

### *Thanksgiving After Mass, Part 3*

November 12, 2017

St. Thomas Aquinas in the beautiful prayer of thanksgiving after Mass continues with the following: “May it be unto me.... a strong defense against the snares of all enemies, visible and invisible.” We are in a battle for the salvation of our souls, and the better we are properly armed for the fight, the greater are the chances of success. St. Thomas points out that the enemies are both visible and invisible. We are not fighting against each other to try and win a spot in heaven, as if there are only a fixed number of seats available. Rather, the battleground is our soul, and there are three enemies that we must do battle against: the world, the devil and our own weak selves.

The world would include all the external influences on us from the people around us to the attraction of material things. The devil is, of course, a fallen angel that has not lost his powers as an angel and, therefore, he can be insidiously dangerous if we are not armed with spiritual weapons for the battle. In some ways, however, our own weak selves can be the most dangerous enemy since we carry within us a disorder that results from original sin and from our own personal sins, from which it is impossible to “run away” in a manner of speaking. To win these battles, we need the right armor. The best armor possible is worthily receiving Holy Communion regularly and frequently, since we are receiving the source of grace itself to strengthen and defend us.

Holy Communion can bring about a change within us. St. Thomas has us ask when reciting this prayer that this Communion may be to me “a perfect quieting of all my evil impulses, both fleshly and ghostly”. Along with receiving Communion to bring about this proper order within ourselves, we must also faithfully pray and ask for this grace. Furthermore, we mortify ourselves so that we can keep the lower passions fully under the control of the intellect and will. Grace builds on nature, and thus Communion will help reinforce the efforts we make, which are already a grace from God.

Holy Communion additionally helps us “cleave to the one true God” now while we are fighting the battle, and it will be a pledge for our future destiny with Him. Through this sacrament, our Lord is with us to assist us so that we can be with Him for all eternity in heaven. Communion is already a union with our Savior as we hope to be united with Him in heaven.

*Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP  
Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish*