

THE EUCHARIST AND ITS EFFECTS

SACRIFICE AND HEAVENLY BANQUET (Nos. 1382–1419)



How should we receive Holy Communion? We should be properly prepared by focusing our minds on Jesus, and preparing our hearts by prayer. If we have committed a serious sin (breaking any of the 10 Commandments) we are not permitted to receive Communion until we have been to Confession; to receive Communion in a state of sin is itself a serious sin and a sacrilege. We should receive our Lord joyfully, as the promise of eternal life, and remember to say a prayer of thanksgiving after receiving Him.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

“In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. “The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession” (CCC 1378).

The Fruits of Holy Communion

- Union with Christ: Reception of the Eucharist augments our union with Christ; hence its name, *Holy Communion*. Intimate union with Christ is the principal fruit of receiving this sacrament. As Christ said, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him” (John 6:56).
- Separation from Sin: The body of Christ we receive is the same body that was “given up for us.” As the Eucharist unites us with Christ, it also separates us from sin, cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future ones. Just as bodily food restores strength, the Eucharist restores spiritual vitality and strengthens us in charity, a living charity that wipes away venial sins (CCC 1394). It also strengthens us in grace to preserve us from future mortal sins.
- Unity of the Mystical Body: The Eucharist makes the Church. It is through the Eucharist that the faithful are united to God, and through Him to each other. Communion strengthens and deepens incorporation into the Church. The Eucharist is the unity of Christians, and a Christian community can be said to be more or less in communion with the Church depending on whether or not it celebrates a valid and sacramental Eucharist (as do the Eastern Orthodox).

Pledge of Future Glory

“The Church knows that the Lord comes even now in his Eucharist and that he is there in our midst. However, his presence is veiled. Therefore we celebrate the Eucharist "awaiting the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ," asking "to share in your glory when every tear will be wiped away. On that day we shall see you, our God, as you are. We shall become like you and praise you forever through Christ our Lord."

There is no surer pledge or dearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells," than the Eucharist. Every time this mystery is celebrated, "the work of our redemption is carried on" and we "break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ" (CCC 1404-1405).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the spiritual effects of the Eucharist? How do these correspond to the physical benefits of eating?
2. What connection exists between the Eucharist and the theological virtue of charity (love)?
3. According to the Catechism, reception of the holy Eucharist connects us more closely with the poor. How can you “extend” the fruits of the Eucharist to the poor in your parish and community?
4. In what ways can the Eucharist help bring about full communion with Orthodox Christians? With Protestants?
5. How is the second coming of Jesus connected with the Eucharist?

HOMEWORK

Name _____

From the Catechism Nos. 1382–1401

11. The Mass is both a _____ and a _____ of communion with the Body and Blood of Christ.

12. T or F If we are “conscious of grave sin,” we must go to the sacrament of reconciliation before we can worthily receive the Holy Eucharist.

13. How often are we obliged by the Church to receive the Eucharist?

14. When is the sign of Communion “more complete”?

15. The Catechism presents several fruits of receiving Holy Communion. Name three of them.

From the Catechism Nos. 1402–1419

16. The Eucharist is “the memorial of the _____ of the Lord.” As such, it is “an anticipation of _____.”

17. At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of “the fulfillment of the Passover in the _____ of _____.”

18. According to the Catechism, the Lord is in our midst but his presence is “_____.”

19. "The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are _____ and _____, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration."

20. In the Eucharist, Christ has given us the " _____ of _____ " with him in eternal life.