

There's an envied demographic in society that's likely to experience more physical, mental and financial problems than the average American, can you guess which demographic? Survey says: Lottery winners! Three to five years after winning a lottery, these so called "winners" will be several times more likely to be bankrupt than the average American with all the stress, heartache, and physical maladies that come with this. When I first learned about this, it made me curious. If winning the lottery will most likely make a person unhappy in comparison to others in society, what kind of occupations make people happier than most? This was easy to research and with all the studies I saw, being a priest is very high on the list of occupations that report the most happiness. That made me smile. And so, you kids out there, take note! Religious sisters and priests are typically happier people than most. However, when it comes to happiness, just about any occupation that genuinely serves others, or is part of a team, or makes the community, family or world a better place will make for happier people than those who go through life seeking personal fame or serving themselves. We know this to be true. There seems to be two ways of going about life. There are people who live for "me" and people who live for "we". The people who live for "we" tend to be happier. This brings us to the word "communion".

The Eucharist- the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus freely given to us for our wellbeing and nourishment. We call the time when we receive the Eucharist "communion". When we receive the Eucharist, we're communing with our Lord, welcoming His Body and Blood to be become part of our body and blood. We do this in remembrance of Jesus and His passion, death and resurrection for our salvation. And we do so NOT in isolation. When we receive Christ, we're to be Christ as members of the Body of Christ. We commune together. As community we're called to be a communion of saints. We're citizens of the Kingdom of God. We're in this together. It's good that we're considering the word "communion" because the culture in which we live promotes a lot of false communions out there. For example, do you want to know what might lead you to depression quicker than winning the lottery? Evidently, too much social media! I don't have to cite you any studies. They're all over the internet. People who spend more time on social media than the average person tend to suffer from more depression than others and are more likely to engage in self destructive behaviors as well. Why? It's because social media is impersonal and basically fake. You can't really commune with someone through a post, or a text, but you can gradually become more envious of other people's lives while becoming more dissatisfied with your own. And it's all a lie. The truth is, when we increase screen time at the expense of real human interaction, this is a recipe for loneliness. It's false communion. It's too much "me" time when what we really need more of is "we" time. I find it ironic that when I go out to a restaurant with a friend or group of friends how often we see at least one couple or family sitting nearby around a table all staring at their screens. This is false communion. Turn off your devices and start communing with the people around you. You'll be happier for it. It's amazing how many channels people stare at for hours, the video games people can spend entire nights playing, and all the web sites people addictively surf for hours on end. Instead of seeking holy relationships, people turn to chat threads, blog posts, porn, and it's all false communion. It's fake, leading people into isolation, loneliness, and sin. It's bad for the soul. And I know we understand this. Why? Because we came to Church today. Your presence here demonstrates your understanding that a relationship with God can never just be a "me and Jesus" show. Coming to Church reminds us that my life isn't about me but something bigger. Life is about "we". Life calls us to communion with our family, co-workers, friends, neighbors, and community, not with our devices. Life calls us to communion with Jesus who loves us in a way this culture never can or ever will. Life calls us to communion with Jesus who never saw His own life as being about Him but rather saw His life as being all about us. Life calls us to communion.