

## GUIDELINES FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the following guidelines on the reception of Communion. The guidelines, seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of Eucharistic Communion.*

### FOR CATHOLICS

As Catholics, we [are called to] fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession, except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing, as soon as possible (cf. Canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged for all.

### FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. [Additionally,] We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (John 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, **members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion.** Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (Canon 844 §4). ...

### FOR THOSE NOT RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

All who [due to their current state of life which by itself places them not-in-communion with God's Church] are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

### 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.

(SR: US Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion.cfm>))