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JMJ

U.I.O.G.D.

Ave Maria!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, we love You, save souls

O God come to our assistance. Jesus, Mary, Joseph please make haste to help us!

+ + + Jesus, Mary, Joseph + + +

*VOL. I = THE BAD CHRISTIAN*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### Unworthy Communion

*“But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper.” St. Luke 14:24.*

What a poor excuse: “I have bought a farm!” What if you have? Does that prevent you from going to the supper? Oh, I must go and see it! You should have done that before buying it, so as to see whether it suits you or not. “I have bought five yoke of oxen.” Well, does that prevent you from accepting the invitation? I must try them. What, in the evening, with the dark night coming on? “I have married a wife.” And if you have, do you not want food or drink any more? Why not tell the truth at once: I will not come. By the great Supper, we understand the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, to which our Lord invites all men in the most friendly manner frequently to receive his Flesh and Blood in the Holy Communion. But how many refusals he receives from most people, who approach this holy Table but very seldom! How many vain excuses are framed by people who try to persuade themselves that they cannot communicate frequently! Yet today I must complain still more bitterly of those Christians who communicate far too often and too readily, and who would do better by abstaining from Communion altogether. If I knew who they were, I should have just cause for crying out to them, when they approach the altar rails: Away with you! Keep away from here! This Table is not prepared for you! I tell you that not one of you shall partake of it. And who are they? I mean those alone who receive Holy Communion with an impure conscience, in the state of sin. What a fearful sin they commit! And how many Catholics there are who are guilty of it!

*I. To approach the table of the Lord in the state of sin, is to treat Jesus Christ most unjustly.*

*II. Yet there are many who treat him thus.*

I. The greatest insult that a creature can offer to God is blasphemy; and that because it is a crime against the divine Majesty. The same is to be said of the reception of Holy Communion in the state of sin; for amongst the crimes that attack the divine Majesty directly, it is one of the greatest, since by it Christ is shamefully ill-used. To speak insultingly of a king, especially in his presence, is a most intolerable crime against human majesty, and is punished with death; and yet it is committed only by words, which are carried away by the wind, and inflict no wound. But to attack the king’s person when he is seated on his throne, surrounded by his attendants and courtiers, or when he is passing in state through the streets, or when he is seated at a public banquet; to attack

him then and plunge a dagger in his heart would be a crime that no one but a madman would commit or dream of.

Such is the insolence, or rather madness, you are guilty of when you dare to receive Holy Communion in the state of sin. You pierce with a sword of sorrow the Heart of Jesus when you receive his most sacred Flesh and Blood with a heart and conscience defiled by sin. "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord" (I. Cor. 11:27). It is the living bread: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my Flesh, for the life of the world" (St. John 6:51, 52). This life you destroy by an unworthy Communion, for you cause its efficacy to be destroyed in you, and you make it kill your soul, instead of causing it to live. It is true, according to St. Paul, that every mortal sin crucifies and slaps again the Son of God: "Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God" (Hebr. 6:6); still that is done in a moral sense by disgracing his image impressed upon the human soul, which dies by sin; but in an unworthy Communion the Prototype himself has to suffer, since he is present in his own sacred and divine person under the appearance of bread and wine. In other things we offend God in his creatures, but in this we offend him in his own person, and that, too, while he is seated at his own table, where he offers himself to his dear friends as their food and drink; on his throne of glory, surrounded by Angels, who wait on him; and in his public triumph, in which he shows himself to receive the adoration of all.

The chief end our Lord had in view in instituting the Blessed Sacrament was that he might be repaid on earth for all the labor and trouble, the frequent hunger and thirst, the watching and fasting, the pains and torments, the insults, and injuries, that his sacred Body had to endure during his thirty-three years life on earth; and that all the members of the true Church should henceforth show him all the more humble homage and all the greater honor, in proportion to the insults and contumely he endured for their sake. From the very beginning up to the present time the Catholic Church has distinguished herself by paying the greatest honor to the Blessed Sacrament; therefore we build churches, and have them consecrated, because the hidden God, really and bodily present, takes up his abode in them. Altars are erected and adorned, because every day the bread and wine are changed on them into the Body and Blood of Christ; day and night candles and lamps burn before the tabernacle; all who enter the church bend the knee in profound adoration before him. In a word, nearly every devotion of the Church is directed to the Blessed Sacrament, in order to show honor to it. See now, wicked Christian, what you do when you dare to receive holy Communion in the state of sin; you attack your king when he is publicly seated on his throne of honor and glory; you cast him into the mire of sin, and thus cause him a moral suffering and death, which he feels far more acutely than that he had to suffer long ago at the hands of the Jews and the executioners.

1. One of the bitterest pangs our Lord felt in his Passion was caused by the treason of Judas; and that because the traitor kissed his Master under the appearance of friendship. "Judas," said he, "dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (St. Luke 22:48.) As if he wished to add: My friend, the kiss I give thee comes from a heart that loves thee truly; but it is not so with thy kiss. If thou desirest to deliver me into the hands of my enemies, why didst thou not do so in another way? Thou couldst have given them another sign, and said: There is he whom you wish to capture; go and seize him. It would have caused me less pain than to betray me to my sworn enemies by means of a sign of friendship and love. How much more keenly must not his heart feel the pang caused by the hypocrisy of some Christians, his own beloved children, who approach him with downcast eyes, modest and humble demeanor, and folded hands, not merely to give him a kiss, but to receive him into their hearts, that they may treacherously stab him to the heart and imbue their hands in his sacred Blood.

2. The next insult that caused our Lord great pain during his Passion was the mockery with which the soldiers and executioners treated him when they publicly scorned him as a mock-king. Jesus is the King of glory; but then he was a Teacher of humility, clad in an old purple garment, with a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hands as sceptre, with a hard stone for a throne; in that guise He was surrounded by a crowd of soldiers and executioners, who, amidst bursts of derisive laughter, frequently smote him on the cheek, and, bending the knee before him in mockery, cried out: "Hail, King of the Jews!" And yet, presumptuous Christian, do you not ill-treat in the same manner your glorified Saviour, who is now reigning in triumph as King of heaven, when you receive holy Communion in the state of sin? You bend the knee, and bow the head before his altar; you humble yourself and beat your breast, and adore him with folded hands, and thus you outwardly show

him all reverence; but what is it all but mocking and laughing at your God as a mock-king; for your heart is still embittered against him, and you buffet him anew by the fearful sacrilege you are committing?

3. Finally, the Jews nailed our Lord to the Cross, and thus put him to death. But you, false Christians, nail him to a far more painful and disgraceful cross than the sinless tree was. For you shut him up in a foul prison, where he must put up with sin, than which nothing is more intolerable to him, as his companion. They who crucified him knew him not, and looked upon him as a poor, lowly mortal, who was condemned to a shameful death by the judge's sentence; "for," as St. Paul says, "if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (I. Cor. 2:8). But you, when you approach the holy Table and receive Holy Communion, know well and believe that he whom you are receiving is your God, your Saviour, your future Judge, and your greatest Benefactor, for you know and believe that this Sacrament, which you so shamefully abuse with your impure conscience, is the most noble gift of God. On the Cross Christ readily fulfilled the will of his heavenly Father, redeemed the world by his Blood, and restrained the power of the devil; that sweetened the bitterness of his painful death so that he longed for it, and had no rest until his desire for death was satisfied. But in your sacrilegious Communion he is tortured against his will; on the cross to which you nail him he finds nothing but ingratitude, inhuman malice, and everything that can deserve his hatred, his curse, and his reprobation. Hell is a more suitable place for the Almighty God than the house of a sinner. And why? Because in hell he is a Lord of vengeance and a just Judge, who punishes his wicked enemies with deserved torments; whereas in the heart of a sinner he is compelled to lie, like a prisoner, in a loathesome dungeon, where he is kept, so to speak, only for the purpose of being tortured.

Oh, man, see how shamefully you ill-treat your Saviour when you receive Holy Communion in the state of sin! What can you be thinking of, as you kneel at the altar-rails, with your conscience reproaching you, as it must do, with mortal sin? What does your heart feel when you see the priest coming toward you with the Sacred Host in his hand, and you open your mouth to receive it into your sinful bosom? Are you not afraid of your Judge? Do you not tremble before the Almighty, in whose presence the purest spirits of heaven are penetrated with a reverential awe? Do you not fear that the lightning will fall from heaven and strike you dead on the spot, or that the earth will open to swallow you up? Is it possible that, among Catholics, any one can be found so presumptuous as to dare to receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin? I fear that this fearful sin is often committed by Catholics.

II. There are many kinds of people who generally receive Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin; namely, the unchaste, the vindictive, the unjust, the culpably ignorant; I will say nothing of those who communicate through sheer malice.

1. First, with regard to the unchaste. How many are there not of both sexes, both married and single, who make a custom of this sin? For they sin either with themselves, or with others for years and years; and during that time their desires tend to illicit intercourse with others, and they either remain in the same house, or otherwise in the proximate occasion of sin with their accomplice, or, if the occasion is wanting them, they have at least a constant desire for sins of impurity. Meanwhile, they communicate several times a year. What are such people thinking of? Oh, they say, we go to confession beforehand. God help them! What a poor confession theirs is! For they can have neither true sorrow nor purpose of amendment, since they remain in the occasion of sin; and thus they burden their souls with a new sacrilege. All their Communions are bad and sacrilegious.

2. Secondly, the vindictive; I mean those who for a long time have been at enmity and variance with their neighbor, and who, although they say with their lips I forgive him, and bear no ill-will to him, yet avoid him through spite and refuse to salute him; burst almost with envy when they hear him praised, and exult with a secret joy when they hear of his misfortunes, and, if they are in the same trade or employment, do their best to ruin him. Alas, how many people there are who communicate in that state! Neighbors, relations, sometimes brothers and sisters go every month to the Table of the Lord, and yet they hardly speak to each other once in the month through hatred and ill-will. Is that the way to make a worthy Communion? Does not Christ expressly say: "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and first go to be reconciled to thy brother; and then come and offer thy gift" (St. Matthew 5:23, 24). If you do not accuse yourselves of those things in confession, what sort of a confession do you make? For you are acting in flagrant violation of the law of Christ: "But I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you" (St. Matthew 5:44). If you confess those sins each time, but without

the intention of being reconciled to your enemy, and are nevertheless allowed to go to holy Communion, what sort of a confessor have you? You must know that all your Communions are sacrilegious.

3. Thirdly, the unjust, who possess wrongfully what belongs to others, and do not restore it when they can and ought to restore it. Alas! how many there are who know, or at least ought to know, that that piece of land, that house, that money, or whatever it may be, does not lawfully belong to them, and still continue to keep possession of it! How many who know that they oppress the poor unjustly and willfully cause them loss and injury; who know that they defraud their laborers and servants of their wages, either wholly or partially; how many who have knowingly bought stolen things, or kept what they found without looking for the owner, or cheated in buying, selling, or in other ways; and yet keep all they have thus unjustly gained without the intention of making restitution, or indemnifying the other for the losses caused him, and who remain in that state for ten or twenty years, or even longer, and go to confession and Communion all the time! Oh, my God, what sacrilegious confessions and Communions those are! who can count the number of them!

4. But what hope is there for the fourth class, which is by far the most numerous? They flatter themselves when they go to Communion that they are in the state of grace, and yet they are mistaken. They imagine they have no mortal sin on their conscience, and yet they have enough of them, and that through sheer culpable ignorance, because they do not want to know anything of the sinful lives they lead. They consist of those who have become accustomed to a certain vice, such as drunkenness, detraction, cursing, swearing, and other sins, which they confess each time, but never repent of. They think that it is enough for them to tell everything clearly in confession, and that then they need give themselves no further trouble. They never think of the sorrow and purpose of amendment, which, humanly speaking, it is impossible for them to have with sincerity; at least, the fact of their continued relapse into their former sins shows sufficiently that neither their confessions nor their Communions have had any effect on their souls; for these two Sacraments, if received properly, frequently, and with good dispositions, must necessarily purify the soul and sanctify it. Ah, whoever you may be, I have one request to make of you, and that is that you abstain from Communion, even at Easter, even on your deathbed, unless you intend to leave the proximate occasion of sin, to give up your illicit intercourse, to lay aside your hatred and ill-will against your neighbor, to restore what you unjustly possess, and to amend your sinful customs and unlawful abuses. Again, I entreat you, abstain from Communion! It is true that if you do not communicate at Easter-time you commit a grievous sin against the precept of the Church, which I do not wish by any means to advise you to commit; still you are guilty of only one sin thereby, and that a much less grievous one than you would commit by an unworthy Communion, in which you would offer a most grievous insult to Jesus Christ. If you have not a sincere purpose of amendment, do not communicate, even on your deathbed; it is true that you will then be lost forever, and I do not by any means wish to advise you to incur eternal damnation; still, your damnation will not be so deep as it would be if you went into eternity loaded with the weight of an unworthy Communion. Amen.

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