

DID YOU KNOW - What is the proper way to receive the Holy Communion?

There are clear guidelines on receiving Holy Communion. Each Communicant should refrain from eating or drinking anything (except for water) for one hour prior to receiving the Eucharist, although exceptions are made for those who are sick and for the elderly. Also, each Communicant must be free of mortal sin. Venial sin does not make us unworthy of receiving Holy Communion; but it does prevent us from receiving the graces and blessings that we receive from Holy Communion. You may receive the Sacred Host either in your hand or on your tongue. The choice is yours. As the person in front of you is receiving Holy Communion, bow your head as a sign of reverence.

If you are receiving the Host in your hand, extend both hands palms up toward the Priest/Eucharistic Minister, placing one hand directly on top of the other hand. If you are right handed, the right hand goes on the bottom so you can receive the Host in your left hand and then pick it up with your right hand. If you are left handed, the other way around. The Priest/Eucharistic minister will hold the Host in front of you and say, "The Body of Christ.. The correct response is simply "Amen. No other response should be said. The Priest/Eucharistic minister will then place the Host on your open palm. Do not attempt to grab the Host from the minister with your fingers.

Once the Host has been placed in your hand, step aside (to allow the person behind you to come forward to receive) and immediately consume the Host as you stand facing toward the altar. You should pick up the Host from the palm of your hand with the fingers of your other hand and reverently place the Host in your mouth. However if you would like to receive the Host in your mouth, after the Priest/Eucharistic minister holds the Host in front of you and says The Body of Christ and you respond Amen, tilt your head backwards, slightly open your mouth and stick out your tongue. The Priest/Eucharistic Minister will then place the Host on your tongue. Once you feel the Host on your tongue, take the Host into your mouth with your tongue.

If you wish to receive the Precious Blood - the choice is yours bow your head and shoulders slightly as the person before you is receiving from the chalice. Approach the Priest/Eucharistic minister and he will hold the chalice in front of you and say, "The Blood of Christ., to which you respond, "Amen. The Priest/Eucharistic minister will then hand you the chalice. Grasp the chalice firmly with both hands and bring it to your lips, taking care not to spill any of the Precious Blood within. Take a small sip of the Precious Blood and hand the chalice back to the minister who will wipe its rim to prepare it for the next communicant.

Do not carry the Host with the intention of dipping it into the Precious Blood. Communicants may not dip the Sacred Host into the chalice for two reasons: first because of the liturgical principle stated above, that the communicant should receive the Precious Blood rather than taking it (in this case, by dipping the Host into it); second because there is danger of dripping some drops of the Precious Blood.

Remember: when you receive the Host you are receiving the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The same is true for receiving the Blood of Christ. Also, in order to receive from the cup you must first receive the Body of Christ.