



Come to me

## Spiritual Communion and Coronavirus

The term “Spiritual Communion” has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

We always have the opportunity to give thanks for our communion with our Lord, any day, any time. We may want to be particularly aware of this at times when we would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist, but because of the pandemic we are not able to be so.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly ‘eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ’, although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion ‘regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost’

In the rather antique language of the BCP, we are told:

### THE MINISTRY TO THE SICK

*But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Curate, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood: he shall be instructed that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefor; he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.*

A lovely prayer in the BAS reminds us that we become who we really are as we rest in God:

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. May we find peace in your service, and in the world to come, see you face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

We focus ourselves on Christ and our longing for union with him. We express our desire to feel his grace coursing through us, giving us strength and courage – particularly in these difficult times. In our desiring this, we are united to Christ. In our imagining, we experience the reality that is already there. God is always present, remember – in every place, in everything, in every person, in the very cells that make up your body.

Know yourself to be in union with God: this could be remembering a special occasion when you received communion, like First Communion or Confirmation; or you may imagine yourself embraced by Christ as you watch a livestream of the Sunday Eucharist at St. Augustine's. Each will have their own understanding or experience of it. Let it happen – God's union with us is pure grace. Stay with this union for as long as you can – time will vary with each of you, and it may vary as you do it. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving. Do this as often as you wish. The great thing about spiritual communion is that you can experience it any time and any place.

**Offer yourself, with an open heart,  
to receive God's Grace and Presence**

Use a prayer such as one of these that follow, or use your own words:

**An Act of Spiritual Communion**

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may always be united to you. And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, and embrace you with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live and die in your love. Amen.

**An Act of Spiritual Communion**

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

**An Act of Spiritual Communion**

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.  
May your body and blood be my food and drink.  
May your passion and death be my strength and life.  
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.  
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.  
Let me not run from the love which you offer,  
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.  
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.  
Keep calling to me until that day comes,  
When, with your saints, I may praise you forever.  
Amen.