

# ***Full and Active Participation in the Liturgy: The Holy Eucharist as Sacrifice Sacrament, Communion Sacrament and Presence Sacrament***

## **Active Participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass**

### ***Texts for Prayer and Reflection***

"Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread ... he sat at table with the twelve disciples as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" (Matthew 26: 17, 20, 26-28)

"And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they drank of it. And he said to them, 'This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.'" (Mark 14: 22-24)

"And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer...And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'" (Luke 22: 14-15, 19-20)

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2: 42)

"On the first day of the week, we were gathered together to break bread..." (Acts 20: 7)

St. Monica to St. Augustine: "For when the day of her dissolution was at hand, she did not think of having her body richly clothed or embalmed with spices. She did not desire a carefully chose monument, nor did she care for a grave in her own land. Such things she did not enjoin upon us, but she desired only that she be remembered at your altar, which she had served without the loss of a single day" (*Confessions*, Bk. 9, n. 36).

"When, during the persecution of Diocletian, their assemblies were banned with the greatest severity, many were courageous enough to defy the imperial decree and accepted death rather than miss the Sunday Eucharist. This was the case of the martyrs of Abitina, in Proconsular

Africa, who replied to their accusers: ‘Without fear of any kind we have celebrated the Lord’s Supper, because it cannot be missed; that is our law’; ‘We cannot live without the Lord’s Supper.’ As she confessed her faith, one of the martyrs said: ‘Yes, I went to the assembly and I celebrated the Lord’s Supper with my brothers and sisters, because I am a Christian’” (cf. *Dies Domini*, #46).

“In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the Cross with Mary, united with the offering and intercession of Christ” (CCC, 1370). “Christ’s sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering”

“But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain [cf. 2Cor 7:1]” (SC 11).

“The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it “re-presents” (makes present) the sacrifice of the Cross, because it is its *memorial*, and because it *applies* its fruit” (CCC, 1366).

“The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice” (CCC, 1367).

“The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers, they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s Word and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s Body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all” (SC 48).

“The active participation so happily increased after the council does not consist only in external activity, but above all in interior and spiritual participation, in living and fruitful participation in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ” (Synod of 1985, *Message to the People of God*).

### ***Questions for Examen***

Am I fully and actively participating in the Liturgy? Why or why not? What can I do about it?

Am I always showing up? Do I easily absent myself from attending Mass on vacation or during hunting season? If so, what will I do about it?

Am I bringing my joys and sorrows to the altar? Those of my family and friends?

Do I take Mary with me? Is she “meeting me along the way?” Am I learning from her?

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### **Active Participation in Holy Communion**

#### ***Texts for Prayer and Reflection***

"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6: 35)

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51)

"The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life within you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at 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 sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.'" (John 6: 52-58)

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Cor. 10: 16-17)

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Cor. 11: 27-29)

"I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire His Blood, which is love incorruptible." St. Ignatius of Antioch in his *Letter to the Romans* (circa 110 A.D.)

"For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the Word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the Flesh and the Blood of that incarnated Jesus." St. Justin Martyr in his *First Apology* (circa 150 A.D.)

"Eat my flesh,' [Jesus] says, 'and drink my blood.' The Lord supplies us with these intimate nutrients, he delivers over his flesh and pours out his blood, and nothing is lacking for the growth of his children." St. Clement of Alexandria in his *The Instructor of Children* (circa 191 A.D.)

St. Therese's First Communion: "How sweet it was, the first kiss of Jesus to my soul! Yes, it was a kiss of Love. I felt I was loved, and I too said: 'I love Thee, I give myself to Thee forever!' Jesus asked nothing of me, demanded no sacrifice. Already for a long time past, He and the little Therese had watched and understood one another...That day our meeting was no longer a simple look but a fusion. No longer were we two: Therese had disappeared as the drop of water which loses itself in the depths of the ocean, *Jesus alone remained; The Master, the King!*" (*Story of a Soul*, c. 4).

"The demon, traitor that he is, knows well that he cannot make a soul who wills to belong wholly to the good God commit sin; therefore he endeavors only to persuade her that she sins. That is a great deal gained, but it is not yet enough to satisfy his rage...he aims at something further, he wants to deprive Jesus of a loved tabernacle. Not being able himself to enter into this sanctuary he wishes that it may at least remain empty and without its Lord. Alas! What will become of this poor heart?...When the devil has succeeded in driving away a soul from Holy Communion he has gained his ends, and Jesus weeps..." (Letter of St. Therese to her cousin Marie Guerin).

### ***Questions for Examen***

How often do I receive Holy Communion? Am I making the most of each and every Holy Communion? Am I desirous of receiving Him? Why or why not? Am I consciously trying to do my part in a cultivation of desire?

Do I properly understand the Church's guidelines for receiving Holy Communion? Am I properly disposed for receiving Jesus intimately in Holy Communion? If not, what can I do to help change this?

Am I making regular use of the Sacrament of Penance? What must I do differently?

Do I ask Mary to help me receive with her sentiments? Do I try to make my Holy Communion more like Mary's First Communion?

## ***Full and Active Participation in the Liturgy: The Holy Eucharist as Sacrifice Sacrament, Communion Sacrament and Presence Sacrament***

### **Active Participation in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

#### ***Texts for Prayer and Reflection***

"And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him...Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread." Luke 24: 30-31

"Suddenly, a leper came forward and did him homage, saying to him, 'Sir, if you will to do so, you can cure me'" (Mt. 8:2).

"A man came up to him and knelt before him. 'Lord', he said, 'take pity on my son who is demented'" (Mt. 17:14-16).

"The mother of Zebedee's sons came up to him accompanied by her sons to do him homage and ask of him a favor" (Mt. 20:20-21).

"Jesus stood before them and said, 'Peace!' The women came up and embraced his feet and did him homage." (Mt. 28:8-10).

"At the sight of him, those who had entertained doubts fell down in homage..." (Mt. 28:16-18).

"Catching sight of Jesus at a distance, he ran up and did him homage..." (Mk. 5:6-7).

"When I am before the Blessed Sacrament I feel such a lively faith that I cannot describe it. Christ in the Eucharist is almost tangible to me. To kiss his wounds continually and embrace him. When it is time for me to leave I have to tear myself away from his sacred presence." (St. Anthony Mary Claret)

"I make my Holy Hour with Jesus straight after Mass, so that I get the two hours with Jesus before people and sisters start using me. I let Him use me first" (Mother Teresa to Fr. Michael Van der Peet, March 6, 1976).

"The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as the "perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend." In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained"... (CCC 1374).

"Because of the desire to enter the mystery of Jesus in the Eucharist, the Missionaries of Charity

have four hours of prayer every day, including daily adoration of one hour before the Blessed Sacrament. Fidelity to this prayer and daily adoration brings a growing hunger for God and His will” (Mother Teresa, *Intervention at Synod of Bishops on the Consecrated Life*).

“Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. ‘I look at him and he looks at me’: this is what a certain peasant of Ars used to say to his holy cure about his prayer before the tabernacle. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies our heart; the light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men” (CCC 2715).

“In his Eucharistic Presence he remains mysteriously in our midst as the one who loved us and gave himself up for us...The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this Sacrament of Love. Let us not refuse the time to go meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease” (CCC 1380).

“To visit the Blessed Sacrament is...a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord” (CCC 1418).

“It is invaluable to converse with Christ, and, leaning against Jesus’ breast like the beloved disciple, we can feel the infinite love of his heart.” It conforms us to Him and “we in turn enter into this great act of giving, for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.” (*Pope’s letter to Bp Houssiau of Liege on the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Feast of Corpus Christi*).

“I would also like to repeat my request to you to make adoration of the Blessed Sacrament a habitual practice in all Christian communities, in accordance with the Church’s spirit and liturgical norms” (*Letter to Archbishop of Seville on Anniversary of 45<sup>th</sup> Eucharistic Congress*).

### ***Questions for Examen***

Am I reverent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Do I really believe that Jesus is present in the Church? How do I behave while in His Presence? Does something need to change?

Do I encourage and teach my children and the younger generation about the meaning and value of Eucharistic Adoration? Is regular Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament part of my spiritual routine? Why or why not? Why not put this in the proper place now?

Do I look “with the eyes of Mary?” Have I asked her to come with me to Adoration? Do I behold Him with the joy that Mary radiated when she first saw God in the flesh?