

RECEIVING COMMUNION IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Communion in the Catholic Church is both a personal and a corporate event:

Mass is **personal**. When you receive communion in the Catholic Church, you are stating you personally believe Jesus comes to you through the Eucharist. Communion not only symbolizes Jesus or is just His spiritual presence; by receiving the host and the cup, you receive all of Christ - His Flesh and Blood - under the appearance of bread and wine. We call that the *Real Presence* of Christ.

Mass is **corporate**. When you receive communion in the Catholic Church, you are stating you are a Catholic in fellowship with the Pope, the Bishop of Rome *and everything that implies* regarding communion and all other practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Personally recognizing the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is important, but you must also be a practicing member of the Catholic Church in order to commune.

If you cannot receive communion because of your personal understanding of the Eucharist or your lack of corporate fellowship with Rome at this time, we still acknowledge you as precious in God's sight. Please come forward during communion to receive a special blessing by placing your hands across your chest when you reach the front of the communion line. Communion includes not only receiving the Eucharist, but is also open to the many ways Jesus Christ comes to us: in prayer and blessings, in song, through the words of the person next to us, by Scripture and homily ("sermon").

RECEIVING COMMUNION WELL

Catholics who are conscious of grave (serious) sin are not to receive communion without sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, one should make an act of perfect contrition (ask God's forgiveness out of love for God with a willingness to turn from the sin) and then go to confession as soon as possible after Mass. (Note: Father is always glad to hear your confession before Mass if time permits.)

(Bulletin insert:)

If you are not a practicing Catholic, we invite you to come forward to receive a special blessing during Communion. Please place your hands across your chest when you are at the front of the communion line. For more information on receiving communion, see the front cover of your missalette in the pew rack.