

c. The "Our Father"

- 384 In the prayer of the Litany of Supplication before the *Our Father*, we entrust our whole life and our hope to the Lord. We pray that he would grant us to communicate of the Holy Gifts "for forgiveness of sins, for the pardon of offenses, for fellowship of the Holy Spirit, for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, for confidence before [God], and not for judgment or condemnation," and that "with confidence and without condemnation, we may dare call ... the heavenly God, "Father." The Lord's Prayer precedes Eucharistic communion also because God is not my or your Father, but our Father, and he unites us around the Lord's Banquet table. Such unity also requires forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. "the apostle Paul distinctly warns us about unworthy reception of Communion (*see 1 Cor 11:27*).
- 385 Invoking God the Father in the Lord's Prayer is "a symbol of the personal and real adoption to be bestowed through the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit. In accordance with it... every human particularity [i.e., faculty] is overcome and disclosed by the coming of grace."²⁹⁶ In the prayer after the Our Father, the priest prays that the Lord, as the "Physician of our souls and bodies," grant us his Body and Blood "in accord with each one's personal need."²⁹⁷
- 386 The Church invites the faithful to Holy Communion with the exclamation, "The holy Things for the holy!" these words are at once an invitation and a warning. The faithful approach the Holy Gifts not because they consider themselves worthy but because they belong to the holy Church; the faithful are holy not by their own holiness but because they are the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is what we profess in the response: "One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ." Nonetheless, each of us is responsible for approaching Communion with a clean conscience, so that this union would not be "for judgment or condemnation."
- 387 Before Communion, the deacon pours some hot water (in Greek, *zeon*) into the chalice, pronouncing the words: "The warmth of faith full of the Holy Spirit." Doing so he signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church. "[The Church] received the Holy Spirit after our Lord's Ascension; now she receives the gift of the Holy Spirit after the offerings have been accepted at the heavenly altar; God, who has accepted, then sends

²⁹⁶ Maximus THE CONFESSOR, *Mystagogy*, 20: PG 91, 696.

²⁹⁷ See *Liturgicon*, *The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father John Chrysostom*, Prayer after the Our Father.

us the Holy Spirit in return."²⁹⁸ The adding of hot water also signifies that the Holy Gifts are the Body and Blood of the living Risen Christ.

d. Communion: The Banquet of the Body and Blood

388 Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord is the culmination of the Eucharistic Banquet.

*[Communion] transforms into itself those who worthily partake of it, making them similar to that good which is [their] source by means of grace and participation. They lack nothing of this good that is possible and can be attained by human beings. Therefore, they also are and can be called gods by adoption through grace because all of God entirely fills them and leaves no part of them empty of his presence.*²⁹⁹

Through Holy Communion we achieve a divine likeness: we receive Christ into our lives, and Christ makes us partakers of the divine nature.

389 As Christ offered the apostles his Body and Blood at the Mystical Supper, so the priest communicates the faithful who piously, with hands crossed on their breast, approach the ambo before the Royal Doors. The words of the Prayer before Communion, "Accept me this day, O Son of God, as a partaker of your mystical Supper," explain the essence of the Lord's Banquet, and of the entire Liturgy. Saint John Chrysostom teaches: "Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper, at which he himself sat down. For this is in no respect different from that. For neither does man make this and himself the other; but both this and that is his own work."³⁰⁰

390 Consuming the Holy Gifts, we communicate in the Body and Blood of Christ: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them" (Jn 6:56). We become similar to Christ and acquire a divine way of thinking: as God granted himself to us, so we, in fully giving ourselves to God and to others, have life eternal. Through communion in the Body and Blood of Christ, our life is fully in God: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

e. Thanksgiving for Communion and the Dismissal

391 After Holy Communion, the deacon invites the faithful to render thanks to the Lord for the Gifts received: "Stand aright! Having received ...

²⁹⁸ NICHOLAS CABASILAS, Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, 37.

²⁹⁹ MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, Mystagogy, 21: PG 91, 696.

³⁰⁰ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew, 50, 3: PG 58, 507.