

Spiritual Communion

During this time of separation from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and from Holy Communion, let us be reminded of the Church's tradition of practicing Spiritual Communion.

Spiritual Communion is defined by the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the [Holy Sacrament](#) and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.” Spiritual Communion is recommended to Catholics who cannot receive Sacramental Holy Communion because of extenuating circumstances: the current situation of suspended Masses due to the coronavirus pandemic, Catholics who have no access to Holy Communion due to being homebound because of age or infirmity, those living in isolated areas where there is no priest available to celebrate the Mass and provide Holy Communion regularly, those who cannot present themselves for Holy Communion due to being in a state of mortal sin, military personnel at home or abroad who have no Catholic priest-chaplain available, prisoners, and anyone who is deprived of Holy Communion for any reason.

Spiritual Communion is achieved by forming a deep spiritual desire to be united with Jesus (in communion with Jesus) even though at this time one cannot receive Him actually in Eucharistic Communion. It is usually accompanied by the intention to be united with Jesus until one can receive Him in the Holy Eucharist, and by reciting a prayer of Spiritual Communion expressing this ardent desire for that union.

One of the more famous prayers of Spiritual Communion (there are others) is that given to us by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

*My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.*

Many of the great saints, as well as not so famous Catholics, practiced making Spiritual Communion throughout their daily routines in anticipation of receiving Holy Communion at Mass the next day. They would unite themselves in spiritual communion with Jesus in between the times they actually received Him in Sacramental Communion. In this way they were able to maintain union with Christ between their receptions of the Sacrament. So, even after we restore the celebration of public Masses, hopefully in the very near future, Spiritual Communion is a practice we can continue to help us remain one with the Lord throughout our days.

I hope to see you all soon around the altar, assisting at Holy Mass as you've done so faithfully in the past before the health protocols. Till then, may God guide, govern and protect us and console us in this time of testing, fear and pain.

God be with you,

Fr. Bart