

On Frequent Communion (Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Saint Gregory the Theologian: ‘When they fittingly and worthily partake of the most holy Body of our Lord, this becomes a weapon for those under attack and a return for those who have abandoned God. It fortifies the weak, gladdens the healthy, heals the sick and protects our well-being. Through Holy Communion we’re more easily corrected, we become more patient and resilient as regards pain and sorrows. It makes us warmer in our love, subtle in knowledge, willing in obedience and sharp and swift in the exercise of our gifts. With those who do not commune frequently, however, the opposite is true, since they aren’t sealed with the Precious Blood of our Lord. The Lamb is slaughtered and, through the Precious Blood, theory and practice are sealed, that is habit and action, the supports of my own gates, of the movements of the mind. These open freely onto contemplation and then are closed again, like gates, against the contemplation of more sublime and inconceivable matters’.



Saint Cyril of Alexandria says that, through Holy Communion, the demons, the immaterial thieves, do not find our souls abandoned, so they cannot enter through the senses. You should understand the senses as being the door to your house. Through them, images of all things enter the heart and the immeasurable abundance of the desires are poured into it. The prophet Joel calls the senses 'windows' (*Joel, 2, 9*), since the thieves can enter by them, because they weren't built with the Precious Blood of Christ. Saint Cyril also says that through Holy Communion we are cleansed of all spiritual impurity and we become more zealous and fervent for the virtues. The Precious Blood of Christ not only sets us free from all corruption, it also cleanses us from all the impurities hidden within our soul. It does not allow us to become cold, through negligence, but makes us zealous and fervent in the Holy Spirit.

Saint Theodore the Studite observes [to the monks at the Monastery of Studium] that tears and compunction have great power. But beyond everything else put together, Holy Communion has great power and benefit and 'in this matter I see that you are very negligent. You do not come to Holy Communion. I'm shocked and amazed that I see you taking communion only on Sundays, but you do not do so if there is a celebration of the Liturgy on another day. I am not telling you this so that you can simply take communion as you like, without preparation. Saint Paul says we must examine our conscience before being nourished by the holy Bread and drinking from the sacred Chalice. Those who partake unworthily will be condemned because of their lack of discrimination, in that they do not venerate the holy Body and Blood of the Lord. God forbid. I am telling you to commune frequently so that

we can cleanse ourselves as much as possible with our desire and love for Holy Communion. In this way we will partake purely'.

Do you see this unfathomable gift? The Lord not only died for us, but he also offers himself on the altar so that we may commune with him. If, then, we do as the holy Fathers instruct us to do, and take communion frequently, we shall have divine grace as an ally and aid in this short life. Also assisting us will be the angels of God and even the Lord of the angels himself. Moreover, we will drive the hostile demons far from us as Saint John Chrysostom says (vol. 12, pp. 580-583). We shall leave that spiritual Table of the Sacraments like lions breathing fire. We ignite fear in the devil, because we have Christ with us as our head and we also have his love for us. This Blood burnishes the royal image of our soul, that is the mind, reason and spirit. This Blood begets beauty and the most amazing beauty, at that. It prevents the nobility and brilliance of the soul from waning and is its constant nourishment.

When this Blood is taken worthily, it banishes the demons and drives them far from us, but also draws to us the angels and the Lord of the angels. This is because the demons flee whenever they see the Lord's Blood, but the angels are attracted and come to our aid. This Blood is the salvation of our souls. Through it, the soul is gladdened, adorned and warmed. This Blood makes our mind brighter than fire and our soul more beautiful than gold. Those who partake of this Blood stand with the angels, archangels and the powers on high, since they are clad in royal raiment and have spiritual weaponry with them. But I have not yet told you the greatest gift: those who take communion put on the King himself.

Have you heard of the disasters which befall those who do not take communion regularly and withdraw from the sacraments? Have you heard how they are demonized and become some kind of irrational animal, like King Nebuchadnezzar, who was transformed into an ox? And it is right that they suffer, because, whereas they could progress from being human people to being gods by grace, through frequent communion, they choose not to. Estranged from Holy Communion, they lose the human form they have and are transformed into irrational beasts. They are delivered into the power of Satan, as the psalmist says: 'Behold, those who depart from you will be lost' (*Ps. 72, 27*).

I should probably say that, if death comes suddenly to those who have been negligent in taking communion and finds them unprepared, without the sacrament, what will become of those poor people? How will they pass through the ethereal toll-gates manned by demons? What fear and trembling their souls will experience, when they could have been spared all of it with frequent communion, as Saint John Chrysostom says. Mercy, Lord.

Because of the grace of Holy Communion, when the soul departs from the body of those who have partaken with a clean conscience just before their death, they are surrounded by angels and taken up into heaven. We don't know when death will come: today, tomorrow, this instant. You should always have taken communion and be prepared. If it is God's will that you live longer, through the grace of Holy Communion, you will spend your life full of joy, peace and love, accompanied by all the other virtues. If, on the other hand, it is God's will that you die, then, with Holy Communion, you will pass freely through the toll-gates of the demons in the air and you will dwell in inexpressible joy in the eternal mansions. Since, through Holy Communion, you are always united with our sweet Jesus Christ, the almighty King, you will live a blessed life here on earth. And, when you die, the demons will depart from you at the speed of light, while the holy angels will open the door of heaven for you and will send you, with a retinue, to the throne of the blessed Trinity.