



St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra – St. Patrick's, Berry – Sacred Heart, Bomaderry - Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley – Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pg/stmichaelsparishnowra

Web page: www.nowraparish.org.au

Email: office@nowraparish.org.au

Office Telephone: 4423 1712

Bookings for Weekend Masses, please see notice inside bulletin

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time A

25th October 2020

Spiritual Communion: The real thing?

By Dr. Jeff Mirus (founder of Trinity Communications and CatholicCulture.org)

Over the past year, even before anyone had ever heard of COVID-19, I have received emails from people extolling spiritual communion ... But “spiritual reception” is an unfortunate term, ... There seems to be a movement afoot to elevate spiritual communion to and even beyond the level of The Real Thing. That's typical of modernity, unfortunately, and it is a huge error.

The divorce of spiritual and material

It is perhaps the greatest temptation of all of us in the current cultural moment to be so aware of our own thought processes that we elevate the subjective over the objective. This can take many forms, from the notion that our intentions alone determine whether something is right or wrong ... Nobody will have to look far for other examples.

Because of this sweeping cultural tendency, which lies at the heart of the contemporary loss of meaning and the resulting moral crisis of our time, we must be very careful how we deal with the Eucharist. Our priest columnist, Fr. Jerry Pokorsky, warned against the dangers of an excessive reliance on virtual Masses (even those that are “live”-streamed) in a prophetic essay early in the Pandemic Period... I followed this by adding further comments on the nature of sacramentality (see Beware: Sacramental Presence is always person-to-person).

My point is that we live not in an “earthy” age but in a manipulative technocratic age which insulates our thoughts from material reality, including our own bodies. Our circumstances tend to create within us a mindset which over-emphasizes how we want things to be—and leads us to believe that things can be whatever we want. Yet in comparison with all the many religious or quasi-spiritual impulses which seem to be so largely ignored by God, Catholic religious longing is definitively answered by God the Son assuming a human nature, including a human body, and by the resulting principle of sacramentality.

In other words, with both remarkable condescension and shrewd psychology, God has chosen to communicate His life to us through material signs that are very much more than mere symbols. The greatest of these “reality signs” is Jesus Christ, and the extension of Jesus Christ on earth through history is the great sacrament of the Catholic Church, including the seven specific sacraments which constitute her sacramental system.

Compared with this, every other religious aspiration is just wishful thinking. Or, to be more specific, “spiritual” communion voluntarily divorced for no good reason from sacramental communion is an exercise in human mythology.

Communion

There is only one real “reception” of Communion. It occurs when we receive the body and blood of Christ in sacramental form. Not only is this what divinizes us, by assimilating ourselves to Christ, but also the very possibility of reception is inextricably linked to Christ's bodily sacrifice on the cross, which is re-presented each time the Eucharist is confectioned by a priest. Without that connection, there is no Eucharist to receive. It is, then, first and foremost through the tangible reception of Communion that our incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ, which we receive as an unmerited gift at baptism, is renewed and strengthened within us.

... the economy of salvation established by God and implemented through His Church, even this depends on Christ's very real sacrifice, His very real presence in the Church and, in signally unique ways, His very real presence in the Church's sacraments.

We know from St. Paul himself that we can eat and drink unto condemnation if we fail to discern the true body and blood of Christ in Communion; we know also that if we receive without a certain sacred

recollection we will not immediately receive the greatest benefit from the sacrament. But we also know, when it comes to the sacraments, that we can later unlock those sacramental graces of which we have been imperfectly aware simply by ardently desiring to respond to Our Lord's call to conversion, just as we can gain heaven by seeking to work in the vineyard only at the last hour.

The most significant element—indeed, the infinitely most important element—in Communion is the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine, which we are privileged to receive.

Final clarifications

Can God draw us to Himself without our receiving the Catholic sacraments? Certainly, but the graces used are nonetheless the fruits of His sacramental plan for our salvation, beginning with the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and continuing through His sacramental Presence in the Catholic Church. Surely this plan is not merely arbitrary! Our Creator knows us better than we know ourselves; He knows that redemption and salvation are open only to human persons; He made us as persons who are a composite of body and soul; and He en-graces or divinizes us in and through the fullness of our human nature.

Can those barred from reception of Communion make spiritual communions with profit? Certainly. Their genuine desire is a sufficient starting point, for they are barred by law and not by a final judgment on their souls. It is God who reads hearts. Which of us has not needed a season of prayer and yearning so that we might be opened to a better understanding of God's will to the point that we are ready to follow it more fully? This prayer and yearning offer no affront to our Blessed Lord. What we call a spiritual communion is possible to make without fully understanding our situation, but it is impossible to make insincerely. Indeed, the highest elements of any prayer—the elements added by the Holy Spirit to our confused sincerities—are to seek first the wisdom to know God's will and then the courage to do it.

Finally, we must again grasp the main point—that our own "spiritual" impetus in the reception of Communion is most important only when considering our own part in the sacrament. But our part is by far the lesser part when it comes to any of the sacraments, and that is what makes loose talk about spiritual communion so potentially confusing. The objective element of a sacrament is what carries its true power, by which I mean the active Presence, specific to each sacrament, of Jesus Christ Himself.

Saying that our spiritual intentions are the most important element in a fruitful Communion is like saying that the love, desire and romantic endearments between a husband and wife are the most important element in the procreation of a child. No analogy is perfect, but perhaps if we think seriously about that statement, we will at last begin to understand the nature and power of a sacrament. For a sacrament is always the sacrificial self-donation of Our Lord and Saviour—the tangible gift of life from Life Himself.

We are privileged to nurture the Divine life which the sacraments communicate to us just as we are privileged to nurture the children that are born of our coupling. But we do not singularly create that life, any more than we can alter reality to make it something other than it is. As creatures of God, we are completely embraced by the deepest Love, which is the foundation of reality itself. We do not yearn our way into our own heaven. When we are thinking clearly about this reality, we do not call it the Vision of Man and brag of either our wonderful aspirations or our stupendous powers. We call it the Law of the Gift, and we praise our Creator and Lord.

Children's Liturgy Worksheets can be downloaded from the parish website -

<http://nowraparish.org.au/other-resources>

The 11TH ANNUAL *iWitness* Conference Awake, O Sleeper 10th – 13th December 2020

The tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops

iWitness is an annual, summer conference drawing together 100s of young (18-35 year old) Aussie Catholics for a summer weekend of prayer, formation and fun. For more information please check website

<https://www.iwitnessconference.com/>

Livestream Holy Hour

Join the NET Team for online Holy Hour! Every Wednesday from 6:30pm on Instagram @wollongongnetteam or Facebook @CYMDOW (Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong). Witness adoration and join in for praise and worship and hear the Gospel as well as a reflection written by one of our team members!

Registering for weekend Masses:

For Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry - call **0477 427 396** (Mon to Fri between 10am & 3pm)

For Mass at Kangaroo Valley, please email ronankangaroo1@gmail.com

For Mass at Vincentia - call **0435 862 156** or email holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com

*** PLEASE CALL TO CANCEL YOUR BOOKING
IF YOU HAVE REGISTERED FOR MASS AND ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND***

Mass Times

Saturday Vigils	
Nowra	5:00pm
Culburra	5:00pm
Vincentia	5:00pm 6:15pm

Sunday Mass Times		
Nowra	8:00 am	9:30am 5:00 pm
Berry	8:00 am	
Bomaderry	9:30 am	
Vincentia	9:00 am	10:15
Kangaroo Valley	11:00 am	

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Nowra	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am	8:00 am
Berry		5:30 pm	5:30 pm		11:30 am
Culburra				5:30 pm	
Bomaderry					5:30 pm
Vincentia	8:00 am	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	8:00am	8:00 am
Kangaroo Valley		9:00 am	9:00 am	9:00 am	

Confessions / Reconciliation

Nowra: Saturday: 9.30 – 10.30am

Culburra: Saturday prior to Vigil Mass at 5.00pm

Vincentia: Saturday 4pm

Berry: Tuesday following 5.30pm Mass

Bomaderry: Friday following 5.30pm Mass

All Souls Day – Monday 2nd November

Mass Times

Nowra: 8:00am, **11:00am and 5:30pm

Kangaroo Valley: 11am

Vincentia: 8:00am and 5:30pm

(*The 11:00am Mass at Nowra will be a Special Remembrance Mass for the recently deceased.)

The customary envelopes, which you can inscribe the names of the deceased, you wish to be included in the Mass, are available at the Churches. Please return them as soon as possible.



The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in our parish on 31st October and 1st November. We congratulate the children who are being Confirmed and pray that they remain courageous witnesses to their faith. A sincere thank you to our teachers and catechists, who prepared the children.

CCD Faith Education Officer – Catholic Diocese of Wollongong

Suitably experienced and qualified persons are encouraged to apply for the role of CCD Faith Education Officer in the Diocese of Wollongong, to commence in December 2020. The successful candidate will work as part of a team, based in Campbelltown and across the Diocese, primarily in the area of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), to support the Bishop, Diocesan Director, Clergy and parishes to provide Catholic Special Religious Education (SRE) in government schools. Further, the successful candidate will, as required, assist with the implementation of programs to support renewal and evangelisation in parishes.

Applications close on Friday 13 November.

For more information and a detailed role description, please go to www.dow.sh/ccdjob or contact helen.bennett@dow.org.au

We prayerfully remember the recently deceased **Rosina Fulginiti** and **Frank Baker** and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time especially **Alan Rigney**, **Carole Falzon** and **Paul Borg**. We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide. May they rest in peace.

Entrance Antiphon - Cf. Ps 104:3-4

Let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice; turn to the Lord and his strength; constantly seek his face..

A reading from the book of Exodus - Ex 22:20-26

The Lord said to Moses, 'Tell the sons of Israel this, "You must not molest the stranger or oppress him, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt. You must not be harsh with the widow, or with the orphan; if you are harsh with them, they will surely cry out to me, and be sure I shall hear their cry; my anger will flare and I shall kill you with the sword, your own wives will be widows, your own children orphans. "If you lend money to any of my people, to any poor man among you, you must not play the usurer with him: you must not demand interest from him. "If you take another's cloak as a pledge, you must give it back to him before sunset. It is all the covering he has; it is the cloak he wraps his body in; what else would he sleep in? If he cries to me, I will listen, for I am full of pity."'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 17:2-4. 47. 51. R. v.2

Response: I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold.
The Lord is worthy of all praise:
when I call I am saved from my foes. (R.)

Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me.
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed. (R.)

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians - 1 Thes 1:5-10

You observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction, and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel, in spite of the great opposition all round you. This has made you the great example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia since it was from you that the word of the Lord started to spread – and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other people about it: other people tell us how we started the work among you, how you broke with idolatry when you were converted to God and became servants of the real, living God; and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us from the retribution which is coming.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! All who love me will keep my words, and my Father will love them and we will come to them. Alleluia!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew



When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: you must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

Communion Antiphon Cf. Ps 19:6

We will ring out our joy at your saving help and exult in the name of our God.