

What is Communion?

“The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.” (Baltimore Catechism 870)

In Scripture

“But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.” (St. Luke 4:14)

“And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples, and said: **Take ye, and eat. This is my body.**” (St. Matthew 26:26)

“Then Jesus said to them: **Amen, amen I say to you; Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.** They said therefore unto him: Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them: **I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that you also have seen me, and you believe not....** The Jews therefore murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven.... **Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. 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.** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: **Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever....** Many of his disciples, hearing it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in himself, that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: **Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?”** (St. John 6:32-62)

According to Saints

“To carry himself in his own hands is impossible to man, and peculiar to Christ alone; He was carried in His own hands when, giving His body to be eaten, He said, This is my body.” (St. Augustine, *On the Thirty-third Psalm*)

“Another means of ascertaining the belief of the holy Church on matters of faith is the condemnation of the contrary doctrine and opinion. It is manifest that belief in the Real Presence of the body of Christ in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist was so spread and taught throughout the universal Church and unanimously professed by all the faithful, that when, five centuries ago, Berengarius presumed to deny this dogma, asserting that the Eucharist was only a sign, he was unanimously condemned in the Council of Vercelli, which Leo IX had immediately convoked, whereupon he himself anathematized his error.” (St. Charles Borromeo, *Catechism of the Council of Trent*)

“First of all, the holy council teaches and openly and plainly professes that after the consecration of bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained in the august sacrament of the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of those sensible things. For there is no repugnance in this that our Savior sits always at the right hand of the Father in heaven according to the natural mode of existing, and yet is in many other places sacramentally present to us in His own substance by a manner of existence which, though we can scarcely express in words, yet with our understanding illumined by faith, we can conceive and ought most firmly to believe is possible to God. For thus all our forefathers, as many as were in the true Church of Christ and who treated of this most holy sacrament, have most openly professed that our Redeemer instituted this wonderful sacrament at the last supper, when, after blessing the bread and wine, He testified in clear and definite words that He gives them His own body and His own blood.” (Thirteenth Session of the Council of Trent, Chapter 1)

“Your chief intention in Holy Communion should be to advance in the love of God, to strengthen and console yourselves by it, for you should receive with love that which love alone causes Jesus Christ to give you. In no action can our Divine Savior be considered more loving and more tender than in this in which He, in a manner, annihilates Himself, and reduces Himself to food, in order to penetrate our souls and unite Himself intimately to the heart and the body of the faithful.” (St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*)

