

10 Ways to Prepare Yourself for Communion

Fr. Ed Broom, OMC, June 9, 2015

Of all the gestures, actions, decisions, operations, motions in the life of the human person, by far the greatest (beyond comparison) is to receive Jesus, the Lord and God into the very depths of your soul in the greatest of all Sacraments: Holy Communion.

The Bread of Life, the Bread of the Angels, Corpus Christi, food for the journey, energy and strength on the Highway to holiness, Our Comfort, Friend, Guide, Light, Support and fortitude, spiritual manna, Our eternal life—all of these and many more can be mentioned—are short names, titles or descriptions for Jesus, truly present at Mass in Holy Communion. We can call it the “Sacrament of Sacraments.”

Nobody on earth could ever compare one Holy Communion to any other created reality. However, reflect on this: the entire created universe from the stars, planets, immense oceans, and lofty mountains, and starry skies, as well as all of the fish in the seas and animals populating the earth cannot equal even one, just one Holy Communion. Why?



The reason is simple but very sublime: Holy Communion is God himself! Holy Communion is not some vague or abstract symbol, as non-Catholic religions assert! No one Holy Communion is God Himself. God is the origin of all that exists and the purpose of our existence! God created all of us out of love, to love Him in this life so as to be with Him and to love Him for all eternity in Heaven!

How humble God is that he becomes one of us. By Mary’s “Yes” the second Person of the Blessed Trinity became like us; He became man. He became like us in all things except sin. Still more, Jesus the Son of Mary, after leaving this earth in His glorified Body, wanted to stay with us always even until the end of time.

The last words of Jesus in the Gospel Matthew were: “And behold I will be with you always even until the end of time.” (Mt. 28: 20) If Jesus went up to heaven then how can He still be with us and even until the end of time, until the end of the world? The response: in His Mystical Body which is the Church that He established as the primary Sacrament of salvation.

However of all of the Sacraments the greatest of all of the Sacraments is the most Holy Eucharist. Why? Because the most Holy Eucharist is really God; it is really Jesus Christ the Bread of life. The Holy Eucharist is truly and substantially the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ! Even the smallest consecrated Host, even half of the Host, even a small particle of the consecrated Host is still Jesus the Lord, King and God of the universe!

Ten Suggestions to Improve Your Reception of the Eucharist

The success of a party depends on the prior preparation; sports success depends on the prep and warm-up and mental attitude and discipline; a good and loving courtship terminates in a loving and permanent marriage. The same can be applied

to a fervent and worthy reception of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

Another analogy is receiving a guest. There are very many different ways that we can receive a guest into our home. Here are a few! You could receive a guest against your will—sometimes due to circumstances, this is the case. Or you could receive a guest with resistance and begrudgingly. Then you can receive a guest willingly with the doors of your home wide open! Still more you could receive a guest by preparing the night before, with great joy, to receive such a guest you really long to have in your home and share a meal with. Finally, upon the knowledge of a special guest coming, you clean the whole home the day before, prepare the food and the meal that you know your guest enjoys most; put on the back-ground music that the guest enjoys listening to; and finally, decorate the home with balloons and attractive and joyful banners. We have portrayed a whole series of ways or manners that a guest could possibly be received—from the worst imaginable scenario to the best of bests!

This analogy of receiving a guest into one’s home can easily be applied to receiving Jesus into our souls. Examine your conscience now: what type of reception do you give the Eucharistic Lord Jesus when you receive Him into your home/soul—when you receive Him in Holy Communion? How is He received? Accept the challenge to examine your Eucharistic reception. Why? As was said earlier, this is the most important action that you can possibly do in your life. This being the truth, we should all make a concerted effort to improve and upgrade the efficacy of our reception of the Eucharistic Lord. How then can we apply this principle to receiving the Lord of the universe into the inner recesses of our soul? Following are ten practical suggestions that can be of immense help!

1. **FAITH.** How easy it is for our faith to decline, to get weak, or even to disappear. Sad to say that the biggest religious group in the USA are non-practicing Catholics! Let us pray with fervor: “Lord I do believe but strengthen my faith!” Faith is like a seed planted in the ground. May our faith grow, blossom and flourish until we reach heaven!
2. **APPRECIATION.** In relationships, especially in marriages, one of the greatest perennial dangers is to start to take the spouse for granted. This can be lethal to any marriage. The same thing can insinuate itself into our relationship with the Eucharistic Lord: we can become accustomed or used to Mass and Holy Communion—even among daily communicants—and start to take the Lord for granted. In the *Diary of Merry In My Soul*, by Saint Faustina, Jesus complains that there are souls that receive Him with no love, but rather as if He were a mere object. Jesus states that He would prefer NOT to be received than to be received like a mere object and out of mere routine, to be received mechanically! There is a plaque with these words in many sacristies, which serves as a reminder to priests to celebrate every Mass with faith and fervor: “Priest, man of God celebrate this Mass as if it were your first Mass, last Mass and only Mass.” We should receive every Holy Communion as if it were our first, last and only Holy Communion.

3. **CLEAN THE HOUSE.** Make a good sacramental Confession. The saints and the church teach us that the cleaner and more pure the soul the more abundant the graces in receiving Holy Communion. A dirty glass pane prevents the sun from entering the room fully. Likewise, a dirtied or sullied soul will block the full and powerful presence of the Eucharistic Lord in His entirety from inundating the soul!

4. **COME EARLY.** It is doubtful that we would show up late for the last game in the World Series, or a graduation ceremony, or even an expensive and exquisite meal in a glamorous restaurant. Should we not then be early to welcome the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords into our hearts? What do you think? Coming late for Mass disturbs others, disturbs the priest and dampens one's over-all participation in the Mass. Let us avoid cutting corners and selling God cheap!

5. **REVERENCE.** Moses was commanded to take off his sandals before the burning bush that was a mere symbol of the Eucharistic Presence. Isaiah complained that he was impure in the midst of an impure people. His lips had to be purified by the burning coal. How much more reverence we should manifest in front of the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Lord. He is not a symbol but a Real Person! If a King merits the greatest reverence and respect, what about the King of the universe the Eucharistic Lord?

6. **INTENTIONS!** The Parish priest usually has his specific intentions in every Mass. This does not negate the fact that you can have your own private intentions. Three suggestions to help you to live the Mass more fully: 1) Offer Mass for a deceased person that might be detained in Purgatory, for his quick release or at least alleviation of his suffering. 2) Conversion of sinners. We all have in mind family members, relatives, friends, fellow-workers who seem to have forgotten about God or are angry at God and have for many different reasons drifted away from the Church. Offer your Holy Mass and Holy Communion so that they will return. These lost sheep may return to the Good Shepherd if you take the effort to pray for them and place them on the altar in Holy Mass. 3) Personal conversion. We all struggle with the flesh; we all struggle with our own demons; we all struggle with the seduction of the world and its deception and many allurements. In Holy Communion why not beg the Lord Jesus that He would grant you the grace of a true HEART TRANSPLANT!!! Indeed you do receive the Body, and Blood of Jesus. That means you receive His total Body and that includes His Heart. Ask Jesus to give you His Sacred Heart and beg His Sacred Heart overflowing with the flames of love to consume all that which is in your heart which is displeasing to Him. Fervent and frequent Holy Communion is the shortcut to holiness!!!

7. **PARTICIPATE.** In Mass we are not called to be passive observers as if it were a play, a show or an opera. On the contrary we are called to participate fully, actively, and consciously. (Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Dogmatic Constitution on the Liturgy*) We are called to listen attentively to the Word of God, respond to the Word, and to sing with all our hearts in praise and worship of the Lord. When silence is called for we enter into profound silence where we will meet the Lord. As the prophet reminds: "Be silent and know that I am the Lord."

8. **MARY'S HEART AND YOURS.** While approaching Holy Communion we should humbly beg the Blessed Virgin

Mary—as Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta reminds us—to lend us her Immaculate Heart so that we can receive Jesus with the utmost purity, humility and burning love. This is truly a key to upgrade and improve our Holy Communion—to receive Holy Communion through the Heart of Mary. St. Pope John Paul II makes a beautiful parallel. He compares Our Lady's "Yes" or fiat in the Annunciation to our "Amen" when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. The result is the same: receiving Jesus into the heart. Our Lady's yes resulted in the conception of Jesus in her womb. Our "Amen" in Holy Communion results in Jesus' Eucharistic Presence taking root in our heart, mind and soul!

9. **THANKSGIVING!** After Holy Communion we should spend some time in rendering thanks to Jesus for this greatest of all gifts—His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in Holy Communion. There is no greater gift! In a home visitation and a friendly meal, a guest who has even the least of manners will thank the hosts for having invited him. Should we not abound in thanksgiving to Jesus for humbling Himself to descend into our miserable interior home that we call our soul? Let us join our hearts, minds and voices with the Psalmist and acclaim: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endures forever." Indeed God rejoices in a grateful heart. Let us cultivate an attitude of gratitude!

10. **EUCCHARISTIC APOSTLE.** Given that you have encountered the greatest treasure in your life, the pearl of infinite value, you should be motivated to the fullest extent possible to bring Jesus to others and to bring others to Jesus! Take Our Lady as an example! After conceiving Jesus in her womb in the Annunciation, she went in haste to bring Jesus to her cousin Elizabeth who in her old age was with child. Mary hurried to bring Jesus to others. After you have received Jesus in Holy Communion and given Him a worthy thanksgiving, now it is time to become a fiery Apostle and to bring the Lord Jesus to others. Preach by your example but also by your word. Invite others to Church, to confession, to Mass and Holy Communion. Become a missionary! The harvest is rich but the laborers are few. You right now are called to work in the vineyard with the Lord; you are called to go fishing with the Lord and to save souls. One of the most efficacious tools to save souls is to help the wandering sheep, the stray Catholics, to come back to Church, make a good Sacramental Confession and then to receive the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion. Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen expresses it this way: "First come and then go!" First we should come and receive Jesus with great fervor, faith and love; then we go out to the whole world to bring this good news of salvation to every living being!

In conclusion, we should be overflowing with joy and gratitude for the most sublime gift of the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is truly and substantially the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus. There is no greater action we can possibly do while we live on earth than to receive the Eucharist worthily. Jesus' promise for receiving Him frequently and worthily should fill all of us with immense joy. Jesus consoles us with these words: "I am the Bread of life. Whoever eats my Body and drinks my Blood will have everlasting life and I will raise Him up on the last day." (Bread of Life discourse: Jn. 6: 22-71) Heaven is ours if we receive Jesus here on earth with faith and burning love!