



ALL THINGS NEW

STEADFAST IN FAITH • FORWARD IN HOPE



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by the Body and Blood of Christ,
Source of Our Healing and Hope

EUCCHARISTIC REFLECTION

HOLY COMMUNION

My brother died 10 years ago and everyday I feel closer to him than I did when he was living. The daily Eucharist unites me in a deep way with him. The death of a close relative or friend can hit us hard. We cherished their presence when they were alive and their death leaves an unfortunate void in our lives.

However, while death separates us in a physical way, it's not the end. There is hope found in the Eucharist.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains why we call the Eucharistic celebration "holy communion."

Holy Communion, because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body. (CCC 1331)

Furthermore, the *Catechism* goes on to expand on this reality, stating that the "Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead."

The worthy reception of Holy Communion at Mass unites us to Jesus Christ, and by doing so, unites us to everyone who is in union with him. This includes all the saints in heaven, not simply the "canonized" ones recognized by the Church, but all the deceased individuals who have been purified by Christ's love.



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Jan Wakelin at [Catholic Answers](#) explains this dimension of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist also unites heaven and earth. Many who have lost a loved one may experience closeness to that person after receiving Communion or while in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. These feelings may be a result of a deep theological awareness that those who died in grace are alive in Christ; thus our nearness to Christ in the Eucharist brings us nearer to them as well.

On this side of the veil, we do not know for certain if a beloved relative or friend is united with Christ in Heaven. They may have had to experience a period of purgation in the afterlife, before being able to walk through the gates of Heaven. Others we know may have led a virtuous life and died a beautiful death, united to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Regardless of who is in Heaven, in the Eucharist we are united in a spiritual way to countless people who have died. In this way, we are closer to them than we would have been when they were alive. It is a mysterious theological truth, but one that can give us comfort in this “vale of tears.”

The Eucharist is a foretaste of that heavenly banquet, when we will be united to Jesus and those in Heaven in a way that we cannot fathom here on earth. It gives us hope that one day, we will be reunited with our beloved friend, parent, spouse or child.

Death does not have the final say. Jesus has conquered death and has provided a place for us and our loved ones to live in love and peace for all eternity.