

An Act Of Spiritual Communion

An act of Spiritual Communion is an act expressing what was described by St. Thomas Aquinas as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and in lovingly embracing Him.” In a Spiritual Communion, we, with contrite and humble hearts, ask our Lord to come to us in the same way He would if we were able to receive the Sacrament. This can be done as often as one likes, informally in one’s own words or through one of the traditional prayers which appears below.

What is the value of this practice? The graces received may be as great as — or greater than — those received by some people in the actual Sacrament. Though, of course, the Sacrament itself is inherently greater, our disposition towards the Sacrament affect how we receive its fruits. For example, imagine a woman who is unable to be with her husband, but desires him as contrasted with a woman who has her husband’s presence but doesn’t care for him. Which husband would be more apt to pour out his love for his wife?

How To Receive Spiritual Communion

St. Leonard of Port-Maurice offers this advice for receiving Spiritual Communion:

“When the priest is about to give himself Communion in Holy Mass, keeping composed externally and internally, excite in your heart an act of true contrition. Humbly striking your breast, and acknowledging that you yourself are unworthy of so great a grace, make all those acts of love, of self-surrender, of humility, and the rest, which you are accustomed to make when you communicate sacramentally.

Then desire with a lively longing to receive your good Jesus, veiled in the sacrament for your benefit. To kindle your devotion, imagine that most Holy Mary, or some saint, your holy advocate, is holding forth to you the sacred particle. Imagine yourself receiving it, and then, embracing Jesus in your heart, reply to Him, over and over again, with interior words prompted by love: “Come, Jesus, my Beloved, come within this my poor heart. Come and satiate my desires; come and sanctify my soul; come, most sweet Jesus, come!” Then be still. Contemplate your good God within you, and, as if you really had communicated, adore Him, thank Him, and perform all those interior acts to which you are accustomed after receiving Sacramental Communion.

Here is a formal prayer to pray while following St. Leonard’s advice, though you can pray in your own words, if you prefer:

A Prayer For 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.