

MEDITATION II

The Union of the Soul with Jesus in the Holy Communion.



t. Dionysius the Areopagite says that the principal effect of love is to tend to union. For this very purpose did Jesus institute the Holy Communion, that he might unite himself entirely to our souls. He had given himself to us as our master, our example, and our victim; it only remained for him to give himself to us as our food, that he might become one with us; as food becomes one with the person that eats it. This he did by instituting this Sacrament of love: “The last degree of love” (says St. Bernardine of Sienna) “is when he gave himself to us to be our food; because he gave himself to be united with us in every way, as food and he who takes it are mutually united.”

So that Jesus Christ was not satisfied with uniting himself to our human nature ; but he would, by this Sacrament, find a way of uniting himself also to each one of us, so as to make himself wholly one with him who receives him. Hence St. Francis de Sales writes: “In no other action can our Saviour be considered more tender or more loving than in this, in which he, as it were, annihilates himself, and reduces himself to food, that he may penetrate our souls, and unite himself to the hearts of his faithful.” Because Jesus loved us ardently, he desired to unite himself to us in the Holy Eucharist, in order that we might become the same thing with him; thus writes St. Chrysostom: “He mingled himself with us, that we might be one; for this belongs to those who love greatly.”

Thou wouldst, in short, O God of love, that our hearts and Thine should form but one heart. “Thou wouldst that we should have one heart with Thee” said St. Laurence Justinian.

And Jesus himself said this: “He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him.” He, therefore, that communicates, abides in Jesus, and Jesus abides in him; and this union is not of mere affection, but it is a true and real union. “As two wax tapers, when melted,” says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “unite themselves into one, so he that communicates becomes one with Jesus Christ.” Let us, therefore, imagine, when we communicate, that Jesus Christ says to us that which he said one day to his beloved servant, Margaret of Ypres: “Behold, O my daughter, the beautiful union between me and thee; come, then, love me, and let us remain constantly united in love, and never more be separated.”

(The Holy Eucharist – St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori.)