

When I was a kid, without giving it a whole lot of thought, we used to speak of “going to communion.” It amounted to leaving one’s pew at “communion time” to get the wafer. If that sounds crude, how’s this: we were always interested when the Church gave out stuff: ashes on Ash Wednesday, palms on Palm Sunday, and “communion,” alas, at every Mass. So much for the commodification of the liturgy.

Who knew that “going to communion” had untold depths of meaning? Of all the theological developments that helped prepare the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council, the restoration and subsequent enrichment of the understanding of communion was of the first order of importance. There was, to begin with, the connection between communion and life. The biblical teaching is oriented in this direction: where there is life rich in relationship, there is found life in the full. Where there is isolation, life seeps away.

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