DOES HOLY COMMUNION TRANSFORM US?

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[...] n the octave of the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we contemplate God's love. God's love, which so often, far too often, meets with human indifference, with human ingratitude, with human contempt. We gaze upon the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the burning furnace of love. Truly, the Heart of the Savior — with the fire of love, with the fire of true divine love.

And anyone who has watched a fire, a flame, knows that fire by its nature spreads. It is in the nature of fire to embrace whatever it can. A spark is enough, a small flame is enough, for a whole forest to catch fire. And it is worth our thinking about this property of fire in connection with the invocation from the litany of the Heart of Jesus: "Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of love." The Heart of the Lord Jesus burns with the fire of love and desires to kindle our human hearts with the fire of that love. And every Catholic in whose soul this flame of God's love has been kindled ought to cherish the same desire that fills the Heart of Jesus: that this love may spread, that as many souls as possible — souls that do not know God, that came to know God but have grown lukewarm, the souls of all those who have become prodigal sons, trampling the grace of holy Baptism, trampling sanctifying grace — that these souls too may be embraced by the flame, by the fire of this divine love, this love for which we ought to be consumed, with which we ought to burn.

And, dear faithful, during this octave of the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus we realize how great is our human ingratitude and indifference toward the gifts that the Lord God gives us. How different the face of this earth would look if we, Catholics, were set aflame with the fire of God's love, if we were accompanied by zeal for the salvation of our own souls, the souls of our neighbors, for the salvation of this world.

Dear faithful, we realize how many seeming Catholics walk about our Polish land. People who call themselves Catholics but are not; people who live on appearances, who have put on a certain mask, a mask of piety, of concern for the Church, but behind that mask there often hide spiritual corpses. Corpses that stink, that are decomposing. And this applies not only to the so many souls deceived by the Council, but also in tradition more than one such pseudo-pious soul will be found. More than one soul who says that she has been in tradition for twenty-five years, who would gladly lecture everyone, set everyone straight. And so often, my dear ones, behind this mask of pseudo-piety there hides a human tragedy, there hides a spiritual corpse that rots and stinks.

FRUITLESS SACRAMENTS

And so often we meet in our lives, my dear ones, Catholics whom one could call a walking anti-advertisement for the Catholic religion. Sometimes, after all, more than once in our lives, we have caught ourselves wondering how one can behave in such a way while being a Catholic. How can one act in such a way while being a Catholic? So often we meet in our lives would-be Catholics, pretenders, who are not filled with God's love but are filled with hatred, spite, anger, with which they flood themselves and with which they would like to flood the whole world.

Dear faithful, we must realize that the Catholic faith, the true Catholic faith, bears fruit, good fruit. Where there is faith, good fruits must appear. If these good fruits, the fruits of love, are not there, it means that there is no truly Catholic faith there, that there is only the appearance of it, that there is only a mask that hides, that covers a spiritual corpse.

And we must, my dear ones, make an examination of conscience and answer for ourselves the question: to what extent do I cooperate with God's grace, to what extent am I prepared to approach the holy sacraments? For the Council of Trent teaches, in the history of the Church, that the sacraments are intended for souls that are well prepared and disposed. In other words, the sacraments will be fruitless. They bring no

fruit in souls that are not well prepared, not disposed, souls that may even often approach the sacraments, may even run to confession every day and receive Holy Communion three times a day, but those sacraments will remain fruitless. Fruitless in the soul. A soul that is dead, in which there is no faith, will not bear the fruits that result from approaching the holy sacraments.

HOLY COMMUNION THAT TRANSFORMS

We must, my dear ones, realize what the Most Blessed Sacrament is, what Holy Communion is. When you eat earthly bread, you ennoble it in a certain sense, because from a dead thing it becomes part of the human body. It is raised to a higher level, it is ennobled. What is dead becomes part of the human body. It nourishes that body. With Holy Communion it is exactly the opposite. It is we who are ennobled. It is we who are raised to a higher level, to the supernatural level, when we nourish ourselves with divine food, the Most Holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. By receiving Holy Communion we ennoble ourselves, we are made like the Savior. That is the purpose of approaching Holy Communion. And this desire ought to accompany us in Holy Communion: that the old man may die in us and that we may become a new man, a new man reborn, renewed by God's grace, a new man like our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the history of the Church provides us with hundreds, thousands of examples of how great is the power of the holy sacraments, how great is the power of Holy Communion, of what God's grace can accomplish in a man: from a sinner, from a frail sinner, it can make a saint. And we must, my dear ones, realize that if we were to approach Holy Communion even once with complete devotion and dedication, we would be transformed. So if these Holy Communions of ours do not change us, it means that something is still wrong with our spiritual life. If you do not see in your life the fruits of approaching Holy Communion, then something in your life is wrong.

And from pastoral practice I see, my dear ones, that it is often the case that the faithful who are deprived of access to the sacrament, to Holy Mass, to Holy Communion, are often far more devout, have greater reverence for the sacraments of the Church. This hunger, this desire to be nourished by God's grace, is far greater. For when we lack something, when we do not have something, only then can we understand what we have lost. When something is taken from us, we begin to appreciate certain things, we begin to look quite differently at what seemed obvious to us, as something owed to us.

Dear faithful, therefore we need, in this octave of the Most Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, to resolve firmly that when approaching Holy Communion we will cherish in ourselves this desire to be made like the Most Blessed Sacrament, that this sacrament may ennoble us, that this sacrament may transform us. During Holy Mass the words of consecration spoken over the bread and wine bring about transubstantiation, the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Communion that we receive ought to transform us. It ought to transform us. And does it transform us?

SAINT ANDREW BOBOLA

Look, my dear ones, at the example, say, of Saint Andrew Bobola, a great saint, the greatest son of the Polish land, who was a man of difficult character, a man quick to anger, a high-strung man, who made himself a burden to his family and acquaintances; he entered the Jesuits, a few years of formation, the holy sacraments — they changed him. He became a completely different man. The old man was crucified, and when by God's grace he was able to endure a cruel martyrdom — such a martyrdom that Pius XII, in the encyclical *Invicti athletae Christi* — "To the Invincible Hero of Christ" — an encyclical devoted to the person of Saint Andrew Bobola, stated that the history of the Church knows no martyrdom as cruel as the one endured by our countryman. The whole history of the Church has not seen such a cruel martyrdom, such tortures.

And Saint Andrew Bobola was so transformed by God's grace, by Holy Communion, that he went to the slaughter like a lamb, after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. He prayed for those who abused and tortured his body, he prayed for their repentance, for their conversion, he called on them to abandon

their errors, to cling to the Catholic faith, and he submitted to that martyrdom. So God's grace transformed him: from a hothead, a man of wrath, it made, my dear ones, a meek lamb.

CONSOLERS OF THE SACRED HEART

And may this octave of the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus be for us a time of reflection. To what extent does grace transform me? To what extent do I bear fruit, to what extent does the Holy Communion that I receive bear fruit in me? For if these Communions are fruitless, then you can run to Communion five times a day. You can consume hosts by the kilogram, but if there is no desire in you to be transformed, it is all worth nothing. Fruitless. You will waste God's grace, and for the grace of God that we receive here on earth we will be called to account. To whom more is given, of him more will be required.

So let us make, my dear ones, an examination of conscience: to what extent God's grace bears fruit in me, and to what extent it remains fruitless. For one must observe with horror that there is a whole mass of souls, both in the post-conciliar world and in tradition, who are seeming Catholics, who remain indifferent, untouched by God's grace, even though we approach the sacraments.

Dear faithful, in this octave of the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus, seeing the enormity of human ingratitude, indifference, disregard for God's love, seeing also our own faults, our frailties, we must pray fervently that we may become consolers of the Most Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus; that we, my dear ones, seeing this ocean of evil that floods the modern world, may stop adding to it the water of our sins, our spite; that we, my dear ones, may become consolers; that together with the Most Blessed Mother we may stand at the foot of the Cross, so that our tears may mingle with hers: tears of love for the Savior, tears of compassion, the desire to console the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Such consolers the Lord Jesus needs today. Such consolers the Lord Jesus so greatly lacks today.

And it depends on us whether we become for the Lord Jesus a source of consolation, or whether we will be for Him a source of further sorrow, of further [...] and that we may make the right choice.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.