

ON RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

WHO MAY RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION?

Communicant members of Holy Cross Anglican Church; communicant members of other Anglican congregations; and visiting Christians from other branches of Christ's Church who are baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit), and are communicants in good standing in their home parish or were when they left their previous church, may receive Holy Communion at the Lord's Table. When in doubt, feel free to talk with the pastor.

Young children and others not receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion may come forward at Communion time to receive a blessing. To receive a blessing, fold your arms over your chest in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross (X) so the priest knows to provide a blessing rather than the sacrament.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THOSE WHO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION?

Fasting before Communion is indeed a good external discipline and is an old Christian practice, but true preparation for receiving Holy Communion is not merely

bodily, but spiritual. The Church requires communicants: "To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; to have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and to be in charity with all men" (Book of Common Prayer).

HOW TO PREPARE TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

As part of your spiritual preparation for receiving Holy Communion it is always beneficial to read one or more of these Scriptural records of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper or of his teaching as to the meaning of this sacrament during your devotional time the night before:

1 Cor. 11:23-29, John 6:48-59, Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26:26-30

ON SUNDAY MORNING

Plan to arrive a little early so there is time for private prayer before the Service begins. If practical, participation in Morning Prayer at 9:30 AM is an excellent preparation for the celebration of Holy Communion. Whether or not you have attended Morning Prayer, you may want to prayerfully read

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one or more of the following psalms or hymns:

Psalms: 23, 25, 43, 121

Hymns: 192, 197, 199/200, 209, 213

AT COMMUNION TIME

At Communion time go up to receive the sacrament as the priest begins to receive Holy Communion. A bell will be rung thrice as a signal to go forward. Since we do not presently have a communion rail, gather in a single row between the lectern and the pulpit. If there are too many communicants to form a single row, then wait until the group ahead of you has received Holy Communion and then take their place.

Holy Communion should always be received devoutly kneeling, except in cases of infirmity or advanced age. Kneel close to the person on your right so as not to waste space. Never go back to your place until the person on your left has received from the chalice (cup) and the priest has moved on to the next person. This is to avoid accidentally bumping someone who is receiving from the chalice.

After receiving Holy Communion return to your seat and kneel down to offer thanksgiving for the great blessing received in the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. After offering your thanksgiving you may want to sit in quiet reflection or prayerfully read one or more of the following psalms or hymns:

Psalms: 8, 15, 103, 148

Hymns: 189, 284, 304, 572

HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

You may receive the sacrament of the Body of Christ in either of these two ways:

1. Into the palm of your right hand. Rest your right hand on top of your left in the form of a cross. When the priest places the sacrament in the palm of your right hand reverently raise both hands to your mouth and consume it. Never pick the sacrament up with your fingers. This is not because there is anything wrong with your fingers, but because the more the sacrament is handled the greater chance of it being dropped on the floor which would be a sacrilege.

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2. Directly on the tongue. Tip your head back and extend your tongue over your lower teeth. As soon as the priest places the sacrament on your tongue, withdraw your tongue, close your mouth, and consume it.

There is no need to say *Amen* after receiving the sacrament.

Receive from the chalice (cup) by taking hold of its foot (its base) with your right hand, guide it to your lips, and reverently take a small drink. Do not wipe your mouth after receiving from the chalice.

You may also receive Holy Communion by intinction. To receive in this manner leave the sacrament of the Body of Christ in the palm of your right hand. When the priest passes with the chalice he will pick it up, dip it in the chalice, and place it on your tongue for you to consume.

If you are ill, you should receive Holy Communion in one kind only (the consecrated Bread). According to the doctrine of concomitance the fullness of the sacrament is received when it is taken in one kind only, although the outward and visible sign is clearer when Holy Communion is

received in both kinds. Someone who has an upset stomach or similar problems should not receive Holy Communion due to the danger of sacrilege.

Holy Communion may be reverently received in the hand or on the tongue. Receiving Holy Communion in the hand was described by St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his fourth century work *On the Eucharistic Rite: Make thy left hand as if a throne for thy right, which is on the eve of receiving thy King. And having hollowed thy palm, receive the Body of Christ...*" The Quinisext Council (AD 692) states that "if anyone wishes to be a participator of the Immaculate Body in the time of the Synaxis [Lord's Supper], and to offer himself for the communion, let him draw near, arranging his hands in the form of a cross..." St. John of Damascus (d. AD 750) in *De Fide Orthodoxa (On the Orthodox Faith)* urges communicants to "draw near to it with an ardent desire, and with our hands in the form of a cross, let us receive the Crucified One."

AFTER THE SERVICE

After the recessional hymn, or if there is no music after the priest leaves the Holy Table, kneel again

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in prayer. You should never leave you place until the candles are extinguished. Use this time for spiritual profit. Later, if remaining for fellowship, serve one another, be friendly and kind to one another, and seek to uplift and encourage one another. On your way home be ready to do a deed of kindness and help should an opportunity arise, remembering that Christ our Saviour went down from the Mount of the Transfiguration to heal a poor sick boy. As St. Teresa of Avila said centuries ago, "Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out at the world, yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands with which he blesses us now." The celebration of Holy Communion has ended, but your service in union with Christ to bring the gospel to a lost and hurting world is just beginning. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

This article was written by Father V. E. Novak. For more of his articles visit his Parish website at: www.holycrossomaha.net.