

JOURNEY TO OUR FATHER

FULFILLING HIS DIVINE WILL ON THE PATH TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Discerning and Living the Authentic Faith and Moral Teachings of the Catholic Church in Our Modern World

THE HOLY EUCHARIST SUPERNATURAL NOURISHMENT FOR THE JOURNEY TO OUR FATHER

By James P. Wasel

DIVINE LIFE FOR OUR SOULS

Holy Communion preserves and increases the supernatural life of your soul. In the Holy Eucharist, Christ becomes present so that He may abide bodily among us by His Real Presence in our tabernacles, renew the Sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner on our altars, and nourish our souls in Holy Communion.

The Eucharist is not only a sacrifice, but a sacrament as well. As a sacrifice, it relates in the first instance to God; as a sacrament, to ourselves. Through the Blessed Sacrament God bestows upon us the grace by which we obtain supernatural life and are saved.

By the imparting of divine grace, God has made it possible for us to share His own nature and His own vital activity. The life of God calls for appropriate food. The Bread of Angels has become, through transubstantiation, the food of man. This Bread, the product of our Savior's love and power, is the only food that is worthy of the Father who gives it and the adopted children who receive it from His hands. It produces wondrous effects in those children. The first and principal effect is that it gives divine life to the soul.

Holy Communion is the Body of Jesus under the form of bread, received as food. With His Body, He gives also His Soul, His divinity, His merits, and His grace. All that He is, all that He has, He makes your own. No being on earth is richer and more honored than you are when you bear in your heart your God and Savior, You could not ask for more. Christ could not give you more. Holy Communion is the most intimate union of ourselves with Christ, and therefore it must excel all other sacraments in power to sustain and increase the supernatural life within us. It is justly called the Blessed Sacrament.

THE BREAD OF LIFE FOR YOUR SOUL

The first effect of Holy Communion is life. All the sacraments either impart supernatural life to the soul or develop it in the soul where it is already found. They do this for certain purposes. For instance, the sacrament of Penance raises the soul from death to life; Confirmation bestows on it a special strength to fight against its external enemies. But the Eucharist is concerned with the supernatural life itself. Its function is to intensify and strengthen that life.

Holy Communion is a sacrament, and hence, like all the other sacraments, it is a sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Holy Communion is a sign of nourishment; hence, it is meant to bring to the soul the graces of spiritual nourishment. Holy Communion is meant to do for the soul what material food does for the body, and that is to preserve life and protect it. Material food enables you to continue living and protects you from fatal disease; Holy Communion preserves the spiritual life of your soul and protects you from the spiritual disease of mortal sin.

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 makes your soul holy and pleasing to God.* Sanctifying grace makes you live the life of God, especially by increasing divine love in your heart. Love makes you most like God; thus, love of God through sanctifying grace makes you truly happy.

Sanctifying grace makes you an adopted child of God. In you, as a Christian, have been fulfilled the words of St. John: "But to all who received Him, who believed

in His name, He gave power to become children of God." (Jn 1:12)

Sanctifying grace makes you a temple of the Holy Spirit. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever." (Jn 14:16) And St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16)

Sanctifying grace 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.

UNION WITH CHRIST

The union of Christ and your soul is fulfilled and completed in Holy Communion. Not only do you cling to Him by faith, not only are you incorporated into Him through Baptism, but this is a new union that is most real and most spiritual. For if Jesus has willed to give Himself to us under the form of food, it is because He wishes to enter into the closest possible union with us. Nothing can be more intimate than the union that exists between the living body and the food it transforms into its own substance.

This union is so intimate that Jesus does not hesitate to say, "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (Jn 6:57) When you receive Holy Communion, you receive the real and physical Body and Blood of Christ, together with His Soul and His divinity, veiled under the appearance of bread. Your soul is like a temple in which Christ lives and where the angels adore Him. This union with Jesus is so intimate and sacred that it is called Holy Communion. You can possess His divinity in your soul at all times by remaining in the state of grace.

Through Holy Communion, Jesus abides in you by His grace and the action of His Spirit. He says, "Abide in me, and I in you." (Jn 15:4) 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 Christlike, not only by giving you sanctifying grace, but also by giving you actual graces to preserve His divine life in your soul. Each Communion is made in order to establish His dwelling in you more intimately. He takes in hand the ordering of your life. He gives light to your mind; He gives strength and courage to your will. He

preserves you from temptations, strengthens your will, and enkindles your love.

PROTECTION FROM SIN

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 have no life in you." (Jn 6:53)

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. "This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die." (Jn 6:50)

Those who make a practice of receiving Communion frequently try to avoid whatever might lead them into sin. Should they fall into serious sin, they usually try to get to Confession as soon as possible. As time goes on, they advance in grace and their falls become less frequent; they are at peace with God.

Young couples preparing for marriage should frequent the Table of the Lord. Through the Sacrament of Love, they will learn to love unselfishly. Their purity is protected by the life-giving food of the soul. Since all, young and old, find this inclination to evil within themselves, they need to look with confidence for help to Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. The Church recommends frequent Communion to the young who are tempted to sins of impurity. The coming of Jesus in Holy Communion awakens new love in the hearts of youth and encourages them to love purity and sinlessness -- necessary conditions for happiness.

Nothing can be more fruitful for the preservation of love and peace in the home than frequent Holy Communion. Peace and happiness cannot exist in a family unless God lives there. Mortal sin puts God out of the home so that the Devil may preside. Satan's reign spells unrest and turmoil. Prayer and the sacraments are sources of grace for the individual and for the family. Happiness reigns in the home insofar as these sources of grace are used, because they are the means of bringing God into the home. Special emphasis is to be placed on regular Confession and frequent Holy Communion. Confession frees you from and helps you to avoid the greatest evil in the world: sin. Holy Communion unites you most intimately with the only source of peace and happiness: God.

STRIVING TO BE WORTHY TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

The Holy Catholic Church requires two things for frequent Communion: the state of grace - you must be free from every mortal sin, to the best of your knowledge; and 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.

Being In The State Of Grace

To receive Communion, you must be in a state of grace. The wonderful effects of Holy Communion are not wrought in your soul unless it is prepared to receive so many graces. In Him are all the treasures of the Divinity, and He infinitely desires to share them with you in giving Himself. The Eucharist is the sacrament of union, and the fewer obstacles to this union Christ meets with, the more the grace of His sacrament acts in you. Grave sin, which causes the death of your soul, is the greatest obstacle.

To be in the state of grace means that you must always be free from mortal sin when receiving Holy Communion. The Blessed Sacrament is the spiritual food of the soul, and as natural food cannot benefit a body that is deprived of life, so this heavenly nourishment can produce no effect in a soul that is dead by mortal sin. 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. Should one dare to receive this sacrament while conscious of the guilt of mortal sin, he would stain his soul with the crime of sacrilege and, thus, as St. Paul says, "He who eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks a judgment upon himself." (1 Cor 11:29) Everyone whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin must, before receiving into his heart his eucharistic God, confess and repent of his sin in the tribunal of Penance.

Having The Right Intention

Having a right intention consists in this: that you approach the Holy Table not out of routine or to make an impression upon people, or to seek praise, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by love, and of seeking this divine remedy for your weaknesses and failings.

Sanctifying grace is increased in your soul by the very fact that you receive Communion. However, that does not mean that by receiving the sacrament you become automatically better. There are effects that depend on the cooperation and the love of the one receiving the sacrament.

The secret of spiritual success through Holy Communion lies in the absence of obstacles to God's grace. Hence, *preparation before and thanksgiving after Holy Communion* play an important part in your spiritual life relative to obtaining the fruits of Holy Communion.

PROPER PREPARATION: In order that you may profit by the reception of Holy Communion, try to foster dispositions that make this union more intimate. Hence the importance of a good preparation for and thanksgiving after Holy Communion. In receiving Holy Communion, do not be satisfied with merely performing what is necessary or obligatory. Strive so to dispose yourself as to be able to benefit by the rich graces frequent Holy Communion offers. The following dispositions are important as a preparation for Holy Communion:

Perform the duties of your state of life as perfectly as possible in union with Jesus and in order to please Him. Your remote preparation for Holy Communion consists in living as befits one who approaches the altar frequently, and this involves giving up whatever you feel to be a hindrance to your leading a Christian life.

Renewing your faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacred Host. Recognizing in the light of faith, the sovereign majesty and holiness of Him who lies concealed beneath the sacramental veils, and knowing well your own sinfulness and unworthiness, exclaim, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof; but only say the word and I shall be healed." (Mt 8:8)

Be sincerely humble. This should not be difficult if you honestly consider the exalted sanctity of Jesus and your own sinfulness. Humility empties your soul of its selfishness and pride. The more you empty yourself of self, the more you will make your soul ready to let itself be possessed by God.

Despite your unworthiness, turn to your sacramental God with the tenderest confidence. Remember his kind invitation: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28) Draw close to Him who alone can heal your wounds, lighten your burdens, and comfort your heart.

Let your heart be filled with love for Jesus. The act of love must ever hold a prominent place in your preparation for Holy Communion. Before Holy

Communion, reflect on the measureless love Christ has shown you. Then exclaim with St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28)

Pray. Earnest prayer is the best preparation for Holy Communion, as it is the best thanksgiving. Ask our Lord Himself to prepare your heart, and beg our Lady to assist you in your preparation.

OFFERING THANKSGIVING: Our Lord has expressed how much His Heart appreciates gratitude when He commended the grateful return of the leper whom He had cured. (Lk 17:12-19) You love those who are grateful and you feel it keenly when, in return for some service you had put yourself to inconvenience to render, you meet with ingratitude. Yet ingratitude is a very common failing, and many good people do not always realize how often they fail in regard to the virtue of gratitude.

After Holy Communion, we should spend some time adoring our Lord, thanking Him, renewing our promises of love and of obedience to Him, and asking Him for blessings for ourselves and others. The time spent with Jesus after Holy Communion is the most precious part of the day, because Jesus is eager to grant us the graces of this sacrament, and He does so in proportion to our love and devotion.

Adore Jesus silently, conscious of your nothingness, and surrender yourself completely to Him who is your God and your all.

Speak to Jesus reverently, confidently, and lovingly, for He is the divine Guest of your soul. This is the moment in which Jesus instills in your soul His own dispositions and virtues. Lay your soul open to His divine grace.

Beg for graces from Christ and place no bounds on 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. The greater your faith and confidence, the more abundant will be the fruits 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. (Reverend Lawrence G. Lovasik, "The Basic Book of the Eucharist", Copyright © 1960 Lawrence G. Lavasik; 2001 Raymond L. Lavasik, Available from Sophia Institute Press, 1-800-888-9344)

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Our lives here on earth can be described as a constant journey to the home of the Father. The love of our Heavenly Father is ever reaching out for His wayward children and the greatest sign of His love was shown 2000 years ago when He sent His son, Jesus, to show us the way back to the Father.

We show our love for Jesus by doing His will. We do His will by following and living by all the authentic faith and moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Drawing people back to the authentic truth about the Catholic faith helps us to be reconciled with our God, and obtain peace, holiness and happiness in this sinful world; and eternal salvation with our loving God in the next world.

"Journey to Our Father" is helping to bring people back to the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church, and to develop a closer more loving and holy relationship with their God. All material within our publications is quoted from solid Catholic sources which have an Imprimatur/Nihil Obstat. A copy of the Imprimatur/Nihil Obstat page from each source is available upon request.

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