

24 Jesus Comes to Us In the Holy Eucharist

Jesus once changed five loaves and two fishes into food for five thousand people. This miracle of love amazed His followers. But later, Jesus promised them a far more wonderful bread. He explained that this heavenly bread would satisfy the hungers of the heart. Then He told them: "I am the Bread of Life. He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will live for ever."

The Holy Eucharist is the Bread of Life that Jesus promised. We are very fortunate because we can receive it at every Mass. Whenever we do, Jesus comes as a Guest into our hearts.

To prepare for our divine Guest, three things are necessary. We must believe in Him. We must be in His good graces. And we must not eat or drink anything else (except water or medicine) for one hour before He comes to us. These things prepare us properly to receive Holy Communion.

Once we receive Jesus, we kneel down to make a thanksgiving. We may close our eyes to give Him our full attention. We silently pray to Him and He listens. Jesus already knows us completely, but He is pleased when we share our lives with Him. During Holy Communion we can tell Him our disappointments and joys, our hopes and dreams. If we are having trouble being kind or good, Jesus understands. He will help us. If we want to be more obedient at home or school, we can ask Him to show us the way.

Every time Jesus comes to us, He fills our souls with His own life. We become more and more like Him. He gives us the strength to be generous, forgiving, and kind. We become the grace-filled persons God created us to be.



“My Flesh is food indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, abides in Me and I in him.”

(John 6:56–57)

When we love someone, we never get tired of his or her company. We spend as much time with that person as we can. Think of how much more we want to enjoy the company of Jesus. The best way to stay close to Jesus is to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion, even every day if possible. He is the food and life of our souls. If we share in His banquet on earth, He will one day invite us to live with Him for ever in Heaven.

Words to Know:

thanksgiving

“Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and have died. This is the Bread that comes down from Heaven, so that if anyone eat of It, he will not die. I am the Living Bread that has come down from Heaven. If anyone eat of this Bread he shall live for ever; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.”

(John 6:49–52)

St. Tarcisius

St. Tarcisius was a young Roman boy who lived in the days of the early Christians. Tarcisius secretly learned about Jesus and grew to love Him very much. He started to join the other Christians underground in the catacombs for Mass. Tarcisius especially loved receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. One day the boy was asked to carry the Blessed Sacrament to another Christian who was sick. Tarcisius carefully wrapped the Host in his cloak so it would be safe.

Along the way, Roman boys stopped Tarcisius. “Come play with us”, they said. Tarcisius said, “No”, and kept walking, protecting the Eucharist close to his heart. “He’s carrying something and hiding it from us!” called out one of the children. The boys pulled at Tarcisius’ cloak, but he was strong. He would not let go of the Host.

Finally the boys threatened Tarcisius. “If you do not show us what you are hiding, we will throw stones at you.” Tarcisius was afraid. But his love for Jesus in the Eucharist was greater than his fear. He accepted death rather than let the sacred Host get into the hands of boys who did not respect or believe in Christ, his Lord.

Let us try to love and believe in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament just as deeply as did this young boy.

Q. 73 *What things are necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Communion?*

For a worthy reception of Holy Communion three things are necessary: first, to be in the grace of God; second, to realize and to consider Whom we are about to receive; third, to observe the Eucharistic fast.

Q. 74 *Is it a good and useful thing to receive Holy Communion frequently?*

It is a very good thing and most useful to receive Holy Communion frequently, even every day, provided it is done always with the right dispositions.

Q. 75 *What effects does the Eucharist produce in him who receives it worthily?*

In him who receives it worthily, the Holy Eucharist preserves and increases grace, which is the life of the soul, just as food does for the life of the body. The Holy Eucharist takes away venial sins and preserves us from mortal sins, and it gives spiritual joy and consolation by increasing charity and the hope of eternal life of which it is the pledge.

We Pray:

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.