

Holy Communion

Lesson 28 from the *Baltimore Catechism*

366. What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is the receiving of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him. (John 6:57)

367. What is necessary to receive Holy Communion worthily?

To receive Holy Communion worthily it is necessary to be free from mortal sin, to have a right intention, and to obey the Church's laws on the fast required before Holy Communion out of reverence for the body and blood of Our Divine Lord. However, there are some cases in which Holy Communion may be received without fasting.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

368. Does he who knowingly receives Holy Communion in mortal sin receive the body and blood of Christ and His graces?

He who knowingly receives Holy Communion in mortal sin receives the body and blood of Christ; but he does not receive His graces and he commits a grave sin of sacrilege.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

369. What should we do to receive more abundantly the graces of Holy Communion?

To receive more abundantly the graces of Holy Communion we should strive to be most fervent and to free ourselves from deliberate venial sin.

370. Does the Church now command us to fast from midnight before Holy Communion?

The Church does not now command us to fast from midnight before Holy Communion, as it did formerly. The laws enacted by Pope Pius XII now regulate this matter by the number of hours we must fast.

371. When may Holy Communion be received without fasting?

Holy Communion may be received without fasting when one is in danger of death, or when it is necessary to save the Blessed Sacrament from insult or injury.

372. What are the laws enacted by Pope Pius XII regarding the fast required before Holy Communion?

The laws enacted by Pope Pius XII regarding the fast required before Holy Communion are the following:

1. Water may be taken at any time before Holy Communion without breaking the fast.
2. Sick persons, though not confined to bed, may receive Holy Communion after taking medicine or nonalcoholic drinks. A priest's permission is not necessary.
3. All Catholics may receive Holy Communion after fasting one hour from food and drink including even alcoholic beverages in moderation. This rule applies to Holy Communion at midnight Mass as well as at Masses celebrated in the morning, afternoon or evening. A priest's permission is not needed.
4. One may not receive Holy Communion a second time on the same day, unless the danger of death arises, when he can receive the Blessed Sacrament as Viaticum. But one who has received the Holy Eucharist at the midnight Mass of Christmas or at the Mass of the Easter Vigil may receive again in the course of the day. These rules show the Church's desire that all Catholics partake of the Holy Eucharist frequently.

373. How should we prepare ourselves for Holy Communion?

We should prepare ourselves for Holy Communion by thinking of Our Divine Redeemer whom we are about to receive, and by making fervent acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. (Matthew 8:8)

374. What should we do after Holy Communion?

After Holy Communion we should spend some time adoring Our Lord, thanking Him, renewing our promises of love and of obedience to Him, and asking Him for blessings for ourselves and others.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)

375. What are the chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion?

The chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion are: first, a closer union with Our Lord and a more fervent love of God and of our neighbor; second, an increase of sanctifying grace; third, preservation from mortal sin and the remission of venial sin; fourth, the lessening of our inclinations to sin and the help to practice good works.

He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him. (John 6:57)

376. When are we obliged to receive Holy Communion?

We are obliged to receive Holy Communion during Easter time each year and when in danger of death.

377. Why is it well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily?

It is well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily, because this intimate union with Jesus Christ, the Source of all holiness and the Giver of all graces, is the greatest aid to a holy life.

And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

378. How should we show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist?

We should show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist by visiting Him often, by reverence in church, by assisting every day at Mass when this is possible, by attending parish devotions, and by being present at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.