

The Eucharist, the Bread of Life

Give us our bread:

As for that other bread, have no anxiety about it if you have truly resigned yourselves to God's will. I mean that at these hours of prayer you are dealing with more important matters and there is time enough for you to labor and earn your daily bread. Try never at any time to let your thoughts dwell on this; work with your body, for it is good for you to try to support yourselves, but let your soul be at rest. Leave anxiety about this to your Spouse, as has been said at length already, and He will always bear it for you. (W 34,4)

Eucharistic Communion:

For we know that, until the accidents of bread have been consumed by our natural heat, the good Jesus is with us and we should [not lose so good an opportunity but should] come to Him. If, while He went about in the world, the sick were healed merely by touching His clothes, how can we doubt that He will work miracles when He is within us, if we have faith, or that He will give us what we ask of Him since He is in our house? His Majesty is not wont to offer us too little payment for His lodging if we treat Him well. (W 34,8)

Oh, we know not what we ask! How much better does His Wisdom know what we need! He reveals Himself to those who He knows will profit by His presence; though unseen by bodily eyes, He has many ways of revealing Himself to the soul through deep inward emotions and by various other means. Delight to remain with Him; do not lose such an excellent time for talking with Him as the hour after Communion. *Remember that this is a very profitable hour for the soul; if you spend it in the company of the good Jesus, you are doing Him a great service. Be very careful, then, daughters, not to lose it.* If you are compelled by obedience to do something else, try to leave your soul with the Lord. *For He is your Master, and, though it be in a way you may not understand, He will not fail to teach you.* But if you take your thoughts elsewhere, and pay no more attention to Him *than if you had not received Him*, and care nothing for His being within you, how can He make Himself known to you? *You must complain, not of Him, but of yourself.* This, then, is a good time for our Master to teach us and for us to listen to Him. *I do not tell you to say no prayers at all, for if I did you would take hold of my words and say I was talking about contemplation, which you need practice only if the Lord brings you to it. No: you should say the Paternoster, realize that you are verily and indeed in the company of Him Who taught it you and kiss His feet in gratitude to Him for having desired to teach you and beg Him to show you how to pray and never to leave you.* (W34,10)

When you have received the Lord, and are in His very presence, try to shut the bodily eyes and to open the eyes of the soul and to look into your own hearts. I tell you, and tell you again, for I should like to repeat it often, that if you practice this habit of *staying with Him, not just once or twice, but* whenever you communicate, and strive to keep your conscience clear so that you can often rejoice in this your Good, He will not, as I have said, come so much disguised as to be unable to make His presence known to you in many ways, according to the desire which you have of seeing Him. So great, indeed, may be your longing for Him that He will reveal Himself to you completely. (W34,12)

Spiritual Communion:

I have written at length about this, although, when writing of the Prayer of Recollection, I spoke of the great importance of our entering into solitude with God. When you hear Mass without communicating, daughters, you may communicate spiritually, which is extremely profitable, and afterwards you may practice inward recollection in exactly the same way, for this impresses upon us a deep love of the Lord. If we prepare to receive Him, He never fails to give, and He gives in many ways that we cannot understand. It is as if we were to approach a fire: it might be a very large one, but, if we remained a long way from it and covered our hands, we should get little warmth from it, although we should be warmer than if we were in a place where there was no fire at all. But when we try to approach the Lord there is this difference: if the soul is properly disposed, and comes with the intention of driving out the cold, and stays for some time where it is, it will retain its warmth for several hours...(W 35,1)

