

## **one**

When we receive the Eucharist we receive God. There is an infinite amount of grace, which means, an infinite amount of God's life, in one Eucharist. That is way more than enough to make us saints. Since this is true, then why aren't we? It certainly can't be something wrong from God's side of the deal. The CCC 1128 says "From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it."

It doesn't matter how holy or sinful the priest is, and it certainly doesn't matter if you like him or not – the fact is, when he celebrates a sacrament according to what the Church intends – the sacraments become exactly what God planned. So the reason we are not saints is not because God has failed to give us the grace. The problem lies with us.

The CCC: "*Nevertheless*, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them."

Our transformation not only depends on the infinite grace of the sacraments; it also depends on our capacity to assimilate the grace and to cooperate with the grace. We may receive the Eucharist, but for some reason we are not absorbing grace and we may not be cooperating with it.

## **two**

Just as it is possible to eat food and not digest the nutrients, we can receive the Eucharist and not assimilate the grace. Sin blocks us from absorbing the nourishment of the Eucharist. So what would you do if you were suddenly losing too much weight because of an absorption problem and you were becoming weak and sick and maybe even dying? You certainly wouldn't ignore it. Well your soul is getting awfully skinny...

That is why a daily examination of conscience and frequent reception of the sacrament of reconciliation is so important. This one-two punch of an examination and confession clears out the guilt of our sins and allows the absorption to begin.

## **three**

The Eucharist is the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is the Fountain of Living Water. In fact, Jesus said, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink; for out of my heart shall flow a fountain of living water.' But it is possible to come to the fountain, to receive the Eucharist and still not drink of the living water. How can this be? Because we don't practice daily meditation.

Pope Benedict XVI said that prayer is the self-opening of the human spirit to God. (*Jesus of Nazareth vol 2*, p. 233)

By prayer we open our soul to drink in the Living Water, that is, God's grace poured out in the sacraments. I cannot overemphasize this point, to receive the sacraments without a life of prayer is like coming to a well and not drinking.

Vocal prayer is a good start. By vocal prayer we speak to God in our own words or the words of others like the Our Father and Hail Mary. But you can't talk and drink at the same time. Just try it and see. You will choke and spit out whatever you are drinking.

That is why we need to move on in our prayer from talking to listening and reflecting, from vocal prayer to meditation.

Meditation opens up the soul to drink in the Transforming Power God's grace that comes through the Sacraments.

## **four**

We drink in the grace of the sacraments through Daily Meditation.

Meditation is to turn your attention to God; To think about what He has said or done; In order to understand it; and to love God for the things He has said and done so that we can form firm convictions that we will put into practice with the assistance of grace.

Meditation is like having Coffee with a Friend; Set a specific time and place conducive to a leisurely intimate conversation; Talk and share; Listen and understand. Just spend time together

### **There are three Simple Steps to Meditation**

**Read** or Listen to the Word of God from Scripture, Tradition or the Magisterium. Then as soon as something strikes you – stop reading.

**Reflect** or think about what struck you; Try to Understand it; Apply it to your life and Draw practical conclusions

Rest in the idea that struck you (Affective Prayer)

- Teresa of Avila said: Meditation consists not so much in thinking a great deal but in loving a great deal.
- Learn to be ok with sitting still without reading, talking, or trying to figure things out – Just be with God – loving Him.

**Resolution:** Choose something practical and concrete to remember or to do today based on your meditation

## five

**We are not saved by grace alone but grace plus our effort because we have free will – therefore we must cooperate in our rescue.** We cooperate with the grace of the sacraments by practicing a resolution that flows from our meditation.

### **St Francis De Sales on the importance of a resolution:**

The most important thing of all is that you cling firmly to the resolutions you have taken in meditation so as to practice them carefully. That is the great fruit of meditation, without which it is often not only useless but harmful. Why so? Because the virtues upon which we have meditated but not practiced sometimes puff us up so much in mind and heart that we think we are already what we are resolved to be which no doubt is the case if our resolutions are solid and ardent. But when, on the contrary, they are not practiced, they are useless and dangerous. (Introduction to the Devout Life, II Chap 8)

Examples of a resolution:

- I will not gossip today
- I complain too much, so today I will practice thanking God for everything
- I am anxious - today I will replace that feeling of Anxiety
  - o with an Act of Trust in God

What if I cannot find a resolution?

- Remember your meditation all day long.
- This remembrance will change the way you think and the way you act
- And then you will be changed