

How We Receive Communion under Both Species:

1-We join the **COMMUNION PROCESSION** forming one or two lines moving gently forward towards the Ministers of the Eucharist, first to those distributing the Body of Christ.

2-As the person in front of us receives, we make a gesture of reverence as we approach the Lord's Body, usually a simple bow of the head.

3-We then approach the bishop, priest, deacon, or Eucharistic Minister to receive the Lord's Body.

a- We may receive in our hands. We open our hands, palms up, the left hand placed over the right hand to form a sort of "throne" for the Lord. When the host is placed in our left hand, we take our right hand and raise it to our mouths. We never grab the host ourselves; we always *receive* the host.

b- We may receive directly on the tongue, opening our mouth widely so that the host can be placed on the tongue.

The minister says: **The Body of Christ**. And we respond: **Amen**.

4-We then move towards either side aisle. If we intend to also receive the Lord's precious Blood, as before, we make a small gesture of reverence while the person in front of us is receiving, then we step forward. We are offered the chalice by the Eucharistic Minister as s/he says: **The Blood of Christ**. We respond, **Amen**. Then the minister extends the chalice to us. We take it firmly in both hands, gently lift it to our lips, take only a sip, then return the chalice to the minister. We turn and return to our pews by the side aisles.

If we choose *not to receive the Blood of Christ*, as we pass by the Eucharistic Minister, a slight gesture of reverence can be made so as not to seem to ignore or disregard the Lord present in his precious Blood.

If a Communion hymn is being sung, we join with our sisters and brothers in singing. Our time of quiet reflection and thanksgiving comes after the hymn has been completed and before the priest invites us all to pray: **Let Us Pray!**

Receiving Holy Communion under Both Species

The reception of Holy Communion under both species (both the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ) is the culmination of the liturgy of the Eucharist and is a moment of deep spiritual communion with the Lord Jesus and the entire Church community.

Because of its great importance, it must be done reverently and with a spirit of gratitude for this immense gift offered to us by the Lord. Here are a few reflections and guidelines for the proper reception of this great sacrament of love:

Our Preparation

Each of us should be properly disposed to welcome Jesus into our lives by having authentically examined our lives in recent days and weeks, having repented of our sins and made amendment for them in some appropriate way. If we have committed very grave sins, then we should, if possible, receive the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**. For more ordinary sins, the **RITE OF RECONCILIATION** that begins the Mass is sufficient.

Liturgy of the Word

It is important that we attentively listen to and receive God's Word proclaimed to us in the **LITURGY OF THE WORD**. The first and second readings along with the Responsorial Psalm assist us in understanding God's remarkable work of leading us to communion with God and with one another. The proclamation of the Gospel puts in the presence of Christ himself as his words and deeds are told anew. We then profess our faith in the ancient **CREED OF NICEA** and offer to the Lord our needs and prayers in the **GENERAL INTERCESSIONS**.

Only after we have listened to and absorbed God's Word do we then bring forward our gifts for the **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

As our gifts are brought forward, particularly the bread and wine that will be used in the *LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST*, we know that not just our bread and wine, but our very lives, too, are being placed on the Lord's Table or Altar as a sacrifice of love. This bread and wine will be consecrated in the very words of Jesus into his own Body and Blood; our lives too are consecrated by Jesus and incorporated into his life, his body and blood.

In the prayers of the *LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST*, we give thanks for God's work of salvation and pray for the Holy Spirit to come down upon our gifts, our presiding bishop or priest repeats Jesus' words of consecration and we do all this *in memory of him*. We then pray for our Church and its pastors and our beloved dead that all of us who are gathered around this altar, living and dead, might be gathered together in perfect love in God's Kingdom at the end of time. We do all this: "through him, with him, and in him..." and we respond to all of the preceding prayers with the *GREAT AMEN*.

Rite of Communion

With Christ now present among us in his Word, in his Body and Blood, and in our church community of faith, also his Body, we make now our proximate preparation for sharing in the fullness of the mystery of Communion with the Lord and one another.

We begin by praying as Jesus has taught us to pray: *OUR FATHER, who art in heaven...* and especially note his words, *give us this day our daily bread*.

We then pray for peace in our hearts, our community, and our world and solemnly share Christ's own peace with one another, remembering that this is not a social greeting, but a *blessing* we offer to one another *in Christ Jesus*. The sharing of the *SIGN OF PEACE* should never be disruptive nor overly extended; a simple gesture or touch with those closest to us is sufficient.

Our presiding bishop or priest then does for us what Jesus did for his disciples: he *breaks the bread* as the litany, *LAMB OF GOD...*, is chanted. The *BREAKING OF THE BREAD* is a powerful sign of Jesus breaking his own body in his passion and death in loving self-giving sacrifice that is at the heart of all Christian faith.

In final preparation for receiving the Lord's Body and Blood, we take a solemn moment to adore them as the presider lifts them and proclaim: *Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world...*

Following the bishop or priest's reception of Christ's Body and Blood, we then come forward in solemn and joyful procession to receive the same.

Why Receive Both the Lord's Body and Blood?

We are all very familiar with the Gospel story of Jesus' Last Supper. The most important moment in that narrative as Mark, Matthew, and Luke share it, is when Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, then offers it to his disciples saying, *This is my Body*. Thereafter, he does the same with the cup of wine: he blesses it and shares it with his disciples, saying, *This is my Blood*. Then adds, *Do this in memory of me*. His command to remember him in this new sacrament of love applies to *both* the bread and the wine, now his Body and Blood. *We should take him at his word!* The practice of receiving Jesus' precious Blood was lost for many centuries, almost certainly for practical/pragmatic reasons, not theological or spiritual ones. It just was *too hard* to get Communion distributed probably. There is no obligation to receive both the Lord's Body and Blood, but it is a fuller participation in the sacramental signs of the Eucharist given to us by Jesus himself. Nevertheless, it remains a personal decision to be made by the communicant him/herself.