



NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival

Communion with Christ and Church

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When we receive Holy Communion, Christ is giving himself to us. He comes to us in all humility, as he came to us in the Incarnation, so that we may receive him and become one with him. Christ gives himself to us so that we may continue the pilgrim path toward life with him in the fullness of the Kingdom of God. ... Through this sacrament, the pilgrim Church is nourished, deepening her communion with the Triune God and consequently that of her members with one another.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is called Holy Communion precisely because, by placing us in intimate communion with the sacrifice of Christ, we are placed in intimate communion with him and, through him, with each other. Therefore, the Eucharist is called Holy Communion because it is “the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being.” How can we understand this? The Gospel of John recounts that, when Jesus died on the cross, blood and water flowed out (Jn 19:34), symbolic of Baptism and the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council teaches, “The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus,” and that “it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.” In this image from the Gospel of John, we see that the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, is born from the sacrificial love of Christ in

his self-offering on the cross. The Eucharist re-presents this one sacrifice so that we are placed in communion with it and with the divine love from which it flows forth. We are placed in communion with each other through this love which is given to us. That is why we can say, “the Eucharist makes the Church.”

We are first incorporated into the Body of Christ, the Church, through the waters of Baptism. Yet Baptism, like the other sacraments, is ordered toward Eucharistic communion. The Second Vatican Council teaches,

The other sacraments, as well as with every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual boon of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and Living Bread, by the action of the Holy Spirit through his very flesh vital and vitalizing, giving life to men who are thus invited and encouraged to

offer themselves, their labors and all created things, together with him.

The Council Fathers continue,

In this light, the Eucharist shows itself as the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel. Those under instruction are introduced by stages to a sharing in the Eucharist, and the faithful, already marked with the seal of Baptism and Confirmation, are through the reception of the Eucharist fully joined to the Body of Christ.

That is why the Council calls the eucharistic sacrifice “the source and summit of the Christian life.”



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