

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

By [+Rev. Msgr. Vincent Nicholas Foy](#) (August 14, 1915 – March 13, 2017)

Sermon preached on May 16, 1943

"Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come to Me." (Mt. 19:14)

Part 1: The Love of Christ for Children

One of the most familiar scenes Gospel scenes to us all, a scene that is often painted, a scene we often see in stained glass windows in our churches, is that of Christ in the midst of a group of children. We know that Christ in the midst of a group of children was a frequent occurrence in Christ's life. It was a most natural thing.

The children were attracted to Christ because **He possessed every attractive quality**. They were attracted by His appearance, by His kindly manner, by the softness of His voice, by the music of His speech, by His free and easy manner, by His sincerity and simplicity. When talking with them, He became one of them. **Christ was also attracted by them**.

Christ was attracted to them not so much by their fresh appearance, their sparkling eyes and bright smiles, as by the freshness and brightness of their souls. He was attracted to them because of their innocence, their purity, their simplicity and their humility. He was attracted to them because of their beauty of soul — because their souls were not yet stained or marked or flawed or marred or deformed or disfigured by sin.

To see Christ in the midst of a group of children is to make evident why Christ was later to be in the hands of the Roman soldiers and the murderous leaders of the Jews. It explains the crowning of thorns, the beating at the pillar, the insults, that cuts, the bruises, the carrying of the cross. All the agony of the passion is the result of Christ's love for children — children in body and children in spirit, for Christ has told us that unless we become as little children we shall not enter into the Kingdom of God.

So, heaven is only for children, children in body and children in spirit. A picture of heaven is really but the reenactment of Christ under the skies and trees of Palestine in the middle of a group of happy children.

Part 2: Christ Shows His Love for Children This Morning

In a most special manner, Christ is showing His love for children this morning. A group of children in this church, after careful preparation by teachers and parents, are going to receive their first Holy Communion. **This is their First Holy Communion Day!**

First Holy Communion Day means that this should be the happiest day of their lives, because they are going to receive the greatest gift God ever gave to men - Himself. It means that Christ is going to mingle with these children in a much **more intimate** way than He did with the children He gathered around Him in the fields and streets and roads of the Holy Land, for this morning they're going to receive Christ into their hearts.

It means that Christ is going to be met by these children in a much more **effective** way this morning, because while children contemporary with Christ on earth received Christ's blessing and physical company, the children here are going to receive not only Christ, but the grace of Christ merited by the death of Christ on Calvary's cross. They are going to receive into their hearts the same Christ whom Mary held to her heart in the stable of Bethlehem, the same Christ who as a boy of six and seven and eight, like the children here, played and laughed in the streets of Nazareth, the same Christ who cured the lame, the blind, the lepers and mute of Palestine. The same Christ who said at the Paschal supper on the eve of His passion "This is My body." The same Christ whose blood spattered the dungeon of Pilate's palace, whose blood reddened the streets of Jerusalem on the way to Calvary, whose blood dripped from the body of Jesus on the cross, and all to make occasions such as this morning possible.

So, on this happy occasion, we rejoice with the children on their First Communion Day. We congratulate them and their parents and teachers, and we ask them to pray that with God's grace they will preserve their souls in sinlessness; we ask them to resolve that they will often come to the Altar rail to meet Christ again in Holy Communion.

Part 3: We Must Be Like Little Children

For all of us this morning, those who made their First Communion only a few years ago, and those who made it so long ago that it seems to have taken place in another world, the picture of the children receiving this morning at the Altar rail should teach us a two-fold lesson.

It should recall and impress in our minds the words of Christ Himself: "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God." There is no choice in the matter. If we are to save our souls we must become **children in soul**. We are not wise to seek worldly wisdom. We will have no happiness or peace if we seek sinful worldly pleasures; we must cultivate the simple virtues of innocence, humility, and charity. And if our souls have lost their childlike innocence, we must restore them to freshness and piety by contrition, Confession, and a purpose of amendment. This is the way in which we can become children in soul again.

A second resolution we should impress firmly on our minds today is that to receive Christ frequently in the Holy Eucharist. He is always waiting for us if we will go to Him. Our First Communion is meant to be the beginning of a long list of meetings with our Saviour in the sacrament

of His love. Frequent Communion is a way to recapture the happiness of our first Holy Communion. It is a way to obtain a share in the streams of grace that have been poured out to man ever since the Blood of Christ stopped pouring from His wounds. It is an efficacious way to become children in spirit again.

So, we rejoice this morning with these children who are going up to taste for the first time the flesh and blood of their God and Saviour and we resolve that we also will follow them often to receive the Bread of angels and food of our souls.

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[Msgr. Foy's handwritten notes](#) were typed by the [Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration Inc.](#) on April 6, 2026.

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After a long day working at the chancery offices, Msgr. Foy would travel far to be the guest preacher at Forty Hour devotions with exposition at parishes. He was a co-founder and director of [this charity, which assists parishes with expanding Eucharistic and perpetual adoration](#). Msgr. Foy is known as the longest ordained and oldest diocesan priest in the history of the Archdiocese of Toronto and the longest ordained Anglophone diocesan priest in the history of Canada. Worldwide, four served longer.

Many thanks to [Catholic Insight](#) for publishing this sermon