



Sacraments 15/36: Who Can Receive the Eucharist?

Roman Catholics who have been Baptized and catechized about the Eucharist and who are in a state of grace are welcome to receive the Eucharist. Baptism marks the entrance into the Christian life. The catechesis is given either in preparation for First Communion or through an RCIA process for those converting or preparing for Baptism as adults. As our belief is that the bread and wine have truly been changed into the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, we cannot give the Eucharist to those who do not profess belief in this, nor are in union with us. I understand that other Christian gatherings celebrate a form of communion, but their belief is that it is merely symbolic and representative of the Last Supper. They do not believe in the Real Presence. We cannot give them the Eucharist and no Catholic should ever receive the Protestant form of communion. As we believe in the Real Presence, we cannot participate in a mere symbol, even if they say we are welcome.

When I speak about the “state of grace,” this means that if any Catholic is aware of any mortal sin on their conscious, they should refrain from receiving Communion until they have had a chance to go to Confession. That is why I am always in the confessional before Mass on the weekends. If you are not sure what mortal sin is, it might be good to go through the Ten Commandments and the third part of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§ 1691-2557). We cannot judge those who go up to receive Communion; however, I suspect that some are aware of sin on their hearts, but are more worried about what other people will think if they don’t go up. For our own examination of conscious and the necessity of being free of sin when receiving communion, St. Paul spells it out clearly in his First Letter to the Corinthians (11:27-29):

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Eucharistic Fast

We are all called to fast for at least one hour before the Mass. This can be dispensed for people with medications required at specific times with food.

How are we to receive?

The one receiving approaches the minister, bows to the Real Presence and answers “Amen.” Don’t whisper or mumble or just bow. For the Precious Blood, they take the chalice in their own hands and drink a tiny sip and then return the chalice to the minister. For the Host, the receiver has 2 choices: (1) They may hold one hand over the other and receive the Host in their hand. They pick up the Host with the other hand and place it immediately into their mouth. Please don’t walk away with the Host still in your hand. (2) They may open their mouth and stick out their tongue to receive the Host on their tongue. Both are equally valid.

In the Roman Catholic dioceses of the United States, “intinction” on the part of the receiver is strictly forbidden. “Intinction” is where a person takes a Host and dips it into the Precious Blood and then consumes. The possibility of drips is too great. A priest may decide to distribute by intinction, which will be placed directly into the receiver’s mouth.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Tri-Partite of the Eucharist