

## March Reflection

### **Reverence in Receiving the Holy Eucharist**

As we continue our reflections on the theme of the Holy Eucharist, we offer you the words of some of the Holy Fathers on how we should approach this great mystery:



St Basil in preparing himself for the reception of the Eucharist prayed:

*... Accept, then, even me, O Lord, Lover of mankind, as you did accept the sinful woman, the thief, the publican, and the prodigal; and take away the heavy burden of my sins, you took away the sin of the world, and healed the infirmities of humankind, Who called the weary and heavy-laden unto yourself and gave them rest, Who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Do cleanse me from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and teach me to achieve holiness in fear of you; that with the pure testimony of my conscience, receiving a portion of your Holy Things, I may be united unto your Holy Body and Blood, and have you living and abiding in me with the Father and your Holy Spirit.*

*Yes, O Lord Jesus Christ my God, let not the communion of your immaculate and life-giving Mysteries be unto me for judgment, neither unto infirmity of soul and body because of my partaking of them unworthily; but grant me until my last breath to receive without condemnation the portion of your Holy Things, unto communion with the Holy Spirit, as a provision for life eternal, for an acceptable defense at your dread judgment seat; so that I also, with all your elect, may become a partaker of your incorruptible blessings, which you have prepared for those who love you, O Lord, in whom you are glorified unto the ages. Amen.*

St. Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 215 AD

*The Body of Christ is meant to be eaten by the faithful, not to be treated with irreverence.*

St. John of Damascus

*Wherefore with all fear and a pure conscience and certain faith let us draw near and it will assuredly be to us as we believe, doubting nothing. Let us pay homage to it in all purity both of soul and body: for it is twofold. Let us draw near to it with an ardent desire, and with our hands held in the form of the cross let us receive the body of the Crucified One: and let us apply our eyes and lips and brows and partake of the divine coal, in order that the fire of the longing, that is in us, with the additional heat derived from the coal may utterly consume our sins and illumine our hearts, and that we may be inflamed and deified by the participation in the divine fire.*

St. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*

*For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."*

In conclusion, let us ever be mindful of whom we are approaching and show in our bodies the reverence and awe we feel in our mind and spirit.