

Holy Communion¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Friday, [June 25], 1858

My good Daughters, our poor nature is so fragile, our natural weakness is so great that we need to support it and fortify it, because our strength is always diminishing. Everything around us tends to weaken us: dealing with the world with its creatures takes away our strength, even the relationships necessary with pious and religious people, our communication with spiritual persons, all this strips us of our strength. We must ceaselessly make a new start and fortify ourselves, for we fall in our weaknesses. **From where can we draw that strength, take the medicine for our infirmities?** In Holy Communion, my Sisters, that is the remedy, I dare say, the only one, the sole remedy to all our pain.

Humans are the weakest of creatures. When God created the world, he hurled the sun, a luminous star, into space and said: Go, give light, warmth and make the earth fruitful. The sun, renewing itself every day, always gives us the same light, the same warmth, without ever weakening, because God has put into it a perpetual principle of fertility. It is the same with the stars. The earth also finds its fertility within itself. In creating it God said: Produce fruit for humans. And this earth will never be consumed. All creatures have this seed in themselves, this principle of fertility, they suffice by themselves. God said to the animals: Increase and multiply. Only humans are weak and can do nothing by themselves. Why does this happen to the only creatures made in God's image? God wanted them to depend only on him. He himself wanted to nourish humans, and to be the only one to take care of them; in this way he wanted to oblige humankind to have recourse only to him.

Many mothers, either because of physical weakness or by indifference, give their infants to others to nurse, confiding their care to servants. Our Lord did not want to confide us to anyone. What love, my Sisters! Do we not love a God who loves us so? Because Our Lord is our only strength and in him alone do we find life, we must go to him, take Communion, the food of our souls. **We must take Communion because of our weakness.** The weaker we are the more we must go to Communion, as when someone orders food more or less strengthening after a time of weakness. Our Lord said: *Come to me, all of you* (cf. Mt 11:28). If you need to receive Communion every week, you must receive it to strengthen yourself.

Communion is the antidote to our concupiscence. We have all felt and all the saints have felt in themselves this law of sin, of concupiscence. Saint Paul cried out: *Who can deliver me from this body of sin?* (cf. Rm 7:24) All our senses crave satisfaction: our eyes seek only honors and grandeur, our will wants to rule, our body seeks pleasure, our heart wants to love. So, what will we do? Suppress all, without giving them anything? No, one would be too unhappy. Everyone must have an outlet for passions, not for self-satisfaction, but to change the object. One must receive Communion.

Without Holy Communion it is impossible to advance in the spiritual life. Numerous saints say the same thing when speaking of Holy Communion. As material bread serves to nourish, to strengthen, to make our bodies grow, so Communion, the bread of heaven, must nourish our

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soul to sustain it, strengthen it, make it live of Jesus; the more we expend our energy, the more we must receive Communion.

When the angel Raphael accompanied Tobias on his travels, he appeared to eat normally to encourage him. When he left, he said to him: *Even though you watched me eat and drink, I did not really do so, for my food is in heaven, I am nourished by God.* (cf. Tb 12:19). If the angels who are God's servants and ours nourish themselves by God, it is only just that the children eat the same bread as the servants, for we are God's children as much as the saints in heaven, only we are still on earth. A father's love is not less for those children who are feeble and sick. **We need Communion to fortify ourselves in temptations against faith, hope and charity.** But you will say: I pray. My Sisters, this is not enough; without a doubt, prayer is good but not enough. You must receive Communion to triumph over inner enemies, because it is then that God combats with us.

People of the world claim that they do not have time to receive Communion. They leave this to cloistered religious who, they say, have nothing else to do. But exactly persons who live in the world are needier than those who are secluded. They are continually on the battle field where it is very difficult not to be wounded. They must be strengthened and well armed in order not to stumble. Because they are giving themselves more to their neighbor and expend more of themselves, they have a greater need of Communion. It is the same for business people, judges, young people, who are so exposed to the hurly-burly of the world. To them, I would say: Receive Communion every day, and even ten times a day if that were possible.

The devil knows well the strength which Communion gives. For this reason he drives away many persons, because then they will no longer be under his control. Satan does not need to send a legion of demons to guard those who belong to him; only one suffices to guard an entire village. He exaggerates respect for Holy Communion in order to frighten souls and drive them from this source of grace and strength. He is afraid of Holy Communion. Unfortunately he has succeeded too well because today there are very few persons who receive Communion frequently. They say, the law of the Church requires Communion only at Easter and when in danger of death. But those who want to advance in the spiritual life must receive oftener. The Church, knowing the weaknesses of her children, wants them to receive every day and even permits spiritual communions a hundred times a day to those who wish. Spiritual communion strengthens very much, replacing sacramental Communion when the latter is not possible. It unites us to Jesus Christ, his virtues and his love.

Our forefathers received Communion much oftener. When the crusaders went to combat the infidel, they confessed the night before so as to receive Communion. The next day they flew to combat and to victory with the strength of lions. The bread of the strong was given to martyrs before they went to their execution, and Mass was offered on the chest of a deacon. And if priests did not communicate every day, could they give themselves daily to their neighbor as they do? They need Communion to fill themselves with charity.

