

RCIA HO Class 18 Mass and Eucharist (Rules for reception)

Catholics may not receive “communion” at Protestant services, nor may non-Catholics receive Communion at Catholic Masses. The primary reason for this prohibition is the unfortunate fact that “ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders [priesthood]”.

This is to say that Protestant ecclesial communities do not believe what we believe about the Mass as the continuation or re-presentation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Nor do they believe what we believe about Holy Communion as the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ brought about through the miracle we call “transubstantiation”. Finally, they do not believe what we believe about the Church as the People of God hierarchically ordered and united under the Successor of Peter, i.e. the Pope, in union with all the Successors of the Apostles, i.e. the bishops of the Church spread throughout the world.

The celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) signifies the fullness of faith and unity to be found within the Catholic Church. To admit to Holy Communion others who do not profess the same faith about the Church, the Eucharist, and the priesthood would be contrary to our understanding of the Eucharist as a public profession of unity in faith. Similarly, for a Catholic to receive communion at a Protestant service, even if welcomed to do so, and even with good intentions, would falsely imply a unity of faith which does not exist.

Reminders for the proper manner of receiving Holy Communion

“Whoever is to receive the Blessed Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from all food and drink with the exception of water and medicine.”

“Anyone conscious of grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to Communion”.

“Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment. Holy Communion may be received either on the tongue or in the hand. The choice is left to the communicant. Traditionally, it is received on the tongue while kneeling.

The priest or deacon shows the Host saying, “The Body of Christ”. The communicant responds, “Amen”. If receiving in the hand, BOTH hands must be free. The right hand is placed under the left, to receive the Host. The hands should be elevated such that it is clear to the minister that the communicant intends to receive in the hand. The Host having been received into the cupped left hand, the right hand then lifts the Host to the mouth. If for some reason both hands cannot be used to receive the Host in the manner described above Communion should be received on the tongue. It is never proper to “take” the Host from the minister with one hand. Communion should not be received in the hand if one is wearing gloves, or if one’s hands are not clean for some unforeseen reason. Having received the Sacrament, the communicant should return to his place in the church to make a sincere and fitting act of thanksgiving before the closing prayer, final blessing, and dismissal.

Holy Communion may be received no more than twice in one day.

RCIA WKSH Class 18 Mass and Eucharist (Rules of Reception) (BCL#26-28)

- 1) Can non-Catholics receive Holy Communion in a Catholic church? Why or why not?

- 2) Can Catholics receive communion in a non-Catholic church? Why or why not?

- 3) How long are we required to fast from everything but water and medicine before we receive the Lord in Holy Communion? _____

- 4) Why do you think this is so?

- 5) Discussion **question**. What is the proper way to receive Holy Communion? Kneeling, standing, in the hand, on the tongue? Discuss with your parents. What does the Church teach? Is this Tradition or tradition?

- 6) How many times in one day may we receive Holy Communion? _____

- 7) How many times each year are we required by the Precepts of the Church to receive Holy Communion? _____

- 8) Why do you think that this is so?

- 9) If I willfully skip Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day, what must I do before I receive Holy Communion again?

- 10) **Discussion question**. Why do you think so many people deliberately miss Mass and don't seem to care?