

PROCEDURE FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

As we celebrated Corpus Christi last Sunday, it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the proper reception of the Eucharist. In Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine. It is a Real *not* symbolic Presence. In order to receive this great gift of love from Christ, we must do so worthily:

1. **Be free from mortal sin** - In order to receive Holy Communion worthily, we must *not* be conscious of mortal sin on our soul. If we have committed a mortal sin, then we must confess our sins in the Sacrament of Penance prior to the reception of Holy Communion. We ought to be living in a state of communion with the Church. For example, if we are married, we must have received the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Church.
2. **Preparation** - We should prepare spiritually during Mass for the moment when we will receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. This is done by coming to Mass early, praying in preparation, listening attentively to the readings, responding to the prayers, and participating actively in Mass.
3. **Fasting** - To prepare well prior to Mass we are to abstain from any food or drink, with the exception only of water and medicine, for at least the period of one hour before the reception of Holy Communion.
4. **Reverence** – We have the option of receiving standing or kneeling. If you wish to receive kneeling, then please proceed to the Communion rail. Communion will be distributed there on Sundays and Holy Days by the assisting priest. On weekdays, Communion is distributed at the rail after the standing lines have finished receiving.

If standing, there is to be an act of reverence prior to receiving. This is done by means of a profound bow (from the waist) or a genuflection. The sign of reverence is made when the person in front of us is receiving. In this way we are standing upright when the priest or minister presents us with the Sacred Host. If receiving at the Communion rail, no further sign of reverence is necessary.

5. **Two options** - We have the option of receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hands.
 - a.) **Tongue** – This is the traditional and preferred way to receive Holy Communion. If we receive on the tongue, we should open our mouths sufficiently to allow the priest or minister to place the Host on the tongue. The tongue should be extended slightly.
 - b.) **Hands** - If we receive on the hands, we should place the open palm of one hand over the other (in the form of a throne). After having the Host placed on our hand, we immediately place the Host in our mouth with the other hand. We should never "grab" the Host from the hands of the priest nor walk away with the Host in our hands. The Host must be placed in the mouth immediately upon reception while standing in front of the priest or minister. Hands should always be clean and free of all objects. If any particles of the Host remain, please consume them immediately.
6. **Response** - The response when the priest or minister says, "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ" is "Amen." No other responses are acceptable.
7. **Thanksgiving** - Once we have returned to our seat and kneel or sit, we should make a proper act of thanksgiving thanking our Lord for the great gift of His Body and Blood.