

St. Thomas Prayer After Mass, Part 1

October 29, 2017

The Roman Missal has the beautiful prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas among the prayers of thanksgiving for the use of the priest. This prayer begins showing that our Savior comes to us because of His great mercy: "I give Thee thanks, O holy Lord, Father almighty eternal God, who hast vouchsafed, not for any merits of mine, but solely out of the condescension of Thy mercy, to satisfy me a sinner, Thine unworthy servant, with the precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ." These words were composed by a great Saint who, according to the witness of his confessor during the canonization process, probably never committed a mortal sin in his life. If St. Thomas thought that he was unworthy and still relied on God's great mercy, we too should strive to have this disposition of humility and unworthiness in approaching this Sacrament. St. Thomas had penetrated deeply into this wonderful Sacrament during his years of study, prayer and meditation, he wrote eloquently about this sacrament, and yet he still recognized that our Lord comes to us in this sacrament because He loves us and has mercy on us, not because we have a right to receive Him. We must do our part in receiving this Sacrament by being in the state of grace, that is, baptized and not conscious of any grave sin. 'Communion' is a strong form of 'union'; consequently, we must have that union of supernatural charity as we approach the altar so that our reception of Communion can strengthen this fundamental union of grace.

St. Thomas therefore says: "I pray that this Holy Communion be not to me a condemnation unto punishment, but a saving plea unto forgiveness." If we are not in the state of grace, receiving Communion will only separate us further from Christ, since we are committing a serious sin of sacrilege, but when we receive worthily, we are further conformed to Christ. St. Paul says to the Corinthians: "But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgement to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord." (1 Cor 11:27 f.).

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