



Conversion

Are you perfect? I certainly am not. Though I deeply love Christ, and have committed myself to serving in His name, I am also a sinner in need of ongoing conversion.

Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist is one of the most important sources of that conversion. Unworthy that I am, Christ desires to feed me with His very self and draw me closer to Him. The grace received through the most perfect gift of the Holy Eucharist gives me the strength and desire to follow Him more faithfully.

Some Catholics fall into the understanding that we have to be perfect to receive the Holy Eucharist. However, Pope Francis reminds us that the Holy Eucharist "is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak." Do you remember what our response is prior to receiving the Holy Eucharist? "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." We humbly acknowledge our sinfulness and place our trust in the merciful Lord.

Of course, there are times we have sinned so gravely that we need to do a bit (or perhaps a lot) more work before presenting ourselves at the Eucharistic table. Christ has blessed us with the Sacrament of Reconciliation in which we confess our sins and takes steps to recommit ourselves to Christ and to one another.

This journey of ongoing conversion can be likened to the journey of a couple in marriage. Their wedding day does not signify that a perfect relationship has been established. Though the couple has committed themselves to each other in love, they realize they need to constantly improve their communication, sacrifice themselves more for the other, and be willing to apologize and forgive. This is their "ongoing conversion".

Yes, they will have their disagreements and frustrations with one another, but these won't prevent them from sitting down and eating together. Indeed, those meals will be an opportunity for healing and strengthening their relationship.

Yet, if one of them breaks the bond of trust through infidelity, that person is not going to easily present him or herself at the dinner table. They will need to first begin the arduous task of repentance and sacrifice to prove themselves once again worthy of the trust and love of their spouse.

May all of us be willing to accept the ongoing journey of conversion through the grace of the Holy Spirit, our prayer, and repentant hearts. May Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist nourish and enliven us in our conversion.

Father John Prochaska

Pastor, Saint Joseph the Worker, Berkeley, CA

Parochial Administrator, Saint Ambrose, Berkeley, CA