



BEING IN COMMUNION = BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE COMMUNION

Q. 1. Are there circumstances under which a married person cannot receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church?

A. Yes, there are a few.

Q. 2. Can a Catholic who was married outside the Catholic Church before a non-Catholic clergy member (e.g., not a bishop, priest, or deacon) (such as a Judge, Justice of the Peace, Protestant Minister, family relative, etc.) still receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church?

A. No. A Catholic who marries outside the Church and before a non-Catholic clergy member is no longer “*in communion*” with the Catholic Church and therefore can no longer receive communion (the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist) in the Catholic Church, until this marriage is formally recognized in and by the Catholic Church. By such an action, he/she has (knowingly or unknowingly) disregarded the faith and norms of the Roman Catholic Church by participating in a non-Sacramental marriage, which has made them “*not in communion*” with the Church. To receive Holy Communion in this state of life is a grave act (i.e., a mortal sin).

Q. 3. What about a Catholic living in a common-law relationship; can he/she receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during the Holy Mass?

A. No. A person who is living in a common-law relationship is in a state of mortal sin. As such, they are not “*in communion*” with the Church and therefore, he/she cannot receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. To receive Holy Communion in this state of life is a grave act (i.e., a mortal sin).

Q. 4. Can a Catholic who was previously married and has been granted a formal Declaration of Nullity (e.g., an annulment) or has separated and now lives (or agrees to live) in a celibate state of life, receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church?

A. Yes! A Catholic who has received a Declaration of Nullity and remains in a single lifestyle consistent with Catholic values and norms, can receive Holy Communion.

A Catholic who marries before or after the annulment outside the Church is no longer “*in communion*” with the Catholic Church and therefore cannot receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church, until their existing civil marriage is formally recognized in and by the Catholic Church. By such an action, he/she has disregarded (knowingly or unknowingly) the faith and norms of the Catholic Church by participating in a subsequent, non-Sacramental marriage. To receive Holy Communion in this state of life is a grave act (i.e., a mortal sin).

If you are currently in a civil marriage (not performed within the Catholic Church or by a Catholic clergy member), please contact your parish priest, as soon as possible, to begin the process of the sacramental preparation and/or the annulment process, if/as appropriate.