

# Guidance on Spiritual Communion and Coronavirus

## from the Church of England

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. The form of prayer below offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

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’ (Canon B 15).

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, ‘I am the Bread of Life’.

In making a Spiritual Communion, you may wish to pray all or part of the following, as you are able.

### **An act of Spiritual Communion**

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. You might choose to make your Spiritual Communion at a particular time of day, or after viewing a live streamed service.

#### **Reflect on the day and on your relationships.**

- What good things have come from God today?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?

#### **You may wish to say or pray**

*Lord, have mercy.*

*Christ, have mercy.*

*Lord, have mercy.*

#### **Read the following words from Scripture. If you have access to today’s readings for Holy Communion, you may wish to read and reflect on them.**

Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’ – *John 6.35*

Pray for the needs of the world, for your local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord’s Prayer.

**Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.**

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day.

Amen.

– *after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester*

**You might then add one or more of the following prayers:**

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,  
'I am with you always'.  
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.  
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,  
and keep me in your care. Amen.

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful; in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you; in these days of emptiness, take possession of us; in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross. – *Angela Ashwin*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**Conclude with the following:**

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. Amen.

# Spiritual Communion

(from the Armed Forces Prayerbook of the Episcopal Church of the United States)

¶ *If on any Sunday or other Day of Obligation (see Tables and Rules for the Movable and Immovable Feasts in the front part of the Prayer Book), you are prevented from making your Communion, make an act of Spiritual Communion, after the following manner:*

¶ *Kneel down, and say:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

¶ *Then read the Collect for the day, the Epistle, and the Holy Gospel.*

¶ *Rise and say the Nicene Creed.*

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered was buried: And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

¶ *Kneel and read the Confession*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, Which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against Thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings: The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Forgive us all that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please Thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of Thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ *Then say:*

The Almighty and merciful Lord, grant me pardon and absolution of all my sins. Amen.

¶ *Read the Comfortable Words, Preface. and Sanctus.*

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn to Him.

Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

–*St. Matthew xi. 28.*

God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. – *St. John iii. 16.*

Hear also what Saint Paul saith.

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *1 Tim. i. 15.*

Hear also what Saint John saith.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the Propitiation for our sins. *1 St. John ii. 1, 2.*

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying,

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High. Amen.

¶ *Then say:*

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

¶ *Spend a few moments in meditation upon the fact that God so loved you that He sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world for you. Recite the Lord's Prayer and afterward say:*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me always. Amen.