

From the Bishop - Synod Implementation

6. WHAT DOES CHRIST OFFER THROUGH THE MASS: THE COMMUNION RITE

The Passover sacrifice concluded with the people consuming the victim, the lamb offered to God. This expressed their Communion with their redeeming God.

When instituting the Mass during the Passover meal, Jesus commanded his Apostles ‘Take and eat’. ‘Take and drink’. They were to receive him in Communion.

The Christ who is present through the Consecration is the Risen Christ under the appearance of *each* of the bread and wine. It is the real presence of Christ, body and blood, divine and human, who is received under *each* form.

The blessings of Holy Communion¹

Jesus taught that anyone ‘who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life’.² Holy Communion nourishes this life which he shares through Baptism.

The gifts received through the other sacraments, such as Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders, are nourished as is the spiritual within believers. This especially includes love.

As they grow to think, feel, see and respond to others like the Risen Jesus, his love for the poor and those in need grows within them

Jesus also taught that Holy Communion deepens personal relationships with him. They ‘live in me and I live in them ... and they will live through me’.³

As each is drawn close in relationship with him, he draws together more closely married couples, families, friends, fellow believers and fellow parishioners.

Jesus taught that he shed his blood ‘for the many for the forgiveness of sins’⁴ Through Holy Communion, he forgives past sins, except those which need forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and strengthens against future sins.

The ultimate sign of maturing divine life is divine love expressed in human ways. This love frees from venial sins and strengthens against mortal sins.

As the Risen Jesus draws believers closer to himself through Holy Communion, he draws them closer spiritually to each other in faith community. They are moved too to wish for unity among Christians.

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1391-1398

² John 6:55

³ John 6:56, 57

⁴ Matthew 26:29

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Without Communion, this life is malnourished so that the person is not empowered to live the Christian life as Jesus calls.

The Ritual

The Communion Rite focusses upon communion with Jesus and, through him, with each other.

We pray '*Our Father*', the Lord's Prayer. We pray for freedom from evil; peace and exchange a sign of peace. We then proclaim the '*Lamb of God*' as the celebrant breaks the consecrated Host and drops a morsel into the Blood of Christ as a reminder that he is Risen and alive.

All who are going to Communion then do so in procession after recognising their unworthiness. When the processional hymn concludes, there is a sacred silence for all to 'praise and pray' to Christ 'in their hearts'.⁵ There may then be a reflection hymn.

The Communion Rite, and the Mass, concludes with the Post Communion Prayer.

Question: What will I share from my life with Christ in my heart after Holy Communion?

Sending out on Mission

After any brief notices, the celebrant may remind all in one sentence of their need to live as Christ called through the Liturgy of the Word during the coming week.

Finally, as the Risen Jesus blessed his followers and sent them into the world to share in his mission. The celebrant blesses all and sends them out on mission.

⁵ General Instruction of the Roman Missal 45