

## The Eternal Banquet; The Importance of Frequent Communion (Abbot Tryphon)

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Eternity is an everlasting banquet (the Divine Liturgy) that takes place in the heavenly realm. Every time we participate in the Divine Liturgy we are transported into a place where there is neither time nor space, and participate in that very banquet. As we receive the Holy Mysteries (Christ's very Body and Blood), we receive the healing medicine for that which ails us. Our brokenness in both body and soul are given the healing medicine that we so very much need.



God is everywhere present and fills all things. There is no where He is not. Hell fire is none other than the Fire of God, burning those who are unloving and unresponsive to His invitation to commune with Him. God does not send anyone to hell, for we sentence ourselves. Eternity with God necessitates a transformation of our souls, that we be purified in order to be engulfed by God's uncreated light. Without transformation the fire of God burns us, not because He desires we be

burned, but because our fallen nature can not withstand the presence of God without having been purified.

The Eucharist is the very medicine that God designed for this transformation. Our response should be one of humble submission to this invitation to commune with the very God Who created us. Holy Communion is meant to be the very agent that changes us, making us whole. The Holy Mysteries give us life. Frequent confession and communion are the means we have for change.

The Eucharist is both mystical and symbolic and is understood to be the genuine Body and Blood of Christ, precisely because bread and wine are the mysteries and symbols of God's true and genuine presence and His manifestation to us in Christ.

The Holy Eucharist defies analysis and explanation in purely rational and logical terms, precisely because it is a mystery. The Eucharist, as is Christ himself, is a mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven which, as Jesus has told us, is «not of this world.» The Eucharist, because it belongs to God's Kingdom, is truly free from the earth-born «logic» of fallen humanity.

Saint John of Damascus says, «If you enquire how this happens, it is enough for you to learn that it is through the Holy Spirit ... we know nothing more than this, that the word of God is true, active, and omnipotent, but in its manner of operation unsearchable».

Before the reception of Holy Communion the following prayer is generally recited by the priest on behalf of all. It is each person's act of personal commitment to Christ, their promise of faith in Him and the Sacred Mysteries of His Church.

*I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who camest into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first (1 Timothy 1:15).*

*I believe also that this is truly Thine own most pure Body, and that this is truly Thine own most precious Blood. Therefore I pray Thee: Have mercy upon me and forgive me my transgressions, committed in word and deed, whether consciously or unconsciously.*

*And make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Thy most pure Mysteries, for the remission of sins and unto life everlasting.*

*Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant. For I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies, neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss; but like the thief will I confess Thee: «Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.»*

*May the communion of Thy Holy Mysteries be neither to my judgment, nor to my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body.*

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