

## The Sacraments of Initiation: Confirmation and Eucharist



### Opening Prayer:

#### **Come, Holy Ghost (A Hymn to the Holy Spirit)**

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, and in our hearts take up thy rest. Come with thy grace, and heavenly aid to fill the hearts which thou hast made.

### **THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. . . . "By the sacrament of Confirmation [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit."*

— CCC, no. 1285, citing LG, no. 11

**Why is Confirmation so important?**

Confirmation, together with Baptism and Eucharist, form the Sacraments of Initiation that are all intimately connected. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is "sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ.

The New Testament reports many manifestations of the Holy Spirit, Two of which we note here. St. John's Gospel describes an outpouring of the Spirit on Easter night when Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive the holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22). St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles gives another account of the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ (cf. Acts 2). Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles proclaimed God's mighty deeds. Peter preached that this coming of the Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of Joel: "In the last days ... I will pour out a portion of my spirit / upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17; cf. Jl 3:1).

Those who believed in the Apostles' preaching were baptized and received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The Apostles baptized believers in water and the Spirit. Then they imparted the special gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. "The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church" (CCC, no. 1288, citing Pope Paul VI, *Divinae Consortium Naturae*, no. 659).

By the second century, Confirmation was also conferred by anointing with holy oil, which came to be called sacred Chrism. "This anointing highlights the name 'Christian,' which means 'anointed' and derives from that of Christ himself whom God 'anointed with the Holy Spirit'" (CCC, no. 1289, citing Acts 10:38).

## **THE LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION**

The signs, symbols, ritual acts, and words of the liturgy speak to us of the meaning of a Sacrament and of what Christ enacts in the event through his ministers and the disposition of the candidate. With this in mind, we reflect on the following elements of Confirmation: the anointing with sacred Chrism, the recipient, the essential rite, the ministers, and the effects of the Sacrament.

### **The Anointing with Sacred Chrism**

*The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation ... is the sign of consecration. ... those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ.*

In or near Holy Week, the bishop consecrates the sacred Chrism during the course of the Chrism Mass. It is used to anoint the newly baptized, to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation, and to anoint bishops and priests during the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Anointing with oil has many meanings such as cleansing as part of a bath, limbering up the muscles of athletes, and healing the wounds of the sick. Two other sacramental celebrations make use of blessed oil: "The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort" (CCC, no. 1294). The Oil of Catechumens is used in Baptism. The Oil of the Sick is used for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

### **The Recipient of Confirmation**

Each baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the Latin Church, it is customary to confirm candidates between the age of discretion, also called the age of reason, and about sixteen years of age. It is not uncommon that Catholics not confirmed during this period of their lives for a variety of reasons are confirmed as adults, often on Pentecost Sunday. The candidate should be in the state of grace (that is, without serious sin), be well prepared by prayer and catechesis, and be committed to the responsibilities entailed by the Sacrament.

### **The Essential Rite of Confirmation**

In continuity with the New Testament custom of laying hands on those who would receive the gift of the Spirit, the bishop extends his two hands over all those to be confirmed. He recites a prayer that begs the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for the seven gifts traditionally associated with the Spirit. These gifts are permanent dispositions that move us to respond to the guidance of the Spirit. The traditional list of the gifts is based on Isaiah 11:1-3: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety (reverence), and fear of the Lord (wonder and awe in God's presence).

The essential rite then follows. In the Latin Rite, "the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of hands, and through the words, 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Introduction to the *Rite of Confirmation*, no. 9). In the Eastern Churches, after a prayer for the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, the priest anoints the forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chest, back, hands, and feet of the candidate with *Myron* (holy oil).

With each anointing he says, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Eastern Churches call Confirmation "Chrismation."

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its connection with Baptism is expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. The celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation. (CCC, no. 1321)

The connection between Confirmation and Baptism is also reflected in the choosing of a name by which the candidate will be confirmed, especially when the chosen name is one of the names by which the candidate was baptized.

### **The Minister of Confirmation**

In the early Church, sacramental initiation always involved the bishop; the bishop was the ordinary minister of both Baptism and Confirmation. However, pastoral practice changed as the Church expanded rapidly. When bishops could no longer be present at all celebrations of Baptism, they chose to retain a role in the process of initiation by continuing to be the ordinary minister of Confirmation.

In the Latin Church, with the bishop as the minister of Confirmation, it is evident how this Sacrament can serve to strengthen the person's bond with the Church and her apostolic origins. However, there are also times when the bishop entrusts the celebration of the rite of Confirmation to a priest, such as in the case of the Baptism of an adult or the reception of an adult from another Christian community into full communion with the Church. Bishops may also give this permission in other cases.

In the Eastern Churches, Confirmation is conferred by a priest at the time of Baptism, and in some of these Churches, it is followed by the reception of the Eucharist. This practice underlines the unity of the three Sacraments of Initiation. The priest confirms with the *Myron* or oil consecrated by the bishop. This expresses the apostolic unity of the Church.

### **The Effects of Confirmation**

*Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:*

— *it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation [becoming adopted sons and daughters of God] which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";*

— *it unites us more firmly to Christ;*

— *it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;*

— *it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;*

— *it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.*

-CCC, no.1303

As the words of the liturgy indicate, the person being confirmed is sealed with the Holy Spirit. This seal is called a *character*, marking the person forever as called to fulfill the Church's mission in all the circumstances of life.

The one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment. (2 Cor 1:21-22)

## **THE MISSION AND WITNESS OF THE CONFIRMED**

Confirmation deepens our baptismal life that calls us to be missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ in our families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. Through Confirmation, our personal relationship with Christ is strengthened. We receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intensive manner with great emphasis given to the person of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service.

The Holy Spirit bestows seven gifts— wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, counsel, piety, and fear of the Lord— to assist us in our mission and witness. The impact of these gifts accompanies us in the various stages of our spiritual development.

As the confirmed, we walk with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom enables us to see the world from God's viewpoint, which can help us come to grasp the purpose and plan of God. **It** grants us the long-range view of history, examining the present in the light of the past and the mystery of the future. **It** saves us from the illusion that the spirit of the times is our only guide. The Spirit's gift of knowledge directs us to a contemplation, or thoughtful reflection, of the mystery of God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as well as of the mysteries of the Catholic faith. We are drawn to meditative prayer, where we allow God to lead us while we rest patiently in the divine presence.

The gift of understanding stimulates us to work on knowing ourselves as part of our growth in knowing God. **It** is what St. Augustine meant when he prayed, "That I may know You, may I know myself." When the Spirit pours fortitude or courage into our hearts, we can trust that we will be prepared to stand up for Christ and the Gospel when challenged. As the gift of counsel or

right judgment grows in us, we can sense the quiet teaching that the Spirit gives us about our moral lives and the training of our consciences.

The gift of piety or reverence is an act of respect for the Father who created us, for Jesus who saved us, and for the Spirit who is sanctifying us. We learn reverence for God and people from our parents and others who train us in virtue. The Spirit fills us with this gift at liturgy, which is a masterful school of reverence, as well as through popular devotions and piety.

Finally, the gift of fear of the Lord or wonder and awe in God's presence can infuse honesty into our relationship with God, a frankness that places us in awe before the majesty of God. Yet the gift also imparts an attitude of grateful wonder that God loves us and that we can share in his life.

When we are responsive to the grace of Confirmation and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, we begin to bear the fruits of the Spirit. The tradition of the Church names twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity (cf. CCC, no. 1832; Gal5:22).

## **THE REVELATION OF THE EUCHARIST**

*The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. . . . The Eucharist 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.*

-CCC, nos. 1322 and 1325, citing Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (Eucharisticum Mysterium)*, no. 6

### **The Origins of the Eucharist:**

The origins of the Eucharist are found in the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his Apostles. "In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; 'thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament'" (CCC, no. 1337, citing Council of Trent: DS 1740).

So rich is this mystery that we have a number of terms to illumine its saving grace: the Breaking of the Bread; the Lord's Supper; the Eucharistic Assembly; the Memorial of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection; the

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Holy and Divine Liturgy; the Eucharistic Liturgy; Holy Communion; and Holy Mass (cf. CCC, nos. 1328-1332).

The use of bread and wine in worship is already found in the early history of God's people. In the Old Testament, bread and wine are seen as gifts from God, to whom praise and thanks are given in return for these blessings and for other manifestations of his care and grace. The story of the priest Melchizedek's offering a sacrifice of bread and wine for Abraham's victory is an example of this (cf. Gn 14:18). The harvest of new lambs was also a time for the sacrifice of a lamb to show gratitude to God for the new flock and its contribution to the well-being of the family and tribe.

These ancient rituals were given historical meaning at the Exodus of God's people. They were united into the Passover Meal as a sign of God's delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, a pledge of his fidelity to his promises and eventually a sign of the coming of the

Messiah and messianic times. Each family shared the lamb that had been sacrificed and the bread over which a blessing had been proclaimed. They also drank from a cup of wine over which a similar blessing had been proclaimed.

When Jesus instituted the Eucharist he gave a final meaning to the blessing of the bread and the wine and the sacrifice of the lamb. The Gospels narrate events that anticipated the Eucharist. The miracle of the loaves and fish, reported in all four Gospels, prefigured the unique abundance of the Eucharist. The miracle of changing water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana manifested the divine glory of Jesus and the heavenly wedding feast in which we share at every Eucharist.

In his dialogue with the people at Capernaum, Christ used his miracle of multiplying the loaves of bread as the occasion to describe himself as the Bread of Life: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. . . . Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" (Jn 6:51, 53).

Luke 22:14-20

## **The Institution of the Lord's Supper**

<sup>14</sup>And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."<sup>19</sup>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.”<sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after supper, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Jesus chose the Passover feast as the time in which he would institute the Eucharist and would undergo his dying and rising (cf. CCC, nos. 1339-1340). With the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus gave the Passover its new and definitive meaning. He showed himself to be the High Priest of the New Covenant, offering himself as a perfect sacrifice to the Father. Jesus changed the bread and wine into his Body and Blood, given now as an offering for the salvation of all people.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that 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 the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

By the words "Do this in memory of me," Jesus commanded the Apostles and their successors to repeat his actions and words "until he comes again." From earliest times, the Church has remained faithful to this command. Particularly on Sunday, the day of Christ's Resurrection, the faithful has gathered for the Breaking of the Bread. This practice has continued unbroken for two thousand years right up to the present day.

In the Gospel of John, instead of an account of the institution of the Eucharist, there is the narrative of the foot washing (Jn 13:1-20) at the beginning of the Last Supper, which sets the tone of humble service, exemplified by Christ and fulfilled in his death on the Cross. The Church has selected this Gospel for the Holy Thursday liturgy, highlighting Christ's teaching: "If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" (Jn 13:14-15).

Christ's Last Supper Discourse (Jn 14:1-17:26) reflects Eucharistic themes of divine love, a union with Christ as intimate as a branch is to a vine, and a priestly prayer for the Apostles and those who would believe through them.

# THE MASS FOR THE ROMAN RITE

## 1. The Introductory Rites

The Christian community, united by the Holy Spirit, gathers for worship in response to God's call. Jesus, our High Priest, is the principal agent of our celebration. The bishop or priest acts in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church. All the worshipers participate actively with interior devout attention and with external reverence shown by singing the hymns and giving the responses and, when appropriate, observing silence. There are also the deacon, the lectors, those who present the offerings, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the altar servers, the musicians, and other ministers. This first movement contains the Introductory Rites, which begin the celebration of the Mass. These include the Penitential Rite, the *Gloria*, and the Opening Prayer.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Pt 2:9, 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism. (SC, no. 14)

## 2. Liturgy of the Word

Over the course of the liturgical year, readings from Scripture, especially the Gospels, provide the heart of this part of the celebration. The proclamation of God's Word and its explanation are meant to arouse our faith and prepare us for an ever deeper participation in the mystery of the Eucharist. The readings are followed by a homily from a bishop, priest, or deacon; the Profession of Faith in the recitation of the Creed; and intercessory prayers.

## 3. Liturgy of the Eucharist

a. *The Preparation of the Gifts* (Jesus took bread and wine). The offerings of bread and wine are received by the priest, who may be assisted by a deacon. "They will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his Body and Blood" (CCC, no. 1350). From the earliest days of the Church, there was also an offering of gifts for the poor and needy. This has become the customary place and time for the parish collection.

b. *The Eucharistic Prayer* (Jesus blessed and gave thanks). This is the heart of the Eucharistic Liturgy, which unfolds in the following manner.

- *Thanksgiving* (expressed especially in the Preface): In this prayer, we thank God the Father, through Christ in the Spirit, for the gifts of creation, salvation, and sanctification.
- *Acclamation*: The whole congregation joins with the angels and saints in singing or saying the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy).
- *Epiclesis* (Invocation): The Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine offered by human hands into Christ's Body and Blood.
- *Institution Narrative and Consecration*: The priest proclaims Jesus' words at the Last Supper over the bread and wine. "The power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present, under the species of bread and wine, Christ's Body and Blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross for all" (CCC, no. 1353).
- *Anamnesis* (The Remembrance): We recall the death and Resurrection of Christ and look forward to his glorious return.
- *Second Epiclesis*: The Holy Spirit is invoked upon the gathered community, to bring unity to the worshippers who will receive Holy Communion.
- *Intercessions*: With the whole Communion of Saints and all God's people on earth, we pray for the needs of all the members of the Church, living and dead.
- *Doxology and Great Amen*: We conclude the Eucharistic Prayer with praise of God the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. This glorification is confirmed and concluded by the people's acclamation "Amen."

c. *Communion Rite* (Jesus broke the bread and gave his Body and Blood). After the Lord's Prayer, the Lamb of God is sung or said during the breaking of the Body of Christ, or fraction, then we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. The Communion Rite concludes with a closing prayer.

#### 4. Concluding Rite

Following the prayer after Holy Communion, the priest blesses the people and dismisses the assembly.

Centuries of reflection on the Eucharist have left us a spiritual heritage that continues to deepen and grow. Three key truths about the Eucharist draw our attention: it is a Sacrifice, a Holy Meal, and the Real Presence of Christ.

### The Importance of the Eucharist:

#### 1. The Eucharist is a Covenant.

“This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after supper, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” Luke 22:19-20.

## **2. The Eucharist is praise and Thanksgiving, and sacrifice.**

Eucharist means Thanksgiving. It mirrors the prayers of praise and thanksgiving used at Passover, where Jesus instituted the last supper. It is a transhistorical event.

In this divine sacrifice which is made present in the Mass, especially in the Eucharistic Prayer, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross offers himself in an unbloody manner. Present and effective, Christ's sacrifice is applied to our lives. "If the blood of goats . . . can sanctify those who are defiled . . . how much more will the blood of Christ . . . cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God" (Heb 9:14).

## **3. The Eucharist is a memorial in which Jesus is continually made present.**

The Mass is a sacrifice in the sense that when it takes place, Jesus Christ, through the bishop or priest celebrating the Mass, makes present sacramentally his saving, sacrificial death on the Cross by which he redeemed us from our sins. This Eucharistic sacrifice is the memorial of Christ's redeeming death. The term *memorial* in this context is not simply a remembrance of past events; it is a making present in a sacramental manner the sacrifice of the Cross of Christ and his victory. "When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the memorial of her Lord's death and resurrection, this central event of salvation becomes really present and 'the work of our redemption is carried out'" (EE, no. 11). The Eucharistic sacrifice is offered to adore and thank God, to pray for all our needs, and to gain pardon for our sins.

## **4. The Eucharist is the Paschal Banquet.**

Holy Communion increases our union with Christ. Just as bodily food sustains our physical life, so Holy Communion nourishes our spiritual life. This Communion moves us away from sin, strengthening our moral resolve to avoid evil and turn ever more powerfully toward God. "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" (CCC, no. 1395).

“I am the bread of Life: he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst...he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. John 6:35...54-55

## **5. The Eucharist is communion.**

Holy Communion increases our union with Christ. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6:56). Communion with the Body of Christ preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism.

The fruits of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion:

- Deepens our union with Christ CCC 1391
- Helps us to overcome and avoid sin CCC1393, 1395
- Removes venial sins CCC 1394
- Unifies the church and promotes the unity of Christians CCC1396, 1398
- Unites us with the poor CCC1398

## **6. The Eucharist is a work of the Holy Spirit, anticipating the age to come.**

There is no surer pledge or dearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells,"<sup>248</sup> 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."<sup>249</sup>

### **Meditation for Adoration**

Matthew 26:26-29

#### **The Institution of the Lord's Supper**

<sup>26</sup>Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup>And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; <sup>28</sup>for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup>I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

John 6:48-69

<sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>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.”

<sup>52</sup>The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup>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 in you; <sup>54</sup>he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup>He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>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.”<sup>59</sup>This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper’na-um.

## The Words of Eternal Life

<sup>60</sup>Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” <sup>61</sup>But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? <sup>62</sup>Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before? <sup>63</sup>It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup>But there are some of you that do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should betray him. <sup>65</sup>And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

<sup>66</sup>After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup>Jesus said to the twelve, “Will you also go away?” <sup>68</sup>Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; <sup>69</sup>and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

## PRAYER

### **Anima Christi**

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification. Body of Christ, be my salvation. Blood of Christ, fill all my veins.

Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains.  
Passion of Christ, my comfort be.  
O good Jesu, listen to me.  
In Thy wounds I fain would hide, N'er to be  
parted from Thy side, Guard me, should the  
foe assail me. Call me when my life shall fail  
me. Bid me come to Thee above,  
With Thy saints to sing Thy love,  
World without end. Amen.

### **Guidelines for the Reception of Communion**

On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) approved the following guidelines on the reception of Communion. The guidelines seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of Eucharistic communion.

#### *For Catholics*

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should be conscious of no grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (CIC, can. 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

#### *For Our Fellow Christians*

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they all may be one" (Jn 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the

directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (CIC, can. 844

§4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (CIC, can. 844 §3).

*For Those Not Receiving Holy Communion*

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

*For Non-Christians*

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and unity of the human family.



All my other senses, cannot now perceive,  
But my hearing, taught by faith, always will believe: I accept  
whatever God the Son has said:

Those who hear the Word of God, by the truth are fed.

— St. Thomas Aquinas, *Adora Te Devote (God with Hidden Majesty)*, trans. Anthony G. Petti