

## *Thanksgiving After Mass, Part 2*

November 5, 2017

St. Thomas' beautiful prayer of thanksgiving continues by giving the advantages of having received communion worthily: "May it be unto me the armor of faith and the shield of goodwill." We must do battle to protect our faith and we must also exercise it toward our neighbor with good works. The theological virtue of Faith we received when we were baptized is a gift of God that we cannot acquire by our own means. We can study all the books on this subject that exist and it will not give us this supernatural Faith. Therefore, we also need a supernatural means of protecting and growing in it, and receiving our Lord in Holy Communion is an important means. Communion helps in this regard by protecting our faith as the armor protects a soldier in battle. We are constantly under the assault from the devil and his minions and so we need to protect ourselves with armor, and not just any armor, but a spiritual armor. It will also help us with our good works, which builds our love of God through our love of neighbor. Communion helps us to perform these good works that in turn help us to deflect the arrows of the enemy.

St. Thomas continues: "May it be the emptying out of my vices, the extinction of all concupiscence and lust, the increase of charity and patience, of humility and obedience and of all virtues." Holy Communion helps us to overcome sin and grow in virtue. St. Thomas, therefore, has us pray that the vices be conquered, and he mentions in particular concupiscence and lust, since these are particularly insidious and difficult to overcome. If we strive to keep our eyes turned toward heaven, we will less likely be drawn by the things of this world and our lower passions. What better way to keep that focus toward our heavenly home than receiving our Lord, Who is in heaven. Further, St. Thomas has us pray that we grow in virtue, particularly charity, which we must have to receive Holy Communion in the first place. We must have charity to grow in it and this growth also requires fertile soil which is prepared by the other virtues, and so he mentions patience, humility and obedience. With these virtues established and growing within us, we will have that good soil that will "bring forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold and some thirtyfold." (Matthew 13:8)

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