consented to a temptation or not. Remember that if you have the habitual will and determination to resist temptation (e.g. evil thoughts) and if you have prayed, you may conclude that deliberate consent was lacking. Allow no scruple or doubt to keep you from receiving Holy Communion. Therefore doubts about whether you are in the state of grace or not do not keep you from receiving. Make an act of contrition and go without any fear.

St. Alphonsus says that in case of doubt, whether there be grave reasons for the doubt or not, whether the sin be mortal or venial, a person may go to Communion without previous confession. Simply make an act of good contrition, receive, and then, if you wish, mention the doubtful sin in the following confession. The careless may be advised to confess at least their doubt; habitual sinners should be strongly urged to confess; good pious Catholics need not confess; the scrupulous ought not to confess.

*You must be certain that you have committed a mortal sin before you can say that you may not receive.* Abstain only when you can put your hand on the Bible and swear that you are absolutely certain you are guilty of deliberate mortal sin. Venial sins do not keep you from receiving Holy Communion. Be sorry for them and come to the Holy Table.

### (2) A RIGHT INTENTION

The right intention includes the desire of pleasing God, Who wishes you to partake daily of this

Heavenly Food, of being more closely united with Him by love, and of seeking in the Sacrament a divine remedy for weakness and defects. You should avoid routine, vain-glory and human respect, for these diminish the fruits of the Sacrament. You have a right intention if you wish to receive any of the effects which Holy Communion produces in your soul.

The *physical requirements* necessary for Holy Communion include fasting from midnight from all food and drink. It is a serious sin knowingly and willingly to receive Holy Communion after having broken one's fast.

## CHAPTER IV

### PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING

#### Necessity of Proper Dispositions

Sanctifying grace is increased in your soul *by the very fact that you receive* the Sacrament (ex opere operato), just as it is in all the Sacraments, if you have the minimum required dispositions. These are: valid Baptism and the state of grace. However, that does not mean that by receiving Communion you become automatically better. There are effects which *depend on the cooperation and the love of the one receiving* the Sacrament (ex opere operantis).

A person habitually guilty of deliberate venial sin, a person who receives Christ carelessly, thoughtlessly, without preparation and without thanksgiving, receives the benefits which the Sacrament produces by the very fact that he receives It, but he does not allow these graces to grow and blossom in his heart because he is poorly disposed. *The abundance of fruit is measured by the degree of your love*, since the special fruit of Holy Communion is an increase of sanctifying grace and the virtue of charity. Therefore what matters is not so much the number as the *quality* of your Communion. "The oftener, the better" is true provided you receive Communion from personal conviction and not merely from routine or the desire to please.

Furthermore, what you receive is not moral goodness but grace, which is a new principle of life and

of goodness. That life must be *lived*; that principle must be *used* by your will. You are alive by the very fact that you have a soul, the principle of your life; but unless you actually work, you will get nothing done. Human nature always tries to find an easy way; it tends to seek in the Sacraments a substitute for effort. *Grace, however, does not dispense you from the moral effort, but stimulates it; it does not give "virtue", but helps to make the effort to acquire it.* It does not usually take away difficulties and temptations, but it makes the will prompt and generous to overcome them. Therefore, you should not think you can "take it easy" because you receive Communion. The Eucharist is a food and food is meant to give energy for action. The more grace, the more intense must be your action, otherwise grace remains sterile.

Therefore, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, received with right and fervent dispositions, adds to your personal merits a rich bounty of grace. Approaching frequently, even daily, it is in your power to become a saint. Your task is but to lay your soul open to receive this divine life, to foster it and make it grow until you become "Another Christ."

### Preparation

Preparation and thanksgiving after Holy Communion play an important part in your spiritual life, for *the fruit of Holy Communion depends on your dispositions.* These dispositions may be summed up as follows:

(1) *The more perfect accomplishment of all the duties of your state of life* in union with Jesus and in order to please Him. This is the best general disposition and means of drawing Christ to yourself because His whole life was a continual act of filial obedience to His Father.

(2) One of the most important immediate dispositions is *faith*. The Eucharist is essentially a mystery of faith, and nowhere is faith so useful as in this Sacrament because neither reason nor the senses perceive anything of Christ. On the altar neither His Humanity nor His Divinity are visible.

(3) *Sincere humility and detachment* empty the soul of its pride. The more you empty yourself of self, the more ready you make your soul to let itself be possessed by God and His gifts. To remain attached to venial sin, to deliberate imperfections, to wilful negligences—all these things cannot fail to hinder His action when He comes to you. Do not bargain with Christ, nor reserve any place for creatures loved for their own sake. Detach yourself from creatures, aspire after perfect submission of your being to Christ by love. Christ cannot make you share in the abundance of His grace as long as you do not labor, by watchfulness over yourself and by self-sacrifice, to uproot bad habits and break off attachments to yourself and to creatures. This is true, above all, of deliberate or habitual faults against charity towards your neighbor.

(4) An ardent *desire* to be united to God in the Eucharist. Realizing your helplessness and your



poverty, long for Him Who alone can give strength to your weakness, enrich you with His treasures and fill the void within your heart.

### Thanksgiving

(1) Make an act of silent *adoration and complete surrender of yourself to Christ*, Who, being God, gives Himself entirely to you. In union with Mary, the most perfect adorer of Jesus Christ, adore the Word of God within you. Unite yourself to those acts of intense adoration that the Sacred Humanity of Christ renders to the Blessed Trinity. Nothing so enables Jesus to take complete possession of your soul as this act of self-abasement.

(2) Listen to your Master and speak to Him with love. Lay your soul open to His divine grace and influence. Sit, like Magdalen, at the feet of Jesus; speak to Him familiarly, listening to what He says in the depth of your soul. Be ready to give Him all He asks.

When you receive Christ at the Holy Table, you may *converse with Him in any of His mysteries*. Although He is now in His glorious state, you find in Him the One Who has lived for you and merited for you the grace that these contain. Dwelling in you, Christ communicates this grace to you in order to bring about little by little that transformation of your life into Him which is the effect proper to this Sacrament.

You can, for example, unite yourself to Jesus as the *Son of God* living in the bosom of the Father, equal to His Father, God like Him, the object of His

Father's good pleasure. You can speak to Him, the *Incarinate Word*, as Our Lady did when He lived in her before being seen by the world. You can pray to Him within yourself as you would have prayed to Him, the *Infant Savior*, nineteen centuries ago in the stable-cave of Bethlehem with the shepherds and Magi. He then communicates to you the grace of imitating His humility, poverty and detachment, that you contemplate in Him in this state of His hidden life. If you desire, He will be within you the *Agonizing Savior*, Who, by His wonderful submission to His Father's will, obtains for you the grace to bear your daily crosses. He will be the *Divine Risen Lord* Who grants you the grace to detach yourself from all that is earthly, to live for God more generously and fully. He will be in you *the Victor* Who gloriously ascends into heaven and draws you after Him that you may already dwell there by faith, hope, and holy desire. Christ thus contemplated and received is Christ living His mysteries over again in you. It is His life being instilled into yours with all its own beauties, merits and graces.

Pray vocally by reciting prayers. There is no end to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. The one thing necessary is that you recognize the greatness of the Divine Gift.

(3) *Thank God* for the many favors He has granted you. Christ Himself becomes your thanksgiving, your "Eucharist". He supplies for all your weakness and miseries. Ask the Blessed Virgin to thank Her divine Son with you and for you.

(4) *Promise* to make the sacrifices required to

reform and transform your life in some particular point, and beg for the courage of carrying this promise into effect. At Baptism Jesus planted some tiny seeds of virtue in your soul. As the Divine Sower He comes now to see how well they are growing, to give advice and encouragement about their care, to give you will, strength and life that these seeds of virtue may find fertile soil wherein to grow.

(5) *Beg for graces from Christ*, your Elder Brother, and place no bounds to your confidence. The riches of this Sacrament are infinite since it contains Christ Himself. All the fruits of the Redemption are contained in the Eucharist to become yours. Our Lord earnestly wills to give you a share in them. The greater your faith and confidence, the more abundant will be the fruits which your soul will receive in Holy Communion.

Pray for others: for all who are dear to you, for the vast interests of the Church, for the Holy Father, bishops and priests. Finally, conclude by asking Our Lord to give you the grace of abiding in Him as He does in you, the grace of performing all your actions in union with Him in a spirit of thanksgiving. Entrust to the Blessed Virgin that same Jesus She guarded so well, in order that She may aid you in making Him grow in your heart. Thus strengthened by prayer, you may pass on to action.

#### Communion in the Mass

Mass and Holy Communion are not to be separated. It is *one* service, *one* single action, one Mass *with* Holy Communion as a perfect climax to the

whole. This will be clearer if you consider what the Mass really is.

1. *Mass is an offering to God.* It is giving, the most beautiful and delightful of all actions.

2. *You offer Jesus Himself, the Victim of Calvary,* and thereby you present to the Heavenly Father the great Sacrifice of His Son, your Brother and Savior. There is nothing greater in the world, nothing more pleasing to God, nothing more powerful.

3. *You offer Jesus in union with the whole Church on earth.* But you cannot do this without offering yourself with Him, for the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Whole Christ, Head and members. The value of your offering will be proportioned to the sincerity and fervor of your self-oblation. *You offer yourself with Christ and through Christ, and in that act you unite your present offering with His offering on the cross.*

4. *God gives Himself to you through Jesus at Holy Communion.* Thus Mass is the meeting of God and man, of Father and children, in mutual loving self-surrender, through Christ the only Mediator between God and men. This is the foundation of Christian holiness: union of man and God through Christ.

The very heart of the Mass is in the offering—the Consecration. Yet the Mass would be incomplete, “unfinished”, if it stopped there. Both its meaning and its fruit are completed by Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is the part of the Mass that most affects *you*, for it brings you into the Mass in a very intimate and personal way. It is not simply

union with Christ; it is a *sacrificial meal*, that is, the eating of the Victim offered to God—Jesus under the symbol of His sacrificial death. He said, "This is my body *given up* for you . . . This is my blood which is *shed* for you." The Eucharistic Christ, before being received in Communion, has first been offered to God. The Host you receive is the Victim of the cross Who has been offered in the Mass.

Holy Communion is the fruit of this Sacrifice. You have offered Jesus and yourself through Jesus. *Communion is God's return gift*. Having accepted your offering through Christ He now gives Himself to you through Christ. At the Consecration you have offered the heavenly Father His own beloved Son as the greatest Gift you could offer Him in adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and petition. At Communion the heavenly Father wishes to return that Gift to you as the best He can offer you. Not to receive Holy Communion would be like refusing His Gift.

Therefore, *the most fruitful partaking of the Sacrifice of the Altar is Holy Communion*. It is also the most certain means of being transformed into Jesus, for if you are united to Christ, He immolates you with Himself, renders you pleasing to His Father and makes you, by His grace, more and more like Himself.

#### Active Participation in the Mass

*The best immediate preparation for Holy Communion and thanksgiving is active participation in the Mass itself*. Active participation means uniting

your sentiments with those of the Victim Christ on the altar, joining the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice, praying with him, using, if possible, the prayers designed by the Church as they are contained in a Missal or prayerbook, singing parts of the Mass along with others in attendance, serving the priest when this is necessary and permitted. Such active participation at Mass unites you to all your fellow Christians, even to the Saints in heaven, through Christ Who offers the Sacrifice. In union with the whole Church and according to the mind of the Church, God is adored and Christ is received.

Enter into the spirit of the Mass. The drama of the Mass will take you through all the "acts" required for Holy Communion—faith, hope, love, desire, contrition. Take your troubles, joys and sorrows, your mistakes and failures and, uniting them with the infinite Sacrifice of Jesus, lay them on the altar in offering to the Eternal Father. You have to be ready to give all to God, to accept the sufferings and trials of each day for love of Him in the same spirit that animated the Sacred Heart of Christ upon the cross: intense love of His Father and of your neighbor, ardent desire for the salvation of souls, and full abandonment to all that He wills. When you do this, you offer God the most acceptable homage He can receive from you, for Christ Himself takes all your sentiments into His Heart and offers perfect adoration and full satisfaction for you to His Father; He renders Him worthy thanksgiving and His prayer is all-powerful. All these acts of the



eternal High Priest by which He renews upon the altar His immolation of Calvary, become yours.

At the moment of Communion receive Jesus into your heart as the Victim Who died on the cross for your salvation. After Communion adore, offer thanks, make your petitions. You can finish the Mass prayers when you return from the railing as part of your thanksgiving. The Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, chose those as the best thanksgiving prayers. Some time may be laudably spent in prayer after Holy Mass, but this is not an absolute requisite. It is by far more important to carry the sentiments that the prayers of Mass engender in your heart and mind into your daily living than to spend a long period of time in formal thanksgiving. However, if time permits, be courteous and loving enough to finish your visit with God with acts of adoration, thanksgiving, love, and petition, because Jesus is substantially present in the Host at least ten minutes after you receive. Remember, these moments after Holy Communion are the most precious moments of your life!

#### **Union with Christ Prolonged**

Even when the sacred species are consumed, you may remain closely united with Jesus. The Sacred Humanity is in heaven and in the tabernacles on our altars. According to its glorious form It is in heaven; according to the Eucharistic form in the tabernacles. Assuredly, once the species are consumed, the Humanity of Christ ceases to be with you according to its Eucharistic state. The act itself of Communion is passing, but the effect it produces—union with

Christ, the life of your soul, is meant to be permanent: it lasts as long and in the measure that you wish. Jesus does not dwell with you by His bodily presence, yet He does so by the outpourings of His love, by the lights and graces He sends you without ceasing from the tabernacle.

After Communion grace remains. Jesus, as it were, leaves the imprint of His grace, as the soft wax retains the imprint when the seal is withdrawn. The sun is said to be in the room, not bodily, but by its rays which produce light and warmth in the room. The tree is said to live in the branches, because it constantly extends its life to them. Similarly, the God-Man never ceases to live in you, though bodily present only in heaven and in the tabernacle, *He is ever active giving life, light and strength to your soul by the invisible rays of His grace.* He says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me" (John 15, 4). Only sin can separate you from Christ and from God. Even then the merciful Savior tries by actual graces to bring your soul back to what it has lost.

Therefore, in the course of the day do not diminish by your carelessness, vanity, and selfseeking, the fruit of Holy Communion. It is a *living* Bread. The works you ought to do are the works of life, the works of a child of God, after having been nourished frequently with this Divine Bread in order to be transformed into Christ. Open your soul to His transforming action. Share with Him your joys and sorrows, your feelings and affections, your plans and desires. Any

affection or joy which you cannot share with Christ should find no room in your heart. The whole Christian life is meant to be a sharing with Christ, gradually transforming you into Christ.

#### Acts of Love

*A very useful means of increasing and perfecting this Eucharistic union is by the repetition of acts of love.* If you wish to live like Jesus, you will love God as the first commandment exacts: with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.

On earth love was also the life of Jesus. He became man for the love of His Father, to reveal Him to you, to win you for Him. Love both made Him man and nailed Him to the cross. Love of His Father is the source of all His mysteries, of all His works and sufferings. The same love which has made Him become bread for you, retains Him in the silence of the tabernacle. In the silence of the Host He loves His Father.

Without doubt, it is impossible for you to formulate continually definite acts of love. But you can with God's grace so multiply them that they dominate the action of your other faculties, thereby exercising on your life a more penetrating influence. It is easy to make an act of charity. A simple movement of the heart suffices. The humblest action, the least sacrifice can be transformed into an act of love. All that is done for love is love. The smallest act of pure love has more value in God's eyes than all the other acts united. Love makes you one with God. "God is Love" (John 4, 16), and *sanctity is union with God through love.*

## CHAPTER V

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Objections that are commonly brought forward against frequent Communion are the following, and they are easily answered:

1. "I am full of imperfections and faults."

If these imperfections and faults are the result of mere human weakness rather than of full deliberate intention, then, instead of being obstacles, they are rather the reason why you should go to Holy Communion often. *The Eucharist was instituted to deliver you from your failings and faults.* It is precisely because you are weak and infirm that you take medicine. Jesus is the Physician of your soul, and His medicine is Holy Communion. Every time you go to Holy Communion you gain strength to do right and become more pleasing to God, so that even your daily deliberate venial sins grow less numerous. Have you not been more careful to avoid sin and to serve God well after a truly good Confession and Communion? Did you not recognize how God's grace was influencing your soul? You avoided near occasions of sin, you fought violent temptations, and even began to practice certain virtues and to correct certain faults. Was not all this due to the grace of Holy Communion? And if in time you grew lukewarm in God's service, voluntarily giving way to little sins, until at last you again offended God grievously, was

this not the result of your neglecting Holy Communion? It is necessary for you to receive the Holy Eucharist frequently and consistently if you are to persevere in your good resolutions. Perfection is not achieved in a day; it is the work of a life-time.

The greater the danger that you are in of losing sanctifying grace, the more urgent is your need of frequent Communion. You have to take food frequently in order to restore the bodily strength consumed in the process of life. The strength of your soul, too, is exhausted in the struggle for virtue and eternal life. You need Holy Communion to preserve the sanctifying grace that you have. Christ told you that He is the food of your soul: "He who eats me, he also shall live because of me" (John 6, 58). You have only yourself to blame if your soul is weak or even dead in sins. Miss no opportunity of strengthening your soul with the graces of the Holy Eucharist. Approach the Lord's Table daily, if you can possibly do so, just because you say you are full of imperfections and faults.

**2. "I am not worthy to go to Holy Communion often."**

The Holy Father, Pius X, declares that the *daily reception of Holy Communion is to be permitted to all who are in the state of grace and approach the Sacrament with the intention of pleasing God and of growing in virtue*. He lays down no particular standard of perfection.

Do you suppose that any creature ever could be truly worthy to receive God in Holy Communion? If anyone aimed at being really worthy to receive

God in this Holy Sacrament, he would have to equal God in sanctity. The difference between Creator and creature is so vast that the sanctity of all the saints in heaven and on earth together would never suffice to make a soul worthy to receive Holy Communion.

If by being unworthy you mean that you are in a state of mortal sin, you can and must go to confession and then the obstacle will be removed. Frequent Communion will be the best means of avoiding this unworthiness in the future.

If you mean that you are full of faults, slow to do right, and careless in performing your various duties, *Holy Communion is intended to be your daily bread which acts as a remedy against your daily failings.* Holy Communion is not so much a reward for virtue as it is a remedy for sin.

It is unreasonable to suppose that by waiting you will become more worthy to receive the Lord's Body. To make your unworthiness an excuse for putting off Holy Communion is as foolish as it would be to reject all food, and yet desire to live. It is as senseless as it would be for a person in a high fever to say, "I will send for the doctor when I am feeling well again." If you are weak, you should go to Holy Communion oftener. The more you stay away, the fewer graces will you receive, and so you will grow still weaker and still more unworthy to receive Holy Communion.

Why do you feel worthy to receive at Easter or Christmas? It is because you have been to Confes-



sion and believe yourself to be in a state of grace. Why can you not go to Confession at least each month? Strictly speaking, it is not necessary, though it is certainly desirable, to go to Confession provided that you have no grievous sin upon your soul. If you want to be more worthy to receive, approach the Table of the Lord often.

**3. "I always remain the same."**

You may remain the same if you seldom go to Holy Communion, or if you receive often but without the right intention, being influenced by habit, vanity, or motives of human respect, or without the proper dispositions. However, there is no foundation at all for such a statement if you receive frequently or even daily in the state of grace, with a good intention and with sincerity. The Church would never want you to perform a religious action that is useless or even harmful.

It is true that even though you receive daily, you can and will fall into little faults. You may be irritable or excitable, obliged to associate with people with whom you are quite out of sympathy, or perhaps your selfish tendencies have remained uncorrected. Many of these imperfections are unconscious and involuntary, and may be due not to any bad habit for which you are responsible, but rather to human weakness.

Holy Communion can never directly remove all these causes of your involuntary and unconscious faults. Our Savior did not promise, nor does the Church teach that frequent or daily Communion

completely removes all voluntary sins and imperfections. However, the Church does say that *Holy Communion gives you grace to overcome your faults*. Think what would become of you if you seldom went to Holy Communion! It surely is a very great grace if the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist preserves you in the state of sanctifying grace. Holy Communion affects your soul in much the same way as material food affects your body. By taking nourishment daily a child grows in course of time to its full stature, and the same is true of the soul. By receiving Holy Communion frequently and earnestly for years in succession, you can develop into a saint.

#### 4. "I feel little devotion."

Devotion that you "feel" is not required for a good Communion. There is a vast difference between devotion and emotion. A person can be devout without feeling it. Neither is sensible devotion always the surest or most trustworthy; it is subject to many illusions. Holy Communion, besides increasing sanctifying grace, arouses actual love in your soul, which makes it embrace God's will joyfully and wholeheartedly. You will receive this charity if only you have the right dispositions. But this love is not something that will necessarily be experienced in the feelings. For various reasons, such as fatigue, you may feel completely "dry". *The fervor produced by Communion is in the higher faculties: the mind and the will*. It is a conscious and deliberate adhesion to God as the Supreme Good. It shows itself by devotion, which is defined by St. Thomas as the "eagerness of

the will to give itself to the service of God." In the midst of dryness and physical depression your will may generously embrace the will of God: that is the heart and soul of charity.

5. **"I am afraid of losing my respect and devotion for Holy Communion by too great familiarity."**

Loss of devotion will result from improper preparation. *But if you prepare devoutly for Holy Communion, frequent reception will deepen sentiments of reverence and love.* Familiarity in the sense of intimacy and union with Christ is the object of all prayer and spiritual exercise. Of course, the purely mechanical reception of the Sacrament with an absence of a "right and devout disposition," is to be avoided. This attitude is the very opposite of the one engendered by frequent Communion when care is taken to prepare properly for this great act. Virtue is a good habit. Routine indicates a facility of action which is most helpful in regard to all virtuous deeds. Hence, too, it is most desirable to make the devout reception of daily Holy Communion a matter of habitual practice instead of being dependent upon whim or feeling.

Put aside all false ideas of reverence which keep many away from frequent Communion. Of course, the deepest possible respect is due to our dear Savior in the Sacred Host. But Holy Communion is not mainly an act of devotion, a practice of exceptional piety reserved for the few, excluding the ordinary Christian and especially children with their immature minds. With Christ and His Church, per-

sonal devotion is only of secondary importance; with them it is a question of personal *need* that matters most. Because it is so necessary for the ordinary duties of everyday life, frequent, and even daily Communion is so strongly recommended.

Therefore beware of all exaggerated anxiety about going to Holy Communion, as this may only too easily prevent your approaching the Lord's Table. Go to Holy Communion in the state of grace and with a right and pious intention, thinking of Christ as your dear Redeemer, your greatest Friend and Benefactor. Make a good preparation and thanksgiving as far as your abilities and circumstances allow. Look upon Holy Communion as a remedy for all your weakness, and you will indeed receive the Holy Eucharist with the sort of reverence required by Christ and the Church.

#### 6. "I have not time."

People who offer this excuse are mostly those engrossed in temporal affairs. In the Gospel you will find a similar excuse from those who were invited to a great supper. One said, "I have bought a farm, and I must go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused." Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them." Another pleaded, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." To all such the Lord replied, "I tell you that none of those who were invited shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14, 16).

You probably have no time because you do not wish to make time. *If you have the good will, you*

*will find time for Holy Communion.* Two axioms apply here: "Where there is a will, there is a way," and "Love will find a way." The Church is far from wishing to urge you to go to Holy Communion if thereby you would be obliged to neglect the duties of your calling and position in life; but, it seems that if you divide your time properly and make a conscientious use of it, you will always find that you can go to Holy Communion.

Do not grudge the time that it takes you to go to Holy Communion even if it costs you some trouble and sacrifice. Holy Communion is worth it. Our Savior can compensate you a thousandfold for the time devoted to Him. But with great numbers of Catholics daily Communion is not an impossibility, but only a matter of sacrificing some comfort or convenience to keep their appointment with the Savior Who died on the cross that they might live. They may waste hours in idle conversations, in eating and drinking. They can find time unhappily for sin; they have none at all for God. What they lack is not time, but good will. Like Martha, "They are busy about many things," but they neglect the one great means, the Holy Eucharist, which will bring them the happiness they are so "busy" trying to attain. And yet, their main duty on earth is to serve God and save their souls. The fact that all day long they are busy about worldly affairs should be the very reason why they ought to make time to go to Holy Communion. If you have once experienced the warmth and intimacy of daily union with Christ in

Holy Communion, you will laugh at the trivial excuses which keep the indifferent from receiving often.

After going to Holy Communion frequently for some time, you may say, "I can't keep it up." Do as much as you can. Every Communion will help to strengthen your character, deepen your virtue, and preserve you from sin, even for having received frequently only for a limited period.

**7. "I don't have time for proper preparation and thanksgiving."**

There should be due preparation. But this does not mean the recitation of many prayers. The best preparation for Communion and thanksgiving is a good life and the sanctifying of your ordinary daily actions by performing them out of love for God. This can be done by the use of ejaculatory prayers. *Frequent Communion is the best preparation for Communion.* One Communion is thanksgiving for another; and the Communion of today is the best preparation for the Communion of tomorrow. St. Alphonsus says, "If you have no time to prepare yourself because of the duties of your state, do not abstain from Communion on that account. Only take care to avoid useless conversations and occupations that are not necessary."

If you are in the habit of going to Mass on week days, you can make your preparation during Mass or say the prayers of the Mass together with the priest. No preparation could be better. Spend five to ten minutes in thanksgiving after Mass if you can. This is not time wasted. You will work better and



your work will be blessed after going to Holy Communion. If, however, you are able to hear Mass only on Sunday, it surely is not too much for you to devote a quarter of an hour on Saturday evening to go to Confession at least once a month, or, if you are not in serious sin, to make an act of contrition and receive Holy Communion without Confession.

If you think about it, you will see that by staying away, you lose a two-fold grace: first, that which you might have merited by ever so short a preparation and thanksgiving, and secondly, the sacramental grace conferred in Holy Communion. *Go to receive Communion often even though you have very little time at your disposal, and be sure that Christ will reward your desire for the Bread of heaven by giving you very many graces.* A pure desire to receive is enough to cause the Sacrament to take effect in your soul and to preserve and increase sanctifying grace. You will be wiser if, being in the state of grace, you receive with a good intention, than if you neglect to do so because you have not time to say long prayers in church before and after Communion. Yet never deliberately omit your preparation and thanksgiving or make them carelessly because the effects of Holy Communion depend so much upon your dispositions.

**8. "I don't have time to go to Confession so often."**

*The Church teaches that you may receive Holy Communion repeatedly without going to Confession, provided you are not conscious of any mortal sin.* The Decree on Daily Communion explicitly states that only two conditions are required, namely, the

“state of grace” and “a right and devout intention.” Why then should you insert an action not required by the Church? Consequently, you may go to Communion for several weeks, if you desire, on the one Confession as long as you are able to keep your soul free from serious sin. Frequent Confession is recommended, because it is a Sacrament and each Sacrament imparts more grace, but do not let the fact that you cannot get to Confession be the reason why you abstain from receiving Holy Communion as long as you are not aware of any serious sin upon your soul. Try to confess your sins at least every two weeks.

#### 9. “What will people say?”

Human respect keeps many from receiving Holy Communion often. *Do not make the terrible mistake of trying to please people rather than God.* God will be your Judge someday, not people. You cannot please everybody. People will always talk about you, no matter what you do. Give them a chance to say something good about you.

There is nothing more noble than to suffer for a just cause. You may be criticized for what you do, but, in the end, you will be the victor. Our Lord said, “Blessed are they who suffer for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5, 10). Your good example will influence others without your realizing it. In this way you will be following out the injunction given by Our Lord, “So let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5, 16). And again, “Everyone who

acknowledges me before men, him will the Son of Man also acknowledge before the angels of God" (Luke 12, 8). Therefore why should you worry about the opinions of people when you are what you are before God, not more nor less; when your personal happiness, peace and salvation and that of the persons you love, is assured by your frequent Holy Communions?

10. "I am a good Catholic though I go to the Sacraments only a few times a year."

It may be that you and even your friends think you are a good Catholic because they do not receive any more frequently, but does God think so? *You must judge yourself according to the standards of God and not according to the standards of men.* You must save your soul the way God wants you to, and not according to the requirements which people have made for themselves to suit their own convenience. If you are honest you will have to admit that prayer and thoughts of God and eternity are not enough to keep you from sin and to make you lead a really Christian life. You need other stronger aids, and they are the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion, for Our Lord said, "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15, 5). If you want to save your soul, you must keep the commandments, avoid sin, receive the Sacraments and pray. The Sacraments and prayer are the means of grace instituted by God. Without grace there is no salvation. Where will you get this grace if you neglect using the means, especially Holy Communion?

*Communion received but a few times yearly is insufficient for perseverance in a virtuous life.* There may be exceptions, but such people are rare. They may always be surrounded by good example, continually breathing the atmosphere of souls far holier than themselves. But taking people as they are, you must agree that at least monthly reception of the Sacrament of the Altar is the least provision for guaranteeing lifelong fidelity to God's law. This happy condition is more easily established in your life if you will but join one of the devout societies of your parish—e.g. The Holy Name Society, the Rosary Society, the Altar Society, the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, etc.—whose members receive at least each month. The company and good example of many associates will give you strength and encouragement and will more quickly help you recover your footing if you have fallen.

**11. "Holy Communion is somewhat inappropriate for men."**

With God there is no double standard of morality or piety, one for women and another for men. *Prayer and the Sacraments are the means of grace alike for men, women, and children.* A man is especially in need of Holy Communion because he is usually more exposed to temptation than a woman. He lives in the world and is surrounded by temptations. He hears others speak disparaging words about faith and morals. Bad examples confront him everywhere, and if he is to stand firm, he will have to struggle hard against evil. A woman, being occupied at home,

knows little of these dangers. It is precisely the man, most tempted to sin against purity, who has to struggle against the lusts of the flesh. As a matter of fact, many men receive Communion very rarely, and hence it seems there are fewer pure virgin souls among men and youths than among women and girls. The infrequency of their Communions is to a great extent the cause of this state of affairs.

*If you are a husband and father, it is your duty to set a good example for your family.* If the spirit of worldliness is to be kept from your home and if the truly Catholic spirit is to flourish, you must lead the way. You cannot set a better example to your family than by going to Holy Communion often. It is at once a profession of faith and the best means of maintaining the spirit of reverence, love and obedience in your home. You little know of how much happiness you deprive your family by receiving seldom. If you are a good father and husband, you will love your wife and children enough to make the sacrifices necessary to receive the Sacraments regularly. This will mean a thousand times more for your home than your salary. You cannot buy peace, love, and God's blessing. Those things come from God Himself. What are you doing to get what is the foundation of all happiness in your family? Can you honestly say you are doing your part to bring God and heaven into your home?

*By receiving often you will exert an influence not only on your family, but also on your whole parish and friends.* In a parish where men seldom approach

the Sacraments, religious life is weak, and as soon as men fall off in their attendance, the women too begin to receive less frequently. This is the effect of a bad example. If things are ever to improve, men must be induced to receive often, and until this is done, it is useless to complain that children and the young are not what they should be, and that quarrels and ill will prevail in families. A model parish in every respect is always one in which men rival women in the frequency of the Communions.

Perhaps one reason why many men communicate so seldom is because their *faith is weak*. A boundless desire for temporal and earthly possessions has seized upon all classes of people, and the mad pursuit of pleasure is plunging mankind deeper and deeper into the quicksands of materialism. Under such unwholesome circumstances faith must suffer. A man whose whole time is occupied in worldly affairs has little or no interest in the things of eternity.

*Cowardly fear* also keeps men from frequent Communion. Most men are convinced that, in order to live as good Catholics, they should receive often. Many young men know by their own experience that they need to go to Communion often if their lives are to be pure and good, but they are afraid that someone will talk if they suddenly begin to be religious. They are afraid of the ridicule of people and would rather risk spiritual harm. These same men would not abandon a profitable business deal because others might laugh at them. They would pay no attention to people. And yet they know that the smallest grace



received at Holy Communion is worth more than all the money in the world. They would defend their country with their lives and yet they are afraid of people who cannot hurt them. Manly courage is certainly not displayed by a cowardly neglect of Christian duty. Let men never forget the words of the Savior, "Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father" (Mark 8, 38). It was to men, not to women and children, that Our Lord first gave His holy Body and entrusted Himself in the Holy Eucharist, and will men abandon Holy Communion to women? Regard it as a great honor to be allowed to receive Communion often. You can be an apostle in the world in which you live by means of frequent Holy Communion.

## CHAPTER VI

### A CALL TO A CRUSADE

#### **God's Supreme Gift**

The greatest gift which a loving and merciful God has ever bestowed upon mankind is Jesus Christ, for Christ is God Incarnate. The fact that this Savior became man for you and died upon the cross to save your soul, is something infinitely great and truly Divine. Yet that was not all. He wanted you to receive the abundant graces of redemption, not once only, but daily in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. Because you are very dear to Him, He devised a means of giving Himself entirely to you and remaining with you always.

The Eucharist is the work of a measureless love that had at its service an infinite power, the omnipotence of God. At the words of Consecration the substance of the bread and of the wine is changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Nothing remains of the bread and of the wine except the appearances: color, taste, and weight. This miracle is renewed at the mere word of a priest, for such is the power which God has imparted to him. During the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Jesus deigns to come down from heaven to be offered for you as a Victim to His heavenly Father, to become the spiritual nourishment of your soul, to abide on our altars, strengthening and consoling you by His presence. Stripping Himself of the dazzling splendor of the

Godhead, He comes to your heart under the lowly appearance of the Eucharistic Bread. *After His abiding presence and constant immolation in the Mass, the last excess His love in the Holy Eucharist is the total gift of Himself.* Jesus gives Himself to you in Holy Communion as if you were the only person on earth with all the love of His Heart. You need not feel lost and forgotten in the multitude of human beings. The Eucharist is Love's last word on earth.

Our Lord intended to give you in this Sacrament further proof of His love *by making it remind you of His Passion and death.* God could have redeemed you in some other way, but it was His will to suffer for you, in order to make you realize better His love for you. In the Old Testament the Paschal lamb was a type of the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world. In the New, the Holy Eucharist reminds you of your Savior's sufferings and death, for He said, "This is my body, which is *given* for you; my blood which is *shed* for you . . . Do this for a *remembrance* of me" (Luke 22, 19). He intended the Eucharistic Sacrifice to be offered continually in the Church, and the sacrificial Food to be received in constant remembrance of the redemption that He had effected.

#### The Gift of Yourself

In return for this proof of His undying love, Jesus asks your generous whole-hearted love and the total gift of yourself. If He delights in dwelling within your soul in the most intimate manner conceivable, it should be your most intense happiness to welcome

Him often. Love begets love. You cannot maintain that you love Him if you stay away from Holy Communion. *By receiving frequently, you give Jesus the best expression of your love and gratitude for His great Gift of Himself.* If you were to consider the joy felt by our Lord on entering your heart; if you were to call to mind what He did and suffered for you, and that He desired this Sacrament to be a continual remembrance of it all; if you kept your eyes fixed on this priceless pledge of His infinite love, you surely should feel impelled to receive this most Holy Sacrament very often—every day, if possible—to make it the center of your thoughts, and to live and even die for it.

*The doctrine of Holy Communion should affect you deeply.* Its beauty, its vitality, its absolute place in the scheme of things spiritual, as well as its Personality, ought to make you its willing slave. The thing that should lead you to this daily practice of Holy Communion is the profound conviction that it is as necessary for the life of your soul as the air is for the life of your body. There is no better way to keep on the moral track than frequent Holy Communion. There is no more effective remedy for human weakness, no greater preventive for mortal sin, no more powerful means of taking away venial sin, no more necessary nourishment for every good tendril of virtue which is struggling to grow. Holy Communion is a lift to the weary and strength to the strong. It is the greatest Gift God gave you to enable you to reach heaven.

Virtue is a good habit. How easily you could ac-

quire the habit of receiving Holy Communion frequently. As long as you are fasting and are not in mortal sin, you may approach the Communion rail daily. If you cannot come to Mass daily, you can receive at least every Sunday, no matter how long it was since your last Confession and Communion, no matter how many venial sins you may have committed. You not only have the right to receive Holy Communion, but it is the earnest wish of Our Lord and the Church that you do so. This is the perfect way to offer up the Holy Sacrifice by which you receive its greatest fruit. And besides, *you* need Christ; He does not need you. Yet He wants to help you. If you neglect receiving His Sacred Body as a remedy for your weakness and sin, it is your own fault if you are making little progress in holiness.

Christ calls you, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11, 28). The invitation to the heavenly Banquet is always open to you. Do not make excuses, but acknowledge your helplessness and come to the Divine Physician of your soul that He may heal you. Who would know your needs so well as He Who created and redeemed you? Who would desire your salvation and happiness more earnestly? You can do nothing better for your own happiness and salvation, or that of your family and those you love, than to receive Jesus in Holy Communion as often as you can.

#### Two Great Promises

A striking proof that Jesus and Mary are deeply concerned about your receiving Holy Communion

often is the fact that They both made a special promise to grant the grace of a happy death to the souls who receive Holy Communion. When Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary, and showed her His Sacred Heart, He made His Great Promise: "*I promise thee in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who go to Holy Communion on the first Friday in nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence: they shall not die in my disfavor nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.*"

Our Lady's Great Promise at Fatima, Portugal, in 1917 was: "I promise to help at the hour of death, with the graces needed for salvation, whoever on the First Saturday of five consecutive months, shall (1) *Confess and receive Holy Communion*, (2) *recite five decades of the rosary*, (3) *and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary*, (4) *with the intention of making reparation to me.*" The Confession may be made in the eight days before or after Communion. The fifteen minute meditation may be made at any time of the day, either on all the mysteries as a whole or on one special mystery. The Rosary and meditation may be combined by thinking on each mystery a few minutes before or after reciting the decade. A plenary indulgence is granted for each First Saturday.

There is no greater grace than the grace of final perseverance and a happy death. Your happiness for all eternity depends upon it. If you have not



been receiving Holy Communion at least each month, make it a point to make the First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart and the First Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Mother. Nothing could be more worthwhile for your salvation and happiness.

### **The Eucharist-minded Family**

*The Eucharist is the heart of the Catholic family.* Christ is the source of strength for father, mother, and children. With His help they are enabled to keep the commandments and to love God and their neighbor and each other. As a result, peace and charity reign in the family because the Eucharistic influence has penetrated its very depths. The Christ-life, increased in their souls by frequent visits to the Table of the Lord, has become the inspiration of their every good deed. The family where the Eucharistic spirit abides is a happy family because the peace and joy of Christ fill it. Christ reigns there supremely as in a little kingdom where He is loved, honored and obeyed.

*Every member of the family must do his part to bring about the reign of Christ in the home not only by keeping the commandments and avoiding sin, but by the frequent reception of the Sacraments and by prayer.* Father, mother, and children will go to Holy Communion at least each month, weekly, or daily, if possible, so that they may take the Eucharistic Christ into their hearts and then, as it were, bring Him home with them so that He may live there; that His spirit, which is born of love, may always abide there.

What are you doing to make Christ reign in your family? Do you love the members of your family and your home enough to be ready to make sacrifices for them especially by being faithful in receiving the Holy Eucharist frequently? Be assured, there is no better way of proving your love for your family than by bringing Christ's peace, love and blessing into it. Neglect of regular Communion is a glaring proof that you do not have the real kind of love for your family. This, then, is a challenge to your generosity. Let each member—father, mother, children—endeavor to sanctify himself by frequent contact with the Eucharistic Christ, and that family will be like the Holy Family at Nazareth, with husband and wife devoted to each other in sincerest love, and children subject to their parents for the love of God. Such Eucharist-minded families are the glory of the Catholic Church.

#### **The Sad Reality**

*It is unfortunate that so many of our good Catholic lay people fail to see the close relationship between Holy Communion and Holy Mass, between the Sacrament and the Sacrifice. They separate them not only in their mind but in their practice. Hence you see a crowded throng at Mass, but only a handful sometimes going to the Altar rail. Never did Christ intend that. The early Christians never disjoined the Sacrifice from the Sacrament. Such was the teaching handed down from Christ to the Apostles and from the Apostles to them. Pope Pius X restored early traditions; the laity were to go to Holy*

Communion as often as possible, even daily, and children were to start as early as six or seven years. Is the bulk of the laity taking advantage of this privilege now? Would it were otherwise, but—no! Once a month, once every two months, once at Christmas and at Easter. True it is that changes take time and customs are not dislodged over-night, and still more true it is that we are improving; yet it must give Christ a pang on Sunday morning to see the laden pews and the gaps at the altar rails. It is like being invited to breakfast with our Lord, and coming, and eating nothing, just looking on.

*Normally, the frequency of the worthy reception of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is an indication of the state of one's spiritual life.* God, of course, will grant the necessary grace and strength to avoid sin and retain the divine life to anyone who because of circumstances over which he has no control cannot receive Holy Communion. On the other hand, we certainly cannot expect God to use extraordinary means when we willfully refuse the ordinary ones. The precept of Easter Communion binds under the pain of sin. However, the Church does not present yearly Communion to us as a desirable standard. By the precept she shows her intention to set it as the absolute minimum which one can do and still be a living member of the Communion of Saints. Those, therefore, possess very little of the spirit of the Church who go to Holy Communion only once or twice in the year. They can hardly claim to be good, loyal children of the Church, if they do the minimum that she requires, and do it, moreover, under threats

of grievous sin and punishment. Many call themselves Christians. Christian means a follower of Christ, and the substance of Christianity is the life of Christ within us—in our thoughts and in our private and public actions. If such a life is lacking (and how can it be otherwise without frequent Communion), there remains nothing of Christianity but the name.

When in the early ages of Christianity the horrible cry arose, "Ad Bestias!"—"Cast the Christians to the wild beasts," people used to receive Holy Communion to strengthen them for the conflict that they would have to undergo. They had no fear of death. Today we are surrounded by other enemies, bitterly opposed to our faith and eager to destroy not our bodies but our immortal souls. If the present century surpasses in many respects the godless and immoral age in which the first Christians lived, we ought to seek strength and protection where they did, at the Lord's Table. Early Christians often went to Holy Communion at the risk of their lives, while many Catholics today fear the ridicule of bad or lukewarm Catholics. Communion on rare occasions is the standard according to which so many live today. Does not this indicate that we are weak in our faith and that we lack the true spirit of the first Christians, which was a Eucharistic spirit?

#### **Communion Crusade**

On the 25th anniversary of his episcopal consecration, May 13, 1942, Pope Pius XII in a world radio address signaled the work of Pius X in regard to

the Eucharist as a providential preparation for the times in which we live in these words: *"The thought of the Eucharist is the center of the faith now as it was in the first centuries. Its increase in the Church and its spiritual, vivifying radiation must become more vital and more effective."*

"Whence did the courageous faith of the early Christians derive its life and enthusiasm? From the Eucharistic union with Christ . . . At the Table of the Bread of the Strong they felt themselves united in fraternal union by one same love, welded together in a mystic bond that makes thousands of hearts and thousands of souls one great family with but one heart and one soul.

"Show love for the Church by daily Mass attendance . . . Defense against the atom-bomb is the Eucharist."

May Catholics heed the voice of Holy Mother Church and return to the Eucharist-mindedness of the first Christians. May the Last Will of Jesus be carried out as faithfully today as it was then! Daily Mass with Holy Communion is the Church's ideal, for the altar is the center of the Christ-life—the center for the priests who there offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, the center for the faithful who gathering in the churches before the altar strengthen their souls at the Lord's Table. The Eucharist is the Food of life—Food of the Christian life—which therefore ought to be a Eucharistic life, and a Eucharistic life cannot be but an apostolate!

Will you not put aside all excuses and do your part through frequent Holy Communion in bringing

about a Communion Crusade? *Resolve to receive the Sacraments at least each month. If you have already been doing this endeavor to go to Holy Communion more than once a month, daily if possible. If you cannot come each morning, come at least Sunday morning when you assist at Holy Mass. As long as you are fasting and are not conscious of any grievous sin, you may receive Holy Communion.*

**JOIN THE COMMUNION CRUSADE!** This Crusade will mean so much for your own happiness as well as that of your family and loved ones—it will mean everything for the welfare of mankind and the peace of the world. Show the world by the eloquence of your actions that you believe with a profound and deathless faith the words of your Divine Master, “My flesh is food indeed; and my blood is drink indeed” (John 15, 4). “Abide in me and I in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him” (John 6, 56).

The time has come to launch a **COMMUNION CRUSADE**. Will **YOU** be a Crusader? **GOD WILLS IT!**



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