

Maronite Monks of Adoration

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The Fruits of Holy Communion



St. Peter Julian Eymard informs us: “We shall profit more by Holy Communion than by any other means of sanctification” (*Holy Communion*, P. 1). Fr. John A. Hardon, S. J. explains: “Every worthy reception of Holy Communion deepens the life of God in our souls; automatically, spontaneously, and infallibly.”** Indeed, “the principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist...is an intimate union with Jesus Christ [God]” (*Catechism* #1391). In this article, we’ll examine the fruits of Holy Communion.

Holy Communion makes life in God pleasurable

Holy Communion makes the spiritual life joyful. Joy flows from an interior knowledge of God. Being infinitely good, God is infinitely attractive and desirable. Therefore, this interior knowledge deepens our love of God. Fr. Eymard links this interior knowledge with Communion: “In Holy Communion Jesus...becomes ... our teacher ... [He] enlightens the mind and gives it a special aptitude for discovering more and more clearly the things of God ... Communion awakens in us a hunger for God...This attraction, mysterious to some extent is a special grace of Communion” (*Holy Communion* p. 76-77). Since the will naturally follows what attracts it, this “special grace” makes the spiritual life pleasurable. Fr. Hardon confirms, “There is no more effective way known to God or man for enjoying the practice of virtue and doing God’s will than receiving Holy Communion as often as you can.” Again, “Guaranteed, receive Holy

Communion as often as you can [and] wonder of wonders, you’ll come to enjoy the practice of virtue. [Don’t believe it?] Try it out!!”

Holy Communion empowers us to persevere in the spiritual life

Many beginning a life of prayer weary and fall away. St. Paul explains why: “A man becomes an enemy of God when his mind is controlled by human nature; for he does not obey God’s law, and in fact he cannot obey it” (Rom 8:7). Someone not in a state of grace has an aversion to the things of God and “is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). As St. Thomas points out: “No man can live without joy. That is why, deprived of spiritual joys, he must go over to carnal pleasures.” Charity —increased through Holy Communion —is the virtue in the will which makes it possible to love God. St.

Thomas explains, “This reordering of the mind [toward God] ... is from the free will with the help of divine grace” (S.C.G. 4:72). Thus Fr. Hardon says, “The most basic effect of Holy Communion is to enable the communicant to remain supernaturally alive.” Indeed, “if we receive Communion only infrequently”

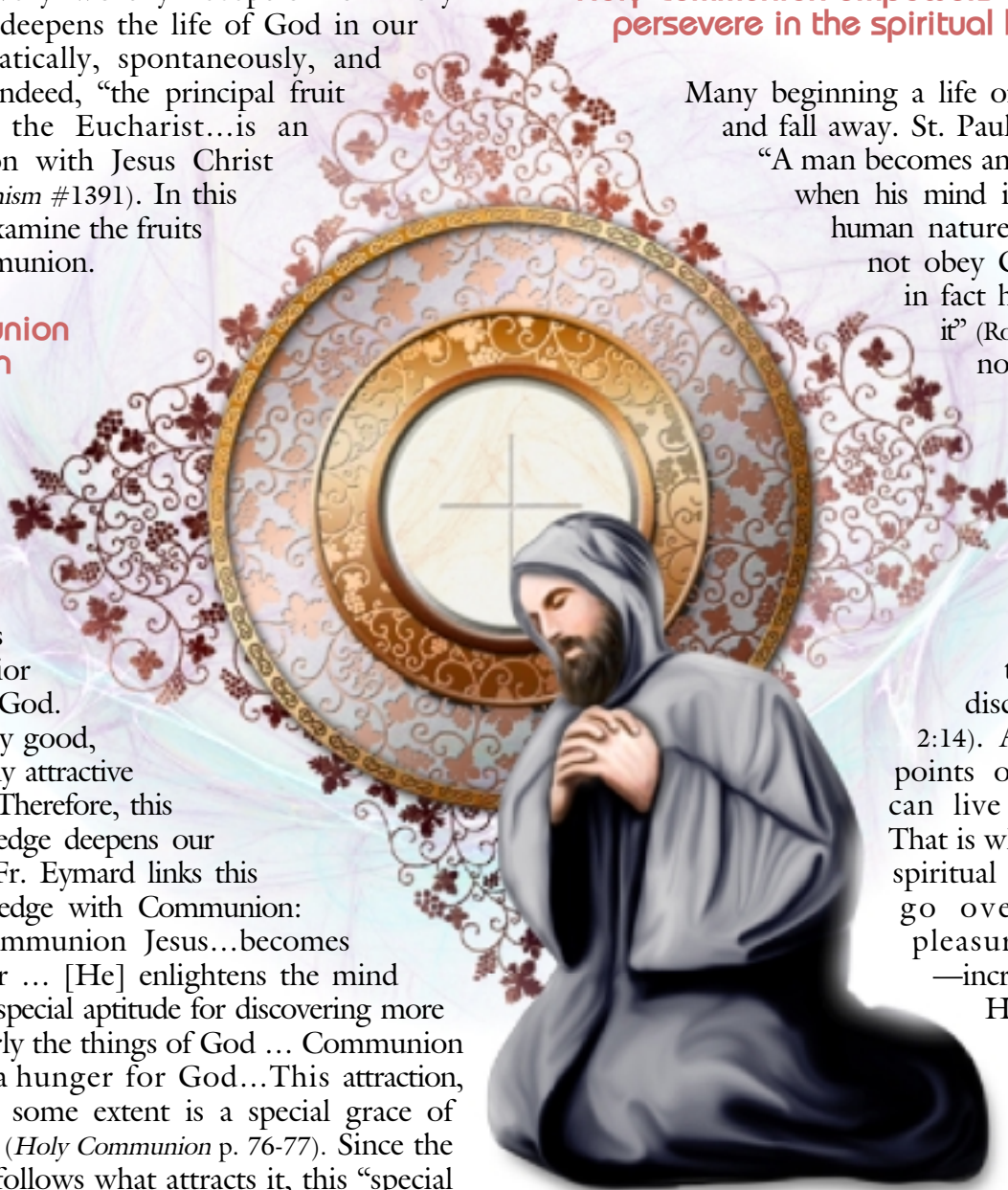


Illustration: Maronite Monks

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** All Fr. Hardon quotes are taken from conferences:
The Blessed Sacrament Album

says St. Peter Julian Eymard, “it is difficult to keep in a state of grace...so experience proves” (*Holy Communion*, p. 92).

Holy Communion provides a remedy against the infectious spread of sin

Venial sin weakens our love of God. In addition, actual graces needed to avoid future sins are diminished. This leads to more frequent and graver sins. Unchecked, this cycle inevitably leads to mortal sin. Holy Communion replenishes the grace lost through sin, thus it “preserves us from future mortal sins” (*Catechism* #1395). To better understand this effect, a proper understanding of fallen human nature is necessary.

Original sin has wounded human nature with a four-fold effect: a difficulty in discerning what reality is; a malicious will; weakness in overcoming difficulties; and intemperance. Consequently, we have a natural tendency to be proud, lustful, prone to envy and anger, greedy, lazy and gluttonous. The graces received in Holy Communion help form the moral and intellectual virtues which enlighten the mind and strengthen the will to combat these evil inclinations. According to Fr. Hardon, “The verdict of human history is certain. Either a person receives Holy Communion frequently and regularly or human nature is no match for the passions that plague every human being.” Fr. Michael Muller, C.S.S.R. concurs, “Ask any Christian who has once lived in sin and afterwards truly amended, from what moment he began to get the better of his passions, and he will answer, from the moment he began to frequent the sacraments” (*The Blessed Eucharist*, p. 120).

Protection against Satanic attacks

In addition, Holy Communion protects against the assaults of the devil. St. Thomas explains this effect: “Hell was subdued by the death of our savior, and the Blessed Sacrament of the altar being a mystical renewal of the death of Jesus Christ, the devils no sooner behold his Body and Blood in us, than they immediately take to flight,

giving place to angels, who draw near and assist us” (*The Blessed Eucharist*, p. 121).

God the Father summarizes these effects in private revelation to St. Catherine of Sienna: “When the appearance of bread has been consumed, I leave behind the imprint of my grace ... [My] son’s wisdom remains there, enlightening the mind’s eye. [It] is left strong, sharing in my strength and power which makes her strong and powerful against her selfish sensitivity, against the devil and the world” (*Dialogue* #112).

Holy Communion removes the effects of sin

With each sin we incur a debt of punishment and lose grace. Theologian Fr. Hardon assures us: “Part of the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church is that Holy Communion removes both debt of punishment and restores grace. But watch it! Depending on the frequency of receiving and the fervor of reception.”

The *Catechism* states, “The Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity wipes away venial sins” (#1394). The increase of charity has a two-fold effect on our actions. First, as stated above, it increases our desire to practice virtue. These virtuous actions are a source of satisfaction for sin. Secondly, the merit of each

action is in proportion to the intensity of our love of God. That is why Jesus said, “Her many sins are forgiven her for she loved much” (Jn. 7:47).

More Fruitful Holy Communion through Sacramental Confession

Each sacramental confession confers sanctifying grace increasing our love of God. This disposes the soul to receive more graces from Holy Communion in three ways. First, with each influx of grace we receive a greater capacity for more grace much as transferring water from a pint jar to a quart jar yields a greater capacity for more water. Secondly, the grace received is measured by the love and desire we have for Holy Communion. God the Father confirms that “each of you receives it [grace from Communion] in proportion to the love and burning desire you bring to it.” (*Dialogue* #110) Finally, confession decreases our inclination to sin and “venial sins...hinder the efficacy of this sacrament.”

(*The Blessed Eucharist* p. 85)

Holy Communion decreases amount of purification necessary in Purgatory

Moreover, the sufferings in Purgatory are in proportion to each person’s degree of sinfulness. Therefore, St. Thomas says, “[When] grace is increased...the less there remains of the blemish of the previous sin and the less punishment is required to remove this blemish” (*Summa* Q18 A2 Supp).

Holy Communion influences how much that special someone will love you forever

At least two factors determine how much we'll love each other in Heaven. First, we'll have a special love for those who helped us grow in holiness. Hence St. Therese of Lisieux notes, "In Heaven we shall not meet with indifferent glances, because all the elect will discover they owe to each other the graces that merited the crown for them" (*Last Conversations*, p. 100). But principally we'll love each soul in heaven in proportion to their degree of glory. St. Thomas explains why: "Because the entire life of the blessed consists in directing their minds to God, wherefore the entire ordering of their love will be ruled with respect to God, so that each one will love more and reckon to be nearer to himself those who are nearer to God" (Q26 A13 Pt. II-II).

Even our physical attractiveness will be measured by our sanctity for "the brightness of the body will show forth the quality of the soul; as to its grace and glory" (Q57 A1 Pt I). St. Theresa of Avila who saw glorified bodies says, "If I had spent many years trying to depict how to imagine something so beautiful I couldn't have, nor would I have known how to: it surpasses everything imaginable on earth, even in just its whiteness and splendor" (*Life* 28:4). The Blessed Virgin said to Ven. Mary of Agreda,

"In Heaven...those who have worthily and devoutly received the Holy Eucharist will in several respects exceed the glory of many martyrs" (*Words of Wisdom*, p. 380).

The amount of sanctifying grace at death will determine our degree of glory, and degree of attractiveness to each other. Holy Communion is the primary means God has ordained for growth in sanctity. Therefore, our "eternal love" and "eternal attraction" for each other will depend—in large part—on the frequency and fervor of our Holy Communion.

"It is impossible to exaggerate," says Fr. Hardon, "the power which Christ confers on those who receive him in the Blessed Sacrament with deep faith and corresponding love." Ironically neglected by the majority, Holy Communion is in fact God's greatest gift to mankind. Our philosophy instructor, Dr. Duane H. Berquist, has the proper perspective. "Occasionally," he says, "someone will commend me for assisting at daily Mass. I respond with a question: 'If you knew a certain bank was giving \$1000.00 to each person who showed up at a specified time, would you find time to go?'" He notes most respond in the affirmative. He then says, "You receive something infinitely greater at each Mass." Indeed, Mass is the highest action that can be performed in this life. It is the divinely ordained means to "perfect happiness." At times, duties of state may prevent attendance, but do not neglect this treasure lightly. ✠