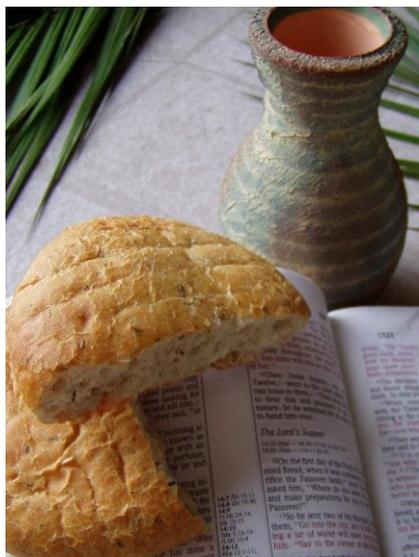


Sermon November 6, 2016 – All Saints Day

## HEALING WORSHIP

### Communion

Various Texts



#### Introduction:

Dear Friends

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Today we observe All Saints’ Day. An occasion to remember and celebrate the believers in Christ! Those believers who not only are now in heaven but that are also members of a very special family, the family of Saints. And to the family of Saints those who are still alive, here today, also belong. But to say we are all saints is really to say that we are members of the family of God as the apostle John puts it straight when he says it in his first letter chapter 3, (1 John 3:1) if anyone would read verse one please: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of

God; and so we are.”

How rich is that?! As you see those saints lived and walked among us, but now are resting from their labors, for that is where God is leading us here and now, those who are left behind, they, the saints gone before us are already there, ahead of us.

But do you know how those saints made it through their journey on earth? Well as with any journey, getting the right nourishment. A nourishment that is heavenly in nature. You know where I’m going with this, don’t you? You got it right communion.

That’s the focus of our meditation this morning on this All Saints day and as continue with our theme Series on Healing worship.

Communion is another important element in worship in the Christian Church as we read in the book of acts ([Acts 2:42](#)) chapter 2 if anyone could please read verse 42: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Now, You and I agree that it is important to know what we are doing and what why we are doing it, especially when it comes to the reason of our worship.

In fact, as we have learned all through these few weeks, Worship begins with God, it begins with his actions as he comes to us bringing healing of the soul. Worship is not something we initiate but it is our response to God’s goodness. And today again we see God’s goodness in the gift of Holy Communion, or the Sacrament of the Altar.

It is my prayer and my desire that as we continue with this series you will have a fresh outlook and a renewed appreciation for our liturgy and our worship services, especially on the gift of Jesus body and blood that nourish the saints while God leads us to heaven, nourishment that comes in the form of his body and his blood, through and under bread and wine.

#### I. Sacraments are God’s mystery and miracle.

Sacrament of the Altar, or as we commonly known as Holy Communion, is a sacrament. Do you know what a sacrament is? A sacrament is a sacred act, a holy act, that God has established through which God gives us his grace, his blessings, his gifts.

Now, through this Sacrament, through this holy act of Communion, we behold nothing less than a mystery and a miracle, a miracle for his children, his baptized children. Those who have been baptized, those who are connected to God through simple water with the power of his Word and are walking in the new life that God gives, reflecting their status as God's children throughout each day of life on this earth, until God calls them into what we call the triumphant church, that is the church that is already in heaven, joining all the saints who are there already, and whose memory we recollect today.

In Holy Communion, we celebrate the miracle of Christ's real presence among us, presence in his body with and under the bread, and in his blood, with and under the wine. Yes both are physical elements, bread and wine, but how can that be? A miracle? After all what we put in our mouths are just bread and wine.

The miracle happens because of Jesus words, the words he spoke when he established the sacred act. You remember the words? Mathew records those words in chapter 26, (Mt 26:26) if somebody would please read verse 26: "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

Did you hear that? Jesus said "This is my body." He didn't say it's a symbol to remember him by, but he said "this is my body." Given for you, given to die on a cross, in sacrifice for us, for our sins!

Communion is also the miracle of his blood. Yes the wine we drink is just wine, or is it, because here Jesus also speaks his word, if anyone would read verses 27 and 28 of the same (Mt 26:27) chapter 26 of Mathew: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

If it looks like wine and tastes like wine and smells like wine, it must be wine, and so it is. But because Jesus spoke those words, indeed the wine brings about the blood of Jesus Christ. That same blood that flowed freely from his head as a crown of thorns was placed on his head, from his hands and feet as he was nailed to the cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

## **II. When we partake of the body of Christ, we, too, are brought together into the Body of Christ.**

Now, here is where many have a problem with Holy Communion, many think it's a symbol, not really Christ body and blood, but Jesus wants and desires that we take Christ's words at face value because that's how he desires to be present in us, in a real way, through bread and wine.

Yes, it's hard to understand that he is there, but it doesn't depend on our understanding but on his promise that he will be there through bread and wine, body and blood. That's the miracle, Christ comes to us!

But here is another beauty of the miracle when you and I eat and drink we become one with Jesus, for we take his body and blood, we can't deny that fact.

As you see God's Word cannot be denied. Hear what the apostle Paul writes, if somebody would please read (1 Corinthians 10:16): "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

But bread and Christ's body, and wine and Christ's blood, is not all that come together in this holy meal. There is more to that miracle. If somebody else would please read verse 17 (1 Corinthians 10:17): of the same chapter of 1 Corinthians 10: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread"

We are the Body of Christ gathered in this place, brought together and bound together by God's grace, making us a communion of saints, not just a community, but a communion, that enjoying an intimate fellowship with one another and with Christ, one with Christ.

And coming together as an intimate fellowship is also act of worship for God has pleasure at our coming together in unity, and we do respond in worship and to the praise of his name as we celebrate that unity of faith each time we gather together around the altar of sacrifice and Sacrament.

Remember that rejoices over you when we are together, he said it through the prophet (Zephaniah 3:17) Zephaniah: "The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."

### **III. The Sacrament of the Altar calls for personal preparation.**

Now as sweet and wonderful as those words sound, we need to keep in mind that the one inviting us to be one with him is Holy, his words are true, therefore the sacrament of the Altar, Holy Communion, is not something we treat lightly, because there are consequences if we do. Here is what the scriptures tell us, from (1 Cor. 11:29) 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and is anyone would read verse 29: "For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself."

Perhaps these words are too severe, too threatening, not loving at all. But let's face it, God is holy and we are not, he is light and we know what light does, it dispels any darkness, but to be in sin is to be in darkness. And if we are in darkness when taking his body and blood, well you know what happens. But we confess our sins the same light will dispel darkness from us, in the way of the forgiveness of our sins, because that's what Communion does, it brings about the forgiveness of sins. That's why we are to prepare and receive this Sacrament with fear and anticipation, in worship but also trembling repentance because what you are receiving is nothing less than Jesus body and blood, God almighty himself.

Therefore let's watch that none of us receives this Sacrament lightly or casually. This meal is sacred, holy. Our very Lord serves as host and we are the Lord's invited guests—invited to receive the assurance of total and absolute forgiveness of sins. We need to prepare our minds and our hearts, our lives and our faith, therefore, to meet our God. Thus, Paul asks us to "examine" ourselves as he writes in his letter to the Corinthians, if somebody would please read: (1 Corinthians 11:28): "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup."<sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement on himself.

<sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."

Prepare yourself—by the power of the Holy Spirit working within you—prepare yourself; your mind, your heart, your will. Begin by asking and answering in fervent faithful prayer, “Am I heartily sorry for my sins and do I sincerely repent of them? Known and unknown?” Yes, I confess those sins. Then, “Do I believe that my sins are forgiven solely and singularly through the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ on the cross of Calvary?” Yes, I believe in Christ’s forgiveness of sins through the cross and the open tomb. Finally, “Do I in faith acknowledge the real presence of bread and the body and wine and the blood of Christ in this Sacrament?” Yes, in faith I do so acknowledge the real presence.

### **Conclusion**

Today, dear friends, we do give thanks to God for the Saints who are now in Heaven. We do give thanks to God for their testimony of faith, for what God did for them, saving them, nourishing them through Holy Communion, the miracle of his real presence in us and among us.

It does us good to emulate, to copy, the saints’ faithful obedience in the reception, in taking Jesus words at faith value, coming to us in Communion.

We do have a great and marvelous miracle in front of our eyes every time we gather for communion. We marvel at God’s sustaining and nourishing gifts through his body and blood, through bread and wine that keep sustaining us fighting the good fight, so we can endure, so we can stand strong at the face of the strong winds that come our way, both spiritually and even physically, and they one day it will be our turn to join the triumphant church where we will see our loved ones who died in the faith, there eternally worship God in the majesty of his glory.

Until then, keep on feeding, keep on praising his name, keep on wining!  
In his name, amen.