

Approaching this awesome mystery, we say, "Neither like Judas will I give you a kiss." Who is it that gives the Lord the kiss of Judas? Without a doubt, it is those who, not having cleansed their consciences by heartfelt repentance, not having grieved over their sins, approach the Chalice of Christ without the fear of God, or those who, having been joined to the Lord, having been sanctified by His most holy gift and freely cleansed of their innumerable transgressions, the spawn of the spirit of malice, return again to their foul deeds, again become enslaved to Satan.

In conclusion let us point out some of the innumerable blessings which it bestows upon those who receive Holy Communion worthily. According to the teaching of the Church (see the Prayers before and after Holy Communion), this most Holy Mystery of the Body and Blood gives to those partaking of it worthily: 1) strengthening of joints and bones, 2) healing of diverse sicknesses, 3) health, 4) strength, 5) preservation, 6) salvation and sanctification of soul and body, 7) cleansing of a defiled soul, 8) preservation from every soul-destroying action and word, 9) protection from every action of the devil, 10) a rampart and aid in dispersing the enemy (i.e., evil spirits); 11) the driving away of every fantasy, evil act and work of the devil acting mentally in our members; 12) the burning up and utter destruction of wicked thoughts and deeds, and of nocturnal fantasies of the dark and evil spirits; 13) correction of life and confirmation in holiness of life, 14) keeping of the commandments, 15) increase in virtue and perfection, 16) enlightenment of the senses, 17) peace of the powers of the soul, 18) unashamed faith, 19) fullness of wisdom,

20) enlightenment of the eyes of the heart, 21) boldness and love towards God, 22) the gift of the Holy Spirit, 23) an increase of divine grace; 24) strengthening of life, 25) hope of the future life and kingdom, 26) provision for eternal life, 27) a good defense before the awesome judgment seat of Christ, 28) and communion of heavenly blessings. With a conscience cleansed by the Mystery of Confession and with a sincere desire to correct our life, let us more and more often come to partake of the Heavenly Meal given to us in the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ, that by worthy reception of this great gift, we may also receive those innumerable gifts which are bestowed upon us through this great Mystery, that worthily tasting this most holy bread, the actual Body of Christ, here on earth, we may be granted to partake of Christ more completely in heaven as well, and remain eternally in communion with and in the face to face vision of Jesus Christ, our Creator, Master and Redeemer, of which may we all be deemed worthy through his good pleasure and beneficence.

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**Holy Ascension  
Orthodox Christian Mission**

## **Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church**



***On Frequent Communion  
by Elder Arsenius***

**Holy Ascension  
Orthodox Christian Mission**

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***Anyone who eats My flesh and drinks  
My blood lives in Me and I in him.  
(John 6: 56)***

What can be greater and more desirable than these most comforting words of our Saviour in which He expresses all His love, all the boundless compassion which is given to us in the Mystery of Holy Communion! With what can we compare the state of a person who is united with the Lord Himself! This is the Mystery of Mysteries, so exalted that it can only be grasped in part by our limited mind. It is sufficient for us to know that in the Mystery of Holy Communion we are given the greatest of God's gifts, and therefore we must by all means try to live in such a way that we may more often approach this most Holy Mystery, which the ancient Christians were given daily.

Holy Communion, strengthening our spiritual and bodily powers, also serves as an invincible weapon for us in defeating the invisible enemy of our salvation - the devil. This enemy is extremely dangerous for us. How many snares he sets out for our ruin, in which he tries with all his power to trap us; wherever we go, at almost every step this evil spirit tries to wound us, ever trying to deceive and tempt us. We want to do good, but he lures us into evil; we want to pray, but he brings upon us foul thoughts, laziness, heaviness and so forth, taking advantage of our weaknesses and our inclination towards sin. How much care, attention to self, and self-discipline is required of us, for this cruel spirit of malice not to prevail over us!

He is so much the more dangerous in that he is invisible to us and is exceedingly cunning and evil. Against such a dangerous enemy we must use a mighty weapon; but what can be more powerful than the most holy Mystery of Communion? In itself it is an almighty power, for in partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ we receive the Master of heaven and earth, whose might is infinite. On the other hand, it contains within itself all the power of our great redemption which was accomplished for us by our Savior, the fruit of which was victorious triumph over the dark kingdom of the devil.

Those who rarely approach this saving Mystery are estranging themselves from salvation. Even commonsense can grasp the truth of this. Those who receive Holy Communion often, also cleanse their conscience often in the Mystery of Confession, and in relieving their grief and contrition over the sins they have committed, they set the saving fear of God as a seal on their soul, keeping them from sin. To attain this, we must arm ourselves more often with good thoughts and good works which keep us from sin and draw us nearer to God. Then, according to the frequency of Holy Communion, good dispositions and virtues acquire great power and become essential to the soul. Each of us knows from experience that frequent repetition of anything forms a habit in us. Thus, the person who partakes of Holy Communion often necessarily acquires the disposition to serve the Lord with fervor, for they truly believe in the power of this Divine Mystery; they praise God with gladness and hope, for they truly trust that the Lord is their helper and defender.

Present-day Orthodox Christians, for the most part, approach the saving Mysteries of Confession and Holy Communion once a year (this is mainly a practice nowadays only in the Greek Orthodox Church, not in other Orthodox Churches) but Christians of the first centuries were given this Gift daily. From this it is evident how piety has decreased in our days, and that it will do so further in the future. One can sometimes hear people say that they avoid approaching the Holy Mysteries because they consider themselves unworthy. But who is worthy of it? No one on earth is worthy of it, but whoever confesses their sins with heartfelt contrition and approaches the Chalice of Christ with consciousness of their unworthiness, the Lord will not reject, in accordance with his words, "Anyone who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out (John 6: 37)." Others are so caught up in the vanity of the world that they find no time to prepare for Holy Communion, or only prepare haphazardly for this most holy Christian duty. What carelessness concerning such a great gift of God, what negligence concerning the salvation of one's soul! Throughout the whole year they cannot set aside even a few days for the salvation of their soul, when before their eyes there are almost daily examples of sudden death. And we will not remain silent about the person who indeed approaches the Chalice of Christ unworthily. Of such people the word of God says: Those who eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink damnation for themselves, not discerning the Lord's body (I Corinthians 11: 29).