

Spiritual Communion

Mid-Week Reflection - June 2020

One practice that I know many of you have is the praying of a spiritual communion prayer. The Archbishop of Ottawa has invited the faithful to pray the version written by St. Alphonsus de Ligouri. This is the [prayer](#) used at Communion time during our parish livestream Sunday Masses.

What is the meaning of this prayer?

The making of a "Spiritual Communion" is a long standing part of our Catholic tradition, encouraged by the saints, Popes and Bishops. In this type of prayer I tell Jesus of my desire to be close to him and invite him to be with me as He would be when I receive Holy Communion. In our days we are accustomed to the practice of receiving Holy Communion every time we participate in the Celebration of the Eucharist. Some of you may remember a time that while going to Mass weekly was the norm, the receiving of communion was occasional. The practice of making a spiritual communion arose as a way to intentionally invite Jesus to "come into my heart" at the Celebration of the Eucharist when one was not receiving communion and at those times when one could not attend Mass. Even in our own country there are many parishes that only have the Celebration of the Eucharist occasionally when a Priest or Bishop is able to travel long distances for a visit.

This prayer is rooted in the reality that at our Baptism we were made members of the Church; the Mystical Body of Christ. This means that every Catholic "shares in the Church's official worship of God...shares in the spiritual benefits of each and every Mass celebrated throughout the world...united to Christ's sacrifice through our 'spiritual communion.'"¹

Every time Fr. Frank and I celebrate the Eucharist you and every Catholic are with us, mystically present and offered to the Father. Hard to believe? Here's some authoritative quotes:

"In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer and work are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value. Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1368

"If they are intimately animated by a desire for the sacrament and united in prayer with the whole Church, and call upon the Lord and raise their hearts to him, by virtue of the Holy Spirit they live in communion with the whole Church, the living body of Christ, and with the Lord himself. Through their desire for the sacrament in union with the Church, no matter how distant they may be physically, they are intimately and really united to her and therefore receive the fruits of the sacrament. "

Letter to Bishops, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1983

One of the gifts of this pandemic time is that we are reminded of the power and presence of Christ in the Eucharist that is spiritually available to us all the time. The practice of making a "spiritual communion" when viewing an online/TV Mass or as part of our daily prayer is another concrete way that we choose to be "who we are"; disciples of Jesus and members of the One Body of Christ who are eager to receive and share the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

[Spiritual communion prayer-St. Alphonsus](#)

Fr. Charles

1. [The Gift of Spiritual Communion](#), Michael R. Heinlein