Hey, friends, Beth Davis here, and it's my pleasure to be with you on this Eucharistic retreat to help you to grow in devotion to Jesus in the most blessed sacrament. And today, I'm excited to share with you the nourishing effects, the power of receiving Holy Communion regularly. Why should we receive the Eucharist regularly?

The Best Meal Ever

Well, to begin, let me tell you about my very favorite meal, the best meal I've ever had in my life. It was on a beach in Hawaii, but it's not what you think. You're probably thinking, I was at some resort and I had all this gorgeous spread with these courses, and the weather was beautiful and the company was extraordinary. But no, it was just me on my beach towel eating a hot dog from a vendor up in the parking lot before you came down to the beach, drinking a Pepsi. I don't even like Pepsi, at the time, I was a diet Coke girl and a bag of Lay's potato chips, the best meal I have ever had in my life.

Why? Well, let me give you a bit of context. I had been out in these gorgeous crystal clear waters in Oahu, and I was snorkeling, and I was so taken with the beauty of this undersea world that I totally lost track of time. And I had the sunburn on my back to prove it. I had snorkel out quite a ways, to where the reef dropped off. And I watched for what felt like no time at all, but turned out to be, quite a long time. I watched, a giant sea turtle just going about its day eating, chomping. I could even hear it, its little beak kind of, eating away at the algae on the rocks and then swimming up to the surface for some air, going back down. I was so taken by this. I'd never seen anything like it, I was swept away in the magic and the beauty of God's creation.

And by the time I tore myself away from this scene and ended up back on the beach, a lot of time had passed, and I suddenly realized I was starving. Absolutely famish. You know how it is when you're in the sun and the water, and it just drains you and your, your hunger increases. And I sat down. My friends had had brought me back, they'd finished lunch long ago. They'd brought me back, this hot dog and a Pepsi, and a bag of Lay's potato chips, and the taste of that hot dog, the saltiness of those chips, the sweetness of the soda. It was everything in that moment. It was the cherry on top of the most gorgeous day.

It was so satisfying. It was maybe not, nourishing in the traditional sense, but it, it got me what I needed. It got me some fuel to keep going, to keep exploring, to hike back up to the car. It was a moment of pure bliss there on that beach. And the thing is, as we've already discussed here, it wasn't because of the food that was my favorite meal of all time. It was because I was really hungry, like really, really hungry. And remember, I didn't even know how hungry I was. But we're only satisfied like that when we're truly hungry, when we're aware of how hungry we are. And the same is true of the spiritual life.
Pray More Eucharistic Retreat Transcript

How Is Your Hunger and Desire for God?

We're only satisfied in God, satisfied by reception of Holy Communion when we have an appetite for Him. We only crave Him when we develop this appetite for God and for the things of God. When we begin to hunger for more of Him to know Him and, and thirst, for His love, that hunger and thirst for God can really be translated desire. So let me ask you, how is your hunger? How is your desire? Be really honest with yourself for a moment. Do you allow yourself to really long for, to hunger and thirst for God Himself?

Exodus 16:2

You know, who knows a thing or two about hunger? Who can maybe lead the way in this discussion? The Israelites. The Israelites, know about hunger. If you go all the way back to Exodus chapter sixteen, I want to share with you just the opening verses of a very famous scene in the Exodus story. This is Exodus sixteen, verse two. "The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, if only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots and ate our fill of bread, for you, have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

They thought they were going to die of hunger. Now, I don't know how long this trek really was, but it's, pretty early in the Exodus narrative. It's pretty soon after God has just miraculously delivered them out of slavery. Out of the hands of the Egyptians, parted the Red Sea allowed them to cross through it. God has been leading them with a pillar of fire by night, a pillar of cloud by day. He has been providing for them all along. And yet here they are hungry, hangry, really, if we're honest, they're getting pretty hangry and they forget God. They forget all that God has ever done. Maybe you're like that too. When you're hungry, they forget who God is. They forget all that God has done. They begin to complain against God and doubt the leaders doubt the whole plan of God, all because their hunger is out of whack.

And what does God do? He responds to that hunger. God gives them their fill of bread, just as they described this provision, that they knew the steadiness of their meals, even when they were in slavery. They preferred the, steadiness and the security of those meals that came their flesh, pot and, and their fill of bread. And so God gives it to them. God Himself provides for them. Manna by day and, meat in the evening. God Himself provides the food that they need morning and night. And you and I, we are hungry like that too.

Are You Aware of Your Spiritual Hunger?

I would venture to say many of us are spiritually hangry like that. Now, we're aware of our physical hunger much more than we are of our spiritual hunger. I think many of us stuff or numb our spiritual hunger with distraction or entertainment or honestly, food, wine, alcohol. But we need more than physical nourishment. We know that, which is why we're over consuming, why we're overindulging, why we're distracting ourselves. Because all we know in the tangible and the natural is this physical hunger. But this physical hunger, this drive, this desire we're feeling is
actually revealing a much deeper spiritual hunger. And our souls can only be nourished by God. It's God alone who satisfies.

I Am The Bread of Life

Now, in the Old Testament, God feeds His people, the Israelites himself. He feeds them from His own hand, He provides. But in the New Testament, in the New Testament, He levels it up. He's even more generous, more self-giving. In the New Testament, He doesn't only provide for their physical hunger, supernaturally provide for their physical hunger. In the New Testament, He feeds them with Himself. This is Jesus, In John chapter six, "I am the bread of life." Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I'm the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh, is my flesh. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Jesus is offering us both physical, tangible, nourishment and spiritual nourishment. He's offering us His very own flesh. The life of God, the living God, we consume as food to satisfy, to nourish us, both physically and spiritually. And friends, we need this nourishment every day, just like we need physical food, nourishment every day. We need to be spiritually nourished every single day. And so I want to encourage you to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, in Holy Communion regularly.

Don’t Miss Out on Daily Mass

And I can tell you this from a very, tender and, passionate place. I'm convicted of this truth because I've been going to daily mass for a little over three years now. And honestly, in all vulnerability, I can't believe it took me this long. For the many, many years that I was in full time ministry. I might go to daily mass, but I didn't have a spiritual discipline of daily mass the way I do now. And I don't want you to miss out on all of the graces that God desires to give. He's pouring Himself out, wanting to give us Himself, to feed us with Himself, to satisfy our every need, to give us all the help, the heavenly help that we so desperately need. It's available to us every single day in the most blessed sacrament at daily mass. So I don't want you to miss it.

The Effects of Holy Communion

And let me share with you some of the reasons, some of the effects of receiving Holy Communion regularly. With every reception of Holy Communion, the Eucharist unites us ever more intimately to Christ. This communion with Jesus is the principle fruit of Holy Communion. So first and foremost, we become one with Jesus. Our intimate love and union with Him is strengthened every time we receive Him in Holy Communion. Now, if you're curious, you can read more about this particular effect of Holy Communion and all the rest that I'm going to share, you can read them for yourself, pray with them. Meditate upon God's generosity, you can find this in the Catechism paragraphs 1391 to 1401.
A Way To Increase Our Virtues

Okay, so what else if that weren't enough, that our union with Jesus is strengthened, that our love for Jesus is strengthened. What else? Well, it preserves, increases and renews the life of grace in us, which we received at our baptism. So just as, physical material food nourishes us to grow physically, the Eucharist provides essential nourishment so that we can grow in our spiritual lives. It separates us from sin strengthening us in charity. Listen to this 1394 "As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life."

Well, what a relief. It's not just me. Our charity tends to be weakened in daily life. So we need to be strengthened, We need to be sustained. And God has given us this nourishment in the Eucharist. It goes on to say this, "Living charity wipes away venial sins by giving Himself to us. Christ revives our love, and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in Him." Honestly, I put these notes together and I'm ready to go do a Holy Hour right now that moves me so much, the gratitude that I feel for God, because I need help. I need forgiveness for my venial sins. I need my charity to be strengthened, it's so weak. It preserves us from future mortal sin, I want this.

Receiving the Eucharist increases our virtue. And friends, we can't do this alone. We can't be who God's calling us to be. Jesus Himself says, be perfect. Therefore, as the heavenly Father is perfect, what chance do we have without God? We're so weak, I am so weak. And so He gives me Himself. Himself, the perfect one comes to perfect virtue, charity in me.

This reception of holy communion commits us to the poor. It makes us more sensitive to our brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor. I think it similarly, it makes us more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, to his, direction to his promptings in our daily life. It drives away demonic activity. There's so much going on in the world, so much coming at us, especially for those of us who are striving to live a moral Christian life, a life of joy. And there's a heaviness, there's a burden just to living in this fallen world. Receiving the Eucharist strengthens us, restores our joy, drives a way that spiritual warfare.

The Eucharist Makes the Church

And finally, the last one I'll share with you is that it brings about unity in the church. "The Eucharist makes the church." The catechism says that's paragraph 1396. When we're united to Christ in the Eucharist, we're also united more closely to members of the mystical body, His mystical body, the church, the sacrament. That is the sign of unity and the bond of charity. That's what Saint Augustine calls. It also inspires us to pray more fervently for the unity of all Christians, just as Christ Himself prayed on the night He instituted the sacrament.

So this sacrament brings about the greatest desire. The high priestly prayer that Jesus prays in John is realized in the most Holy Eucharist. Can we give Him what He wants? Can we give Him what He wants? Can, can we dispose ourselves hungry as we are, weak as we are desperate and needy and thirsty as we are? Can we dispose ourselves to receive Him because it's his desire to, he wants to feed us, to nourish us, to satisfy us, to love us.
Turning to Prayer

Have you ever noticed that mass is around meal times? This is something I've become aware of in recent months, and I've tried all the mass times. If you are going to daily mass and you're committed to one time, bravo. But I have to hop around depending on my schedule. And so I've tried, you know, six thirty in the morning, Eight thirty in the morning, I've tried noon masses. I go on my lunch break, I try to go after work. And oftentimes, because masses typically happen around meal times today, for instance, I went to a noon mass on my lunch break. And because I had meetings after I didn't get to eat lunch. So I was very hungry going to mass. And I've started turning that into a prayer.

Instead of being distracted, maybe you can relate to this. You're at Sunday mass and you find here kind of daydreaming about where you're going to have brunch or what you're going to cook for dinner. I think our mind naturally, sort of travels, wanders to food as an expression of this spiritual hunger that we're experiencing. We just are translating it in a natural way rather than in a supernatural way. And so, as I'm at daily mass, and, and I'm tempted to think about, okay, when can I eat lunch? Or how am I going to get to dinner on time before this next thing? Instead of trying to, you know, work my schedule and make plans, I just simply look at Jesus. I look at Him on the altar and I say, I'm hungry. I just pray those words. Jesus, I'm hungry because I am physically hungry and He will physically feed me with His body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist. But He does more than that. He's making me aware of my deep spiritual hunger. My thirst for His love might need for nourishment that nothing else on earth will satisfy but Him.

A Thirst For You

So I've made that my prayer. Jesus, I'm hungry. And if you are hungry too, let Him nourish you. Let Him feed you with Himself. Let Him satisfy you with His body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist. Go to Jesus in daily mass, maybe it's just one extra mass a week, one daily mass throughout the week. But would you give Him what he wants? Give Him a drink. Those are His words to the woman at the well. In John four, she has the bucket, of course, but He's speaking again of a deeper thirst, a deeper need from the heart of God. Jesus is expressing His thirst for her. And, and by extension, He's expressing His thirst for you. Jesus wants to feed you because He thirsts for you. Jesus wants to feed you because He's hungry for you. So go to daily mass and give Him what He wants. Give Him yourself and He will give you everything.

Closing Prayer

Let's pray. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Precious Lord, generous God, living water, thank you, thank you, thank you for the most Holy Eucharist. Thank you for giving us yourself, for holding nothing back. Thank you that you go first in your hunger and in your thirst. And it's your hunger and thirst that draw us to you, that draw out our own hunger and thirst.

Jesus, I pray for through reception of the Eucharist, through, your sanctifying grace, active in us, that you would reorder and write order all disordered attachments, especially to food, God, to anything that we're replacing, that we're stuffing or numbing Lord.
And God, would you even now, would you draw out that desire for food that lasts for true food, for your flesh? It gives us eternal life. I want to pray, move mountains so people can come to you in daily mass. But Lord, I have a sense you're just going to make it easy. Might just be a simple shift, leaving a little earlier, staying a little later. But God, make a way. Make a way as you draw our hunger and thirst, God, make a way to satisfy it with yourself.

Thank you, Jesus. We pray this in your Holy and precious name, Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. God bless you, friends.