

LITURGY BYTES

10 amazing facts about the power of the Eucharist

1) *Union with Christ:* Reception of Jesus in the Eucharist fuses our being with that of Christ. St. Cyril of Alexandria describes it as similar to “when melted wax is fused with other wax.” The Christian journey is a journey to become like Christ, to “abide in him” and he in us. The Eucharist is the means for this to happen.

2) *Destruction of venial sin:* The Eucharist destroys venial sin. Destroys! Through sin, the fervor of our charity can be dampened by venial sin. But when we receive the Eucharist we are united with Charity himself, which burns away the vestiges of our venial sins and leaves us cleansed and ready to begin again.

3) *Preservation from mortal sin:* While we should refrain from receiving the Eucharist when we are aware of being in a state of mortal sin, we should receive the Eucharist as much as possible when we are able because it *preserves* us from grave sin. It is as if the Eucharist’s power washes away the venial sin in our souls and then covers us with a protective coat which helps us to stay away from serious sin.

4) *Personal relationship with Jesus:* Many Christians speak of the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus, which is very true. But it is primarily through the Eucharist that we can truly have an intimate encounter with the Person of Jesus. Benedict XVI once pointed out this connection:

“Today, there is a need to rediscover that Jesus Christ is not just a private conviction or an abstract idea, but a real person, whose becoming part of human history is capable of renewing the life of every man and woman. Hence, the Eucharist, as the source and summit of the Church’s life and mission, must be translated into spirituality, into a life lived ‘according to the Spirit’” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*).

5) *Gives life:* According to the Catechism, the Eucharist “preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism” (CCC 1392). In other words, reception of the Eucharist increases the life of grace already present within us. Sounds even better than a trip to a spa!

6) *Unity with the Body of Christ:* Since we are united more closely to Christ through the Eucharist, we are therefore united more closely to all the other people who

receive the Eucharist! In other words, the Eucharist is like the glue that keeps us united with Jesus and all our brothers and sisters in the Church.

7) *Commits us to the poor:* The words of St. John Chrysostom shame those of us who leave the Eucharistic table without caring for Christ in the poor:

“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.”

8) *Spiritual consolation:* Holy Communion is a foretaste of the joys of heaven so it can produce joy in us as we experience real unity with God. If we are feeling beaten down by the difficulties of life, we can come to the Eucharist, our font of joy, and ask the Lord to fill us with his consolation and peace.

9) *Peacemaking:* In the Synod on the Eucharist in 2005, the bishops discussed how the reception of the Eucharist in war-torn areas transformed the people of God and gave them the impetus to seek peace:

“Thanks to eucharistic celebrations, peoples engaged in conflict have been able to gather around the word of God, hear his prophetic message of reconciliation through gratuitous forgiveness, and receive the grace of conversion which allows them to share in the same bread and cup.” (Propositio 49)

10) *Provides a focal point for our lives:* If we really understood the profound nature of the Eucharist, we would begin to center our lives around Holy Communion. There is nothing more important that can happen in our lives. Not football games, or get-togethers or picnics. There is nothing more important than our weekly appointment to receive the medicine of the Doctor of souls, Jesus.

All of these amazing effects and more can be yours this Sunday! Or better yet, try going to a daily Mass near you.

But remember that your disposition when receiving the Eucharist can determine how open you are to the powerful effects. So, be reverent, focused and beg God to give you, through the power of the Eucharist, all the graces that you need in your life right now.

Like a good Father, he will listen.

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