

The Effects of Holy Communion

Q. 253. Does reception of the Holy Eucharist at Holy Communion increase the supernatural life of our soul?

Yes. One of the principal effects received from the Holy Eucharist at Holy Communion is the intensification and strengthening of supernatural life. Being a sign of nourishment, the Holy Eucharist is meant to do for the soul what material food does for the body, and that is to preserve life and to protect it. As material food enables us to continue living and tends to protect us from fatal disease, so Holy Communion preserves the spiritual life of our souls, forgives our venial sins, and protects us from the spiritual disease of mortal sin.

Jesus Himself is our food in Holy Communion. He (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity) is entirely ours as the food of our souls. He is united to us in order to make us like Himself. He said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh” (John 6:51). The sharing of divine life means that God lives in us and we in Him, and that as God the Son has by nature the same life as the Father in its infinite fullness, so do we share it by grace.

Our Lord compared the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar with the manna given to the Jews, because the Holy Eucharist was intended to be the daily spiritual food of Christians, just as manna was the daily food of the Israelites in the desert.

It was in the midst of a meal, under the form of food, that Jesus chose to institute the Eucharist. He gave Himself to us as the nourishment of our souls: “For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:55).

Jesus Christ is not only glad to accept our invitation to come into our hearts, but He told us that we must receive Him as our Guest. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53).

Sanctifying grace is that grace which gives our souls new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself. Sanctifying grace makes our souls holy and pleasing to God, especially by increasing divine love in our hearts. Sanctifying grace makes us adopted children of God and temples of the Holy Spirit.

Just as our souls are the life of our bodies, so sanctifying grace is the life of our souls. We need sanctifying grace to save our souls. Mortal sin brings death to our

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Sacred Scripture

Q. 253. Is 55:1-3, 6-7; Jn 6:35, 40; Heb 4:4-16.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Q. 253. Paragraphs 1392-1395.

souls, because it takes away sanctifying grace, and this means losing God Himself.

To understand why the Church incessantly stresses the advantages of receiving the sacraments frequently, particularly the Holy Eucharist, we have but to recall her doctrine concerning sanctifying grace.

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament that produces in us, by means of Holy Communion, an increase of habitual or sanctifying grace. It not only preserves the life of our souls, but increases it, just as the body is not only supported by means of natural food, but also is strengthened.

Holy Communion also preserves and increases all the various virtues which have been bestowed upon our souls together with sanctifying grace. By increasing the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, Holy Communion enables us to enter into closer union with God. By strengthening the moral virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude, Holy Communion enables us to regulate better our whole attitude toward God, our neighbor, and ourselves. Holy Communion also opens our understanding and wills to the inspirations and promptings of the Holy Spirit.



#E4-78

Sacred Scripture

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” *John 15:4-5*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1395 By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist *preserves us from future mortal sins*. The more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from him by mortal sin. The Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins — that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Eucharist is properly the sacrament of those who are in full communion with the Church.

Vatican Council II

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 be attuned to their voices, and that they cooperate with heavenly grace lest they receive it in vain (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1). *Sacred Liturgy*, 11

#E4_4-9

**Summary Prayer**

Jesus, we believe that Holy Communion gives us an increase of sanctifying grace, the very life of our souls. It makes us sharers in Your own divine life. You said, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56).

Just as the heavenly Father gives You His divinity, His power, His goodness, and His life, from all eternity, so do You, Jesus, give us Your divine life in Holy Communion. You said, “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.” (John 6:57).

Jesus our Lord, just as the stem and the branches of a vine are the same being, nourished and acting together, producing the same fruits because they are fed by the same sap, so too You circulate Your divine life of grace in our souls through Holy Communion in such a way that we live by Your life and really become like You. You said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit” (John 15:5).

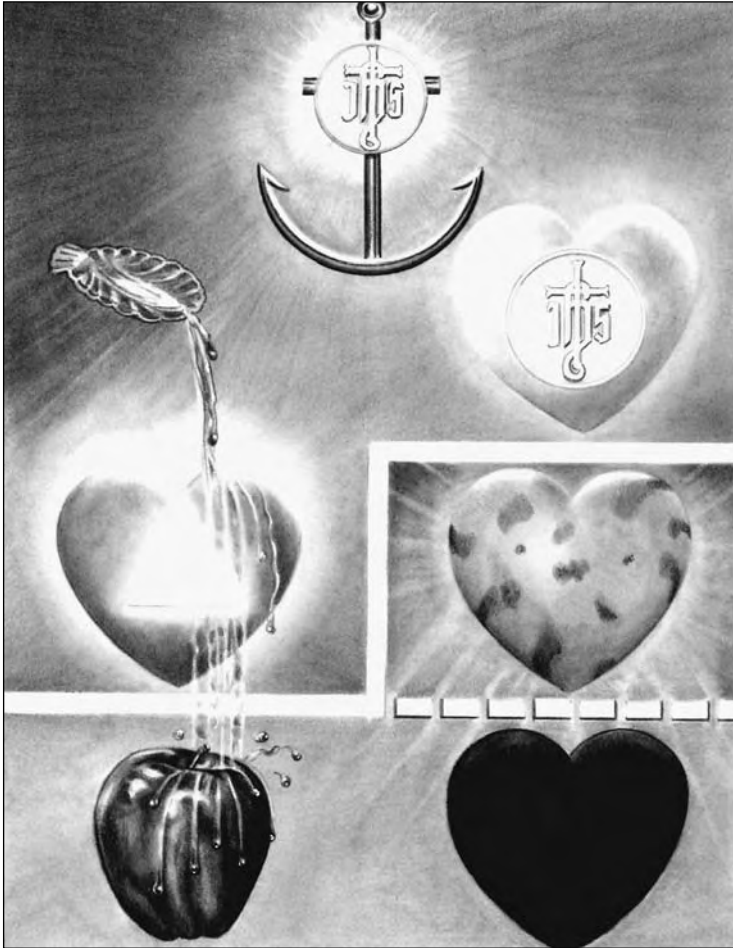
Most compassionate Christ, how marvelous is the fruit of sanctifying grace! It makes our souls holy, beautiful, and pleasing to God, sacred temples of the Holy Spirit. Sanctifying grace, which is increased in our souls in Holy Communion, not only makes us adopted children of God, but also helps us to act as other Christs. It gives us the right to enter heaven, for without this grace we can never see God.

Jesus, we believe You make us Christ-like, by giving us sanctifying grace at Holy Communion and by giving us actual graces—helps from above—to preserve Your divine life in our souls. Through these helps given to us at

Holy Communion and in times of need, our minds receive the light to see, and our wills are imbued with the strength to do what is right and to avoid what is wrong. Through frequent Holy Communion, help us to think, desire, speak, and act like You. We ask this in Your most Holy Name. Amen.

Catechism by Diagram

#E4_4-1



The Effects of Holy Communion. (1) Holy Communion preserves the sanctifying grace that we received for the first time in Holy Baptism (water), which took away original sin (apple) by giving us the grace of God (heart with triangle). (2) It helps us to grow in grace. Baptism begins the Christian life, but the Christian must grow ever more alive by sharing in the divine life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, especially through Holy Communion. Jesus is our food and our life, to strengthen and nourish us with His Flesh and Blood (host in heart). With this food, we make progress in holiness. (3) It takes away venial sins (spots on heart), if we are truly sorry for them. (4) It preserves us from mortal sin (black heart) by putting a wall (separated by lines) between us and mortal sin. (5) It is a means to unite the faithful more closely each day with God and with one another (rays around heart). (6) It is our hope of eternal life (anchor, host). Jesus said, “He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).

#E4-75



Q. 254. Does Holy Communion unite our souls more closely to Jesus?

Yes, Holy Communion unites our souls to Jesus' divine and human natures. It is an article of faith that the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood of Christ, together with His soul and divinity. Therefore, when we receive Holy Communion, we receive the real, physical Body and Blood of Christ, together with His soul and His divinity, veiled under the appearances of bread and wine.

Put another way, during Holy Communion, we receive the same Body of Jesus which He took from His most pure Virgin Mother, and which arose in glory from the tomb; His Precious Blood, with which He redeemed us—one drop of It would have been enough to redeem a thousand worlds!—and His most sacred soul, the abode of graces and virtues in absolute perfection.

We share in Christ's life as the Divine Word and as the only Son of the Father. We receive the life the Father gives to the Son from all eternity. We can possess His divinity in our souls at all times by remaining in the state of grace; but it is only at the time of Holy Communion that we enjoy the great privilege of being intimately united with the human nature of our Lord.

The three divine Persons are already in us by grace, but at the moment of Communion they are present within us in a special manner. As we are then sacramentally united to the Incarnate Word, the three divine Persons are also, through Him and by Him, united to us, and They love us as the Word Incarnate, Whose members we are. When we carry Jesus in our hearts, we also bear the Father and the Holy Spirit with Him. Thus, Holy Communion is a foretaste of heaven.

To receive our Lord in Holy Communion is the most wonderful thing that can happen to us, because it means having the God-man, Jesus, in our own hearts.

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

The Holy Eucharist is the greatest and the holiest of the sacraments, because it is our Savior Jesus Christ Himself, God Who became man for our salvation.

Holy Communion also brings about a special union between us and the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. Jesus said, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him” (John 14:23).

#E4-80



Catechism of the Catholic Church

1391 *Holy Communion augments our union with Christ.* The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”²¹ Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.”²² “On the feasts of the Lord, when the faithful receive the Body of the Son, they proclaim to one another the Good News that the first fruits of life have been given, as when the angel said to Mary Magdalene, “Christ is risen!” Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ.”²³

Roman Curial Document

On those who receive the body and blood of Christ, the gift of the Spirit is poured out abundantly like living water (cf. John 7:37-39), provided that this body and blood have been received sacramentally and spiritually, namely, by that faith which operates through charity. *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (1967), 38*

Summary Prayer

Lord Jesus, the Eucharist is the most wonderful work of Your love. Out of Your infinite love, You have given us not only what You have, but what You are. At Holy Communion, You give us Your Body, Your Blood, Your Soul, Your Divinity, Your merits, and Your graces. Nowhere do You bestow these graces more abundantly than in this sacrament. May such love awaken a return of love in our hearts!

Jesus, our Divine Love, we want to receive You in Holy Communion frequently, so that we may live in You, and You in us.

Lord Jesus, nowhere is Your love for us greater than in this sacrament. Your gift of love to us is nothing less than Yourself, whole and entire: Your Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. You are generous, not for Your own sake, but for the sake of our salvation and happiness. Love for us and for all mankind urged You to leave us the treasure of Holy Communion as a parting testament on the night before You died. We can make no better return of love than to receive You often in this sacrament of love. Our unworthiness and sinfulness should not keep us away from Your Holy Table; rather, conscious of our shortcomings, we should come to You more frequently in order that our souls may be cleansed and sanctified. Only in this way shall we become more worthy to receive You. Give us the grace to overcome our carelessness and lack of faith.

Jesus, be our Companion throughout life by frequent Holy Communion; be our unfailing Companion during the last painful struggle of death. Come in that decisive hour to protect our souls, which You bought with Your own Precious Blood, and lead us safely into the home of Your Father and ours.

Change us more and more into Yourself, O Bread of Life. Let each Holy Communion fill our hearts with greater love for You and bind them so closely to Your own that we may always think as You do, desire what You desire, and do everything as You would, even as St. Paul said of himself, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). We do not want to think, will, or act in our own way, but in Your way. Our only desire is to live Your life, that we may resemble You, our Elder Brother.

Jesus, Bread of Life, in the Eucharist You touch our lives. Keep Your love alive in our hearts, that we may be worthy of You and pleasing to Your heavenly Father, now and forever. Amen.

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus as food. Why is Holy Communion compared to the material food we eat as well as to the manna given to the Jewish people in the wilderness?
2. Meditate on the words of Jesus from Scripture: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56).

Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit: “What changes must I make in my way of thinking, speaking, and acting so that Jesus, whom I receive in Holy Communion, can live and reign in me?”

3. Resolve to prepare yourself well interiorly each time you receive Jesus in Holy Communion. When you receive Him in this sacrament, talk to Him as a special Friend. Thank Him wholeheartedly for giving Himself to you to strengthen your spiritual life.

Q. 255. Does Holy Communion increase our love for God?

Yes, Holy Communion is a source of the theological virtue of charity.

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament which most fittingly increases man’s love for God, because it was begun and inspired by God’s love for man. St. John pointed to that love when he wrote: “When Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (John 13:1). Then the Evangelist tells us that the Savior gave us the Eucharist to show this love. The love of His Sacred Heart caused the wonderful mystery of the union that could henceforth be effected unceasingly on the altar.

Jesus once said: “I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49). Through the Holy Eucharist, Jesus casts fire into men’s hearts. He Himself is that flame of love.

Sanctifying grace, which we receive through Holy Communion, and which attaches itself to the very essence of our souls, brings with it supernatural powers that enable us to perform virtuous deeds. The most important of these deeds are acts of charity (sacrificial love) by which we love God above all things for His sake and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

At Holy Communion, Jesus is within us, bringing His most pure and holy love. He longs for our love and asks us to give Him our whole hearts and all of our love. Jesus’ love is a great gift, and it is in Communion that He gives it.

The only obstacle to this complete reign of Christ in us is our selfishness. We must die to our selfish lives in order to avail ourselves fully of the divine life. The Christ-life in us is a life of self-surrender and of love. Love yields our wills to Christ, and through them, our whole beings and all our energies. Christ gives Himself to us according to the measure of our love. If we give ourselves to Him unreservedly, with a pure heart, Jesus, in exchange, gives Himself to us as only God is able to do. St. John wrote, “So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16).

If we yield to the workings of His grace, we will find our minds and wills more ready to do what Jesus will inspire us to do. If we do not put obstacles in the way

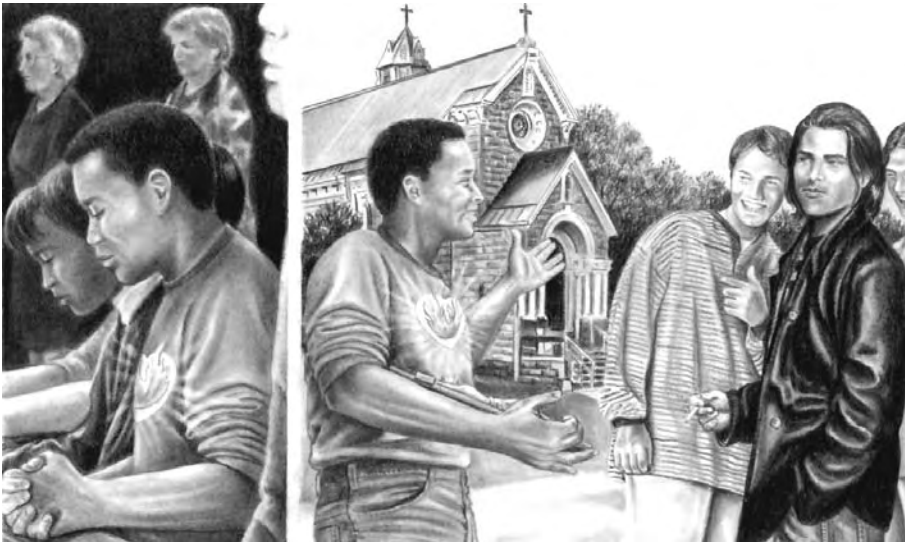
For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

of God's grace and if our fervor in receiving Holy Communion continues, the life of Jesus will manifest itself more distinctly in us. Let our hearts, which love so little, be subjected to the transforming influence of the tremendous love of Jesus' Sacred Heart, that we may become one with Him in Holy Communion.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1394 As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity *wipes away venial sins*.¹ By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him: "Since Christ died for us out of love, when we celebrate the memorial of his death at the moment of sacrifice we ask that love may be granted to us by the coming of the Holy Spirit. We humbly pray that in the strength of this love by which Christ willed to die for us, we, by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, may be able to consider the world as crucified for us, and to be ourselves as crucified to the world.... Having received the gift of love, let us die to sin and live for God."²

#E5-29



Splendor of Truth

The life of holiness thus brings to full expression and effectiveness the threefold and unitary *munus propheticum, sacerdotale et regale* which every Christian receives as a gift by being born again "of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5) in Baptism. His moral life has the value of a "spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1; cf. Phil 3:3), flowing from and nourished by that inexhaustible source of holiness and glorification of God which is found in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist: by sharing in the sacrifice of the Cross, the Christian partakes of Christ's self-giving love and is equipped and committed to live this same charity in all his thoughts and deeds (*section 107*).

Vatican Council II

"The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful and sets them aflame with Christ's insistent love. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain, and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God to which all other activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, are achieved with maximum effectiveness." *Sacred Liturgy, 10*

Summary Prayer

Jesus, we believe that at Holy Communion we drink at the very fountain of grace, holiness, and love. In It, You give us Your Sacred Heart, the source of all grace and love. Holy Communion unites us in divine love to You, most lovable God. True joy springs from divine love.

How earnestly You invite us to this banquet of divine love, which You prepared for our souls so that we might partake of Your own Body and Blood! “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). At Holy Communion, a world of life, light, and love, and a gracious outpouring of the treasures of Your Sacred Heart are opened for us.

Jesus, the moments of union with You in Holy Communion are the happiest of our lives. How much this union of love means to us! It is the climax of Your divine love for us, and it should therefore be the object of our fondest desires. You have made our hearts for Yourself. They yearn to be with You, and to possess You even here on earth, so that they may prepare for an eternal union with You in Heaven.

Holy Communion fills our hearts with love because It fills our souls with sanctifying grace, the source of true love. In our union with You through this sacrament, may we find the strength and courage to undertake anything You might ask of us, for Your glory and the welfare of our neighbors. Let Holy Communion be the foundation of our faith, the support of our hope, the nourishment of our love, for It inflames our hearts with Your love. To You, the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory. Amen.

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. At Holy Communion, Jesus comes to us and increases our love for God. Why is the Holy Eucharist the sacrament which most fittingly increases our love for God?
2. Are there obstacles in your life which hinder you from giving your whole heart to Jesus? List these obstacles and the ways you can overcome them by God’s grace. (Do not show your answers to anyone except to a priest in confession or to a trustworthy Christian friend or counselor.)
3. Meditate on 1 John 4:16. Ask God to grant you the grace to abide in His love.

Q. 256. Does Holy Communion increase our love of neighbor?

Yes, since Holy Communion increases sanctifying grace in our souls, it also increases our love of neighbor.

In Holy Communion, we are united directly to Jesus Christ, and through Him, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, Who are in Him. We also are united with Him

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

and through Him to all His members, and especially to those who are perfectly united with Him in glory.

The Eucharist is the bond of love that unites all Christians as members of one spiritual body, the Church. St. Paul says, “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 Corinthians 10:16–17). Jesus is that one Bread in Holy Communion.

Through frequent Holy Communion, Jesus will give us help to carry out His great commandment of love for our neighbors and to put away all unkindness. He will give us the grace to love our neighbors as ourselves for His sake and to respect and love them as God’s image and likeness, as children of our heavenly Father, and as temples of the Holy Spirit. We must not be unkind to those whom Christ loves and for whom He died on the Cross.

By frequent Holy Communion, we learn to overcome our selfishness, to resist feelings and reactions such as hatred and bitterness, to develop kindness, sympathy, forbearance, and forgiveness, to think kindly of everyone, and to find our happiness in making others happy, and thus we will unite ourselves by love to Christ and to the members of His Mystical Body. By uniting all of the faithful to Jesus, Holy Communion unites us to each other in love.



#E4_4-11

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1397 *The Eucharist commits us to the poor.* To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren: “You have tasted the Blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother,.... You dishonor this table when you do not judge worthy of sharing your food someone judged worthy to take part in this meal.... God freed you from all your sins, and invited you here, but you have not become more merciful.”⁷¹

Vatican Council II

Really sharing in the body of the Lord in the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another. “Because the bread is one, we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17). In this way all of us are made members of his body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27), ‘but severally members one of another’ (Rom. 12:4). *The Church*, 7

No Christian community is built up which does not grow from and hinge on the celebration of the most holy Eucharist. From this all education for community spirit must begin (cf. *Didascalica*, II, 59, 1-3). This eucharistic celebration, to be full and sincere, ought to lead on the one hand to the various works of charity and mutual help, and on the other hand to missionary activity and the various forms of Christian witness. *Priests*, 6

Summary Prayer

Jesus, when You were about to depart from this world, You laid upon us Your last commendation: that we should love one another. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you... This I command you, to love one another” (John 15:12-14, 17). We must imitate Your example by loving our neighbors with a supernatural love and by being kind to them, for You said, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Jesus, we believe that Holy Communion preserves and increases this love for our neighbors. It is a Banquet of Love which You have prepared for the children of God. Even the outward tokens of the Eucharist remind us of brotherly love and kindness. Many grains of wheat are ground and mingled together to make one bread, and many grapes are crushed to fill the eucharistic chalice; similarly must we become one through love and Holy Communion. The Eucharist is the bond of love which animates the members of one spiritual Body, the Church, just as the soul gives life to each member of the human body.

Jesus our Lord, You love our neighbors as You love us, and You give Yourself to them in Holy Communion as You give Yourself to us. Through frequent Holy Communion, help us to carry out Your great commandment of love for our neighbors, and give us the grace to put away all unkindness; for You said, “So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). We cannot receive You into our hearts if we refuse to forgive. Intimately united with Your loving heart at Holy Communion, we can best learn the lesson of forgiving kindness and thus obtain the help we need to practice it. Help us respect and love our neighbors as God’s image and likeness, as children of our heavenly Father, and as temples of the Holy Spirit. We ask this in Your most powerful and holy Name. Amen.

Q. 257. Why is Holy Communion a pledge of future glory?

Holy Communion gives us a pledge of future glory because it establishes sacramental contact between Jesus Christ, Who reigns in glory, and ourselves on earth.

The glory which is reserved for us in heaven is twofold—the glory of the soul and the glory of the body. The glory of the soul consists in the Beatific Vision of God. God communicates to the soul a wondrous gift known as the light of glory, whereby His own splendor pervades the human mind and empowers it to see God as He sees Himself.

Secondly, there is the glory of the body, a supernatural gift whereby our frail bodies are made like the glorified body of our risen Savior. On the last day, the bodies of the just will be brilliant like the sun, endowed with the power of angelic swiftness, spiritualized, and made incapable of suffering.

The Blessed Sacrament is the pledge of, and the preparation for, the eternal glory of the soul and of the body. Our souls, being brought into such close contact with our Savior, share in His divine life. As we eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, we enjoy a pledge of the glory of everlasting life, for He said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.” (John 6:51).

Holy Communion establishes between Jesus Christ and us not merely spiritual contact, but sacramental contact as well, through the “species” or outward appearances of bread. The resurrection of the body can be traced to this contact with Christ. Holy Communion provides us with a promise of resurrection. Our bodies will be more strikingly glorified if we have frequently been in contact during life with the risen body of our Lord.

Though our bodies will die and be changed to the dust of the earth, they will be reunited to our souls on the last day and share their immortality. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

The glorious resurrection of the body is an effect of Holy Communion. It confers on us the right to a glorious resurrection, which Christ promised to those who eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).

Sacred Scripture

This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever. *John 6:58*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1405 There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth “in which righteousness dwells,”⁷¹ 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 for ever in Jesus Christ.”⁷²

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Vatican Council II

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. Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they should learn to offer themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, (*Cf. St. Cyril of Alexandria: "Commentary on the Gospel of St. John," Book 11, ch. 11-12*) they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all. *Sacred Liturgy, 48*

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. What are some of the effects of frequent reception of Holy Communion? Explain how Holy Communion gives us a pledge of future glory.
2. In what concrete ways have you shown your love for others out of love for Jesus Whom you receive in Holy Communion?
3. Pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to know and repent of your sins and make an examination of conscience based on the following questions:
 - Have I shown respect and love for all people as creatures made in God's image and likeness?
 - Have I become more or less selfish since my last confession? In what ways have I been selfish?
 - Have I resisted negative feelings and reactions such as hatred and bitterness?
 - Have I tried to practice kindness, sympathy, forbearance, and forgiveness, especially in difficult circumstances?

Chapter Summary Prayer

Jesus, we believe that the richness of the sacrament of the Eucharist is infinite since It contains You, the Son of God, God's greatest gift to us. All the fruits of the Redemption contained in the Eucharist become ours. You earnestly want to give us a share in them.

Give us great faith, firm confidence, and ardent love, that the fruits of each Holy Communion may be more abundant. We shall not thirst, for this fountain of grace will bring our souls to life everlasting. Therefore, help us to receive You with sincere preparation, that the Eucharist may add to our personal merits a rich bounty of grace. Sanctifying grace is the very life of our souls, and it will enable us to live forever.

Jesus, may Your Eucharist be for us the heavenly manna which strengthens us weary pilgrims along the road of life. Through it, may we be united to You. Help us to receive You often, so that, from this intimate union, we may draw the divine light and moral strength necessary to fashion our

lives according to Your divine will. Thus, may we come to live with You as You promised. Through this divine life, in which we share through Holy Communion, may we be protected from mortal sin, purified of venial sins and imperfections, and encouraged by divine love to reach true holiness.

We beg You, eucharistic Savior, for the two-fold grace of true repentance and final perseverance. Through frequent Communion and its many graces, prepare our souls for that day when, casting aside the veil which now hides the glory and majesty of Your divine face, You will come to us in the splendor of Your Godhead, and we shall behold You face to face. Amen.

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See Appendix A for more references.

Q. 253. Does reception of the Holy Eucharist at Holy Communion increase the supernatural life of our soul?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 16, 17, 22;
On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 62;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 11;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20;
Reflections on Humanae Vitae, John Paul II, sect. 8-9, 11.*

Q. 254. Does Holy Communion unite our souls more closely to Jesus?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 16, 17, 22, 23;
On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 62;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 3, 4, 7;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20.*

Q. 255. Does Holy Communion increase our love for God?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 16, 17, 22.*

Q. 256. Does Holy Communion increase our love of neighbor?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 16, 22;
On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World, John Paul II, sect. 62;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 5, 6, 7;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20;
Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 107.*

Q. 257. Why is Holy Communion a pledge of future glory?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 3;
On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 18;
On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist, John Paul II, sect. 9;
Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 20.*



Thought Provokers

Please see Appendix C for the answers.

Q. 253: What did Jesus say about Holy Communion being a source of spiritual nourishment?

Q. 254: How often may a Catholic receive Holy Communion within the course of a day?

Q. 255: Is it permissible to receive Holy Communion on the tongue?

Q. 256: Since Jesus is God the Son, isn't He present everywhere?

Q. 257: A. Is the reception of Holy Communion necessary for salvation for those who have been baptized?

B. Can those be saved who have no access to the Eucharist such as Protestants and non-Christians?