

## **Spiritual Communion**

Holy Week and Easter are special times in the life of every Christian when we endeavour to receive Holy Communion. During the Coronavirus Pandemic, that will not be possible this year. 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 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 the day'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 our local community, and for those close to you. End with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father...

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.

**The Right Reverend Robert Atwell. Bishop of Exeter.**