

practice of dipping fingers with the host in the chalice can also lead to other hygiene issues.

How important is the Mass?

At Mass we are nourished by the inspired word of God during the Liturgy of the Word, and offer the Eucharistic sacrifice and are fed by Jesus' Body and Blood during the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which is why it is the very center of our lives as Catholic Christians—nothing we do is more important—and why it is a grave obligation for us to observe the Third Commandment (“Keep holy the Lord’s Day”) by attending Mass faithfully every Sunday.

Yet, more than an obligation, it’s an invitation: Jesus invites us to gather in his house, in the consecrated holy place of his church, to receive him in word and in sacrament, and to worship with our brothers and sisters in faith. What could be more wonderful than that?!

What is the proper practical preparation for attending Mass?

Going to Mass is not just something else we do: again, it’s the most important event, the most sacred duty, in our lives. May that truth inform our practical preparation for it.

Punctuality.

- In order to transition well from the busyness of the world to focus on the sacred liturgy, it’s important to get to Mass on time—which means before it begins.
- Let us enter into a spirit of recollection for Mass by arriving early and prayerfully preparing for what we are

about to receive: the Lord himself, in word and in sacrament.

Attire.

- Unfortunately, the practice of wearing our “Sunday best” to honor the Lord at Mass seems to have waned—and, frankly, sometimes people wear things which are inappropriate for such a sacred event.
- People may say: “God doesn’t care what I wear to Mass!” That may be true. The question is: “Do you care what you wear to Mass?” We dress up when we meet someone important. How do we dress then before the King of kings?
- Flip flops belong at the pool and beach, while athletic clothes and shoes belong at the gym or sporting event: they are not appropriate for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
- Surely we can show respect for the Lord by wearing at least “business casual”—if not “Sunday best”—to Mass to show Him how important the holy event is to us.

Attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and receiving Holy Communion is not just something else we do: it is the very center of our lives, the most important thing we do as Catholics. May we always be fully conscious of what we’re celebrating & receiving, and so be properly prepared and disposed.



**FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION
ONLY**

THE SACRED LITURGY

Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion

For Catholics

Catholics are encouraged to participate fully in the celebration of the Eucharist by receiving Holy Communion devoutly and frequently. To be properly disposed to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, individuals should:

Be free from grave (mortal) sin
Observe the one-hour Eucharistic fast
Approach Holy Communion with
reverence and faith

Anyone conscious of grave sin must seek reconciliation through the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Communion. In situations where confession is not possible and there is a serious reason to receive, the person should make an act of perfect contrition, with the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916).

Frequent confession is encouraged for all the faithful.



Reception of Holy Communion

For our fellow Christians

We warmly welcome Christians from other traditions who join us in prayer at Mass. We rejoice in our shared baptism and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to draw all believers closer to the unity Christ desires: “that they may all be one” (John 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the Eucharist is a visible sign of full communion of faith, life, and worship, we ordinarily do not admit to Holy Communion those Christians with whom we are not yet fully united.

In extraordinary circumstances, Eucharistic sharing may be permitted for other Christians, but only according to the directives of the Archbishop of New York and the norms of canon law (canon 844 §4).

Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are encouraged to follow the discipline of their own Churches. According to Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to their receiving Communion if they freely choose to do so (canon 844 §3).

For those not receiving Holy Communion

Anyone not receiving Communion may remain seated in prayer or join the Communion procession and receive a blessing gesture by crossing their arms over their chest.

You may also make an act of spiritual

communion, expressing your desire to be united with Christ.

For non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

Guidelines for Communicants

If you arrive after the Liturgy of the Word has begun, you may still receive Communion, provided you are properly disposed. Regular participation in the full Mass is strongly encouraged.

A Catholic may receive Communion daily, and even more than once in the same day if the second time occurs during a full Mass in which the person participates.

Standing is the most common posture to receive Holy Communion, though individual members of the faithful may choose to receive Communion while kneeling (GIRM 160).

When approaching to receive Holy Communion, bow in reverence of the Sacrament you are to receive (GIRM 160). A common posture and gesture helps to symbolise the assembly’s unity in Christ and also helps the communion procession to flow smoothly.

When receiving Communion in the hand, the communicant might be guided by the words of

St Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386AD): “When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive him, taking care that nothing is lost” (Cat. Myst V. 21-22). Communicants who are left-handed are obviously free to receive Communion on whichever hand they feel most comfortable.

As a sign of reverence for the Body of Christ, communicants and ministers should ensure that their hands appear clean.

When the minister says “The Body of Christ”, reply “Amen” (GIRM 161). When receiving in the hand, step to one side after receiving the host and consume the whole of it immediately.

When receiving on the tongue, communicants should open their mouths sufficiently and position their tongue to facilitate easy reception of the host.

When the minister hands the chalice to you, saying “The Blood of Christ”, reply “Amen,” receive the chalice, drink a little from it, and return the chalice to the minister.

In keeping with Christ’s command to take and drink and consistent with the Church’s tradition that the sacraments be ministered, it is not permitted for communicants to self-intinct (or dip) the host in the chalice. The