

Spiritual communion available when unable to receive Eucharist

Excerpts by Abbot Jerome Kodell, OSB

What is spiritual communion? St. Thomas Aquinas described it as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament and lovingly embrace him” at a time or in circumstances when we cannot receive him in sacramental Communion.

The opportunities for receiving spiritual communion are limitless, but particular circumstances make it appealing in our time.

No one is ever prohibited from receiving Communion spiritually and receiving strength from the grace of the sacrament during a waiting period which is often painful. As the availability of priestly ministry decreases, daily Mass becomes more and more scarce, and some communities may not regularly have even a regular Mass on Sunday.

Spiritual communion needs no special instruction; it only requires the same disposition as the actual reception of the sacrament and a turning to Jesus with the heart. These days as we experience a renewal of Eucharistic adoration, those who come to spend time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament are receiving spiritual communion, even though they may not have called it by that name.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

No particular prayer or formulary is required, though there are acts of spiritual communion in Catholic prayer books to help focus a proper intention.

One of the most popular is that composed by St. Alphonsus Liguori:

“My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament.

I love you above all things

and I desire you with all my heart.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

**I embrace you as if you were already in my heart
and unite myself to you completely.**

Please do not let me ever be separated from you.”

