

Spiritual Communion – What is it, its Fruits and Benefits

A Spiritual Communion is a pious desire to receive the Holy Eucharist, when for some reason it is not possible to receive Our Lord sacramentally. It has been practiced by all the saints with great spiritual profit.

Warnings:

1) Spiritual Communion may be repeated several times a day. It can be made while we are at Church or elsewhere, at any time of day or night, before or after meals.

2) All those who do not receive Communion sacramentally should at least make a Spiritual Communion, when attending Mass. The better time to make a Spiritual Communion is, obviously, when the priest is taking Communion.

3) Those who are in the state of mortal sin must make an act of contrition beforehand, if they wish to receive the fruits of Spiritual Communion. Otherwise, they would not benefit from it at all, and it would be an irreverence, although not a sacrilege, according to Fr. Antonio Royo Marín, OP, “Moral Theology for Lay People”.

Regarding Spiritual Communion, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, known as Roman Catechism, because it is a compendium of the Roman doctrine, states the following: “It is necessary that the pastors of souls

teach that there is not only one way of receiving the admirable fruits of the Sacrament of Eucharist, but two: Sacramental Communion and Spiritual Communion." The latter is not very well known, and it is practiced by a very few people, nonetheless it is an incomparable and special fountain of graces. Countless souls have attained a high degree of perfection through it.

Saint John Mary Vianney, used to say: "A spiritual communion acts on the soul as blowing does on a cinder-covered fire which was about to go out. Whenever you feel your love of God growing cold, quickly make a spiritual communion."

The Holy Council of Trent immensely praises Spiritual Communion, and urges the faithful to practice this devotion.

Our Lord expressed to His servant, Sister Paula Maresca, founder of the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Siena, in Naples, how much Spiritual Communion pleases Him, and the great number of graces that are granted to us through this devotion, by showing her two precious vessels, one made out of gold and the other one made out of silver; then He said to her that He kept His Sacramental Communion in the gold vessel, and the Spiritual Communion in the silver one.

Jesus would like to come every day in our hearts through Sacramental Communion, however this is not enough for Him: He would like to unite with us continually. This desire of the Divine Savior is fulfilled through Spiritual Communion. Our Lord said to Saint Matilda: "Every time your heart desires Me, you attract Me into you. A desire or a longing is enough to make Me yours." He said to Saint Margaret of Alacoque: "My daughter, your desire has pierced My Heart so deeply that if I had not already instituted this Sacrament, I would do so now to become your food." He also asked to Saint Margaret of Cortona to remind a religious the words of Saint

Augustine: "Believe and you have eaten already"; that is, make an act of Faith and desire towards the Eucharist, and you will be fed by this divine food. During the celebration of a Mass, He said to Blessed Ida of Louvain, who had not been able to receive Him sacramentally: "Call me and I shall come to you!", the saint exclaimed: "Come, O Jesus!" and she immediately felt filled with happiness as if she had really received Communion. Lastly, after having made a Spiritual Communion, Saint Catherine of Siena heard that Jesus said to her: "In such manner and place as may please Me I can, I will, I am able marvelously to satisfy the holy ardors of a soul that desires Me."

This great desire of Jesus to unite with us is infinite and omnipotent: it has no other barrier than our liberty. Jesus has multiplied the miracles to give Himself to us in the Eucharist. Is he not capable of making another miracle? Is he not His own Lord and owner of all His graces and Divinity? If he comes down from Heaven to the Host, between the hands of the priest, would He not come down to our hearts, if we call Him with the ardor of our desire?

The first effect of Spiritual Communion is that of increasing our union with the Humanity and Divinity of the Incarnated Word. This is its main effect, its essential fruit; all the other graces that we receive through this devotion stem from it. Here is a brief summary of the several graces that are granted to us through Spiritual Communion:

Our fervor is rekindled. "A spiritual communion acts on the soul as blowing does on a cinder-covered fire which was about to go out. Whenever you feel your love of God growing cold, quickly make a spiritual communion," said Saint John Mary Vianney. Amidst the many trials on our earthly pilgrimage, sadness continuously takes hold of us, and our hearts fill with darkness. Spiritual Communion dispels the gloom, like the morning's sun; it

brings back joy to the heart and peace to the soul.

Spiritual Communion also facilitates and favors interior retirement. It is the most effective means to fight against dissipation, fickleness and digressions of the mind and fantasy. It helps us to keep our sight fixed on God, to live in a sweet and constant intimacy with Him, and in a continuous union of hearts.

Spiritual Communion detaches us from everything that is purely sensitive and earthly; it helps us to despise all vanities and pleasures of the world, which last so little. "It is the bread of the heart," said Saint Augustine, "The healing of the heart." It also helps us to detach our hearts from everything that is unclean and faulty; and it transforms them and closely unites them to the Heart of Jesus.

It is also greatly effective for removing venial sins and attaining from God forgiveness of punishment for the sins committed. Spiritual Communion will also give an amazing glory to all the souls that practiced well this devotion, and they will enjoy of special joys, sweeter and more delicious, that other souls will not know. One day, Our Lord said to Saint Gertrude that each and every time we devotedly look at the Host, our place in Heaven is raised, and the more we increase these amorous looks and desire for the Eucharist, the more joys we will enjoy in Heaven.

It pushes us towards Sacramental Communion by increasing each day our desire to receive Jesus, it prevents us from willfully ceasing to receive Him sacramentally, and it helps us preparing to better receive Sacramental Communion and to get more fruits out of it.

We can also offer up Spiritual Communions for the intentions of others, whether alive or dead. Saint Margaret of Alacoque highly recommended

Spiritual Communion as suffrage for the souls in purgatory. “You can greatly relieve those poor souls by offering up as much Spiritual Communions as you can to repair the misuse they made of Sacramental Communions.”

Spiritual Communion can be made after prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, before and after the praying of the Rosary, and at night, before going to sleep. It can be made as many times as one wishes to. Time is not important, but ardor and vehemence of desire, hunger and thirst of the soul, the impulse of the heart!

All saints are unanimous in praising the wonders of Spiritual Communion. Some go as far as saying that “Many times, through this means, God fills us with the same graces we receive with Sacramental Communion”, as Blessed Mary of the Cross used to said; and Saint Gertrude, together with Father Rodríguez, agree that “sometimes He grants even greater graces, because although Sacramental Communion is in itself of greater effectiveness, the fervor of desire can make up for the difference.”

**SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH THE PRAYER OF
SAINT ALPHONSUS MARIA OF LIGUORI**

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

(Pause in silence for adoration)

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.



