

# Preparing for and Receiving Holy Communion

**Prayer before Communion** - How holy is the feast in which Christ is our food: his passion is recalled, grace fills our hearts, and we receive a pledge of the glory to come. – based on a prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

## Receiving Holy Communion

- Catholics follow rules and practices to show respect for the Eucharist
- Only Baptized Catholics may receive Communion
- To receive Holy Communion, we must be free from mortal sin. We must be sorry for any venial sins committed since the last time we celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we have contrition, receiving Holy Communion free us from venial sins.
- To honor the Lord, we fast for one hour before receiving Communion. We go without food or drink, except water or medicine.
- Catholics are required to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, if possible during Easter Time. But, we are encouraged to receive Communion every time we participate in Mass.
- Catholics are permitted to receive Communion at other Masses on the same day.

## How to Receive Communion

- Fold your hands in a prayerful manner and join in singing the Communion hymn as you walk to the altar.
- When it is your turn, bow your head reverently as the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist holds the Host and says “The Body of Christ.”
- You can receive the consecrated Host in your hand or on your tongue. To receive the Body of Christ in your hand, hold your hands out with palms up lacing your dominant hand underneath the other and cup your hands slightly. To receive the Body of Christ on your tongue, fold your hands in a prayerful manner and open your mouth putting your tongue out.
- The priest, deacon or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist says, “The Body of Christ” and you answer, “Amen.” The Host is then placed in your hand or on your tongue.
- Step aside and stop. If you have received the Host in your hand, carefully take it from your palm and place it in your mouth. Swallow the Host.
- After swallowing the Host, walk to where the Chalice is offered. The priest, deacon or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist says “The Blood of Christ.” Bow your head reverently and you answer “Amen.”

- If you do not take Communion in the form of the Precious Blood, reverence the Chalice with a slight bow before returning to your seat.
- Take the cup from the minister and take a small sip and carefully hand the Chalice back.
- Quietly return to your pew. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving.

**Prayer after Communion** – O Jesus, I believe that Thou are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Although my eyes and tongue tell me that I have received only bread, yet my faith tells me that I have received Thy Body and Blood. I believe, Lord; help Thou my unbelief. I adore Thee as my God and my Savior. Amen.