

Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion

The Church around the world is reminded of the great gift we receive in the Eucharist. Augustine once said: “no one eats that flesh unless he adores it”. The Eucharist is our spiritual food, our strength for the journey of life; it is the promise of eternal life and the real presence of Jesus who promised to stay with us until the end of time. The life of the Church is a calling to gather and celebrate the Eucharist, where we find forgiveness, peace and the love of God for us. In the Eucharist, we learn to offer our lives as a gift to the Father in heaven. Because of the importance of the Eucharist in our life of faith together, it is an opportunity to remember the guidelines for receiving communion for the Catholic faithful:

- Only baptized Catholics who have been catechized and initiated for the Eucharist may receive Holy Communion.
- Catholics are required to fast for one hour prior to receiving communion, which means we do not eat or drink anything, with exceptions for water and medicine.
- Catholics are required to receive communion at least once in the year during the Easter season, unless serious circumstances such as illness prevent them.
- In order to be open to the graces received in the Eucharist, the faithful are required to go to private confession with a priest at least once a year, and especially for the forgiveness of any mortal sins as needed.
- Participate in the communion hymn to the best of your ability.
- Bow your head prior to receiving communion as a sign of reverence and respect for the presence of the Lord in the sacrament.
- The priest, deacon or minister will offer the host to you and say “The Body of Christ”. The response is “Amen”.
- You may receive the consecrated bread in the mouth or in the hand.
- If you receive communion in the hand, and you are right-handed: place your left hand on top of your right hand, palms facing up. The host of consecrated bread will be placed in your left hand, step to the side to consume the host and use your right hand to bring it to your mouth.
- People who are left-handed should reverse the order of hands listed above, beginning with the right hand on top of their left, etc.
- If you receive communion on the tongue, keep your hands folded together low on your sternum, respond “Amen”, open your mouth and put your tongue out comfortably to receive the host.
- You may receive the consecrated wine as well. The minister will offer it to you saying “The Blood of Christ”, and you respond “Amen”.
- If you are receiving the sacrament from the cup, you should carefully use your dominant hand, left or right, to take the cup firmly in your grip. Take a small sip of the Precious Blood and carefully return it to the minister to make sure there is no chance of spilling the contents.
- Reverently return to your seat and, as best you can, spend time in quiet prayer, reflection and singing the hymn in gratitude to the Lord for the gift of his love and his presence in the Eucharist.

May we renew the faith we have received through the sacraments of the Church. Please keep each other in prayer during Mass and daily for the blessing and protection of God.