

Do Not Lightly Forego Holy Communion

by Thomas a Kempis

The importance of frequent Holy Communion and overcoming the enemy's attempts to hinder it.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 10:22, James 4:7, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Holy Communion", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas a Kempis emphasizes the importance of returning to the source of grace and divine mercy through Holy Communion to overcome temptations and the attacks of the devil. He warns against letting anxiety, scruples, or laziness hinder one from receiving the Sacrament, urging a quick return to confession and forgiveness. Kempis encourages a constant readiness to receive Christ in the Eucharist, highlighting the spiritual benefits of frequent communion and the need for a pure conscience and devout heart.

Transcript

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

YOU must often return to the source of grace and divine mercy, to the fountain of goodness and perfect purity, if you wish to be free from passion and vice, if you desire to be made stronger and more watchful against all the temptations and deceits of the devil.

The enemy, knowing the great good and the healing power of Holy Communion, tries as much as he can by every manner and means to hinder and keep away the faithful and the devout. Indeed, there are some who suffer the worst assaults of Satan when disposing themselves to prepare for Holy Communion. As it is written in Job, this wicked spirit comes among the sons of God to trouble them by his wonted malice, to make them unduly fearful and perplexed, that thus he may lessen their devotion or attack their faith to such an extent that they perhaps either forego Communion altogether or receive with little fervor.

No attention, however, must be paid to his cunning wiles, no matter how base and horrible -- all his suggestions must be cast back upon his head. The wretch is to be despised and scorned. Holy Communion must not be passed by because of any assaults from him or because of the commotion he may arouse.

Oftentimes, also, too great solicitude for devotion and anxiety about confession hinder a person. Do as wise men do. Cast off anxiety and scruple, for it impedes the grace of God and destroys devotion of the mind.

Do not remain away from Holy Communion because of a small trouble or vexation but go at once to confession and willingly forgive all others their offenses. If you have offended anyone, humbly seek pardon and God will readily forgive you.

What good is it to delay confession for a long time or to put off Holy Communion? Cleanse yourself at once, spit out the poison quickly. Make haste to apply the remedy and you will find it better than if you had waited a long time. If you put it off today because of one thing, perhaps tomorrow a greater will occur to you, and thus you will stay away from Communion for a long time and become even more unfit.

Shake off this heaviness and sloth as quickly as you can, for there is no gain in much anxiety, in enduring long hours of trouble, and in depriving yourself of the divine Mysteries because of these daily disturbances. Yes, it is very hurtful to defer Holy Communion long, for it usually brings on a lazy spiritual sleep.

How sad that some dissolute and lax persons are willing to postpone confession and likewise wish to defer Holy Communion, lest they be forced to keep a stricter watch over themselves! Alas, how little love and devotion have they who so easily put off Holy Communion!

How happy and acceptable to God is he who so lives, and keeps his conscience so pure, as to be ready and well disposed to communicate, even every day if he were permitted, and if he could do so unnoticed.

If, now and then, a man abstains by the grace of humility or for a legitimate reason, his reverence is commendable, but if laziness takes hold of him, he must arouse himself and do everything in his power, for the Lord will quicken his desire because of the good intention to which He particularly looks. When he is indeed unable to come, he will always have the good will and pious intention to communicate and thus he will not lose the fruit of the Sacrament.

Any devout person may at any hour on any day receive Christ in spiritual communion profitably and without hindrance. Yet on certain days and times appointed he ought to receive with affectionate reverence the Body of his Redeemer in this Sacrament, seeking the praise and honor of God rather than his own consolation.

For as often as he devoutly calls to mind the mystery and passion of the Incarnate Christ, and is inflamed with love for Him, he communicates mystically and is invisibly refreshed.

He who prepares himself only when festivals approach or custom demands, will often find himself unprepared. Blessed is he who offers himself a sacrifice to the Lord as often as he celebrates or communicates.

Be neither too slow nor too fast in celebrating but follow the good custom common to those among whom you are. You ought not to cause others inconvenience or trouble, but observe the accepted rule as laid down by superiors, and look to the benefit of others rather than to your own devotion or inclination.

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