



Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 22, 2023

THE STRENGTH OF THIS SAVING FOOD

The closing prayer for today's Mass asks God to increase in us "the fruits of this paschal Sacrament and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food."

The Eucharist as a source of strength. This is a repeated theme in the prayers of the *Roman Missal*, wherein the Eucharist is described as "strength for the weak,"¹ the Bread of Life which "restores our strength,"² and gives us "strength to face future trials with fortitude."³ The Eucharist strengthens concord,⁴ unity and peace⁵ and the love of husband and wife for each other.⁶

Strengthened by the blessing of your Sacraments, we pray, O Lord, that through them we may constantly be cleansed of our faults and, by following Christ, hasten our steps upward toward you.⁷

Jesus' remarkable prayer for Saint Peter at the Last Supper sheds light on the Eucharist as a source of strength. At the end of the meal, he says: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren,"⁸ Jesus' prayer for Simon is that through the Eucharist he has just received, the sharing in the Lord's Paschal dying and rising, he may be strong.

Jesus prays for us as well, and offers us a share in the same Eucharist through which he prayed that Saint Peter might be strengthened. He prays that the Eucharist may become for him "strength for those who are weary, worn-out and bewildered."⁹ Thus, in the words of our beloved Pope Emeritus, "by participating in the Eucharist, we experience in an extraordinary manner the prayer that Jesus prayed and prays ceaselessly for every person so that the evil which we all encounter in life may not get the upper hand and that the transforming power of Christ's death and Resurrection may act within us."

When we celebrate the Eucharist, then, in memory of the Lord, we are united to his prayer and with his Paschal Sacrifice, offered for our salvation.

¹ Prayer after Communion, Mass for the Dead.

² Prayer after Communion from Masses for Various Needs: For Giving Thanks.

³ Prayer after Communion from Masses for Various Needs: In any Need B.

⁴ Prayer over the Offerings from Masses for Various Needs: For the Preservation of Peace and Justice.

⁵ Prayer after Communion from Masses for Various Needs: For Holy Church PAC.

⁶ Prayer after Communion, For the Celebration of Marriage.

⁷ Prayer after Communion, Fifth Week of Lent.

⁸ Lk 22:31-32.

⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, 11 January 2012.