



Making a Spiritual Communion

“The effect of the sacrament can be secured by every man if he receive it in desire, though not in reality.” A balm in these times of Eucharistic fasting, these words of Saint Thomas Aquinas point us to the reality that God’s graces are ever-flowing and no amount of social distancing can keep us from the love of God. Aquinas continues: “Consequently, just as some are baptized with the Baptism of desire, through their desire of baptism, before being baptized in the Baptism of water; so likewise some eat this sacrament spiritually ere they receive it sacramentally.” (ST III. q80. a1)

This gift of Spiritual Communion is not new to the Church, though its practice is now exceedingly popular as we await the opportunity to attend Holy Mass and physically receive the Eucharist once more. Theologically speaking, what is required for a proper act of Spiritual Communion? Not a specific rote prayer, though there are some beautiful suggested prayers, but namely, an ardent desire for the Eucharist accompanied by the internal dispositions normally present before Holy Communion: faith, humility, sorrow, adoration, and love. Therefore, it is fitting that an examina-

tion of conscience would precede a Spiritual Communion. Do we desire Christ above all else with an insatiable hunger?

Our hearts rightly should long for the day when we can gather physically for Holy Mass and receive our Eucharistic Lord. In the meantime, by making a Spiritual Communion, we can still receive the fruits of the sacrament: “Christians - especially when they cannot easily receive Holy Communion - should do so at least by desire, so that with renewed faith, reverence, humility and complete trust in the goodness of the divine Redeemer, they may be united to Him in the spirit of the most ardent charity.” (Venerable Pope Pius XII, Mediator Dei) Christ makes himself constantly available to us. May we be strengthened in his generous outpouring of mercy found in this ancient practice, and let us make frequent use of it.

Below is the prayer of Spiritual Communion given to us by St. Alphonsus de’ Liguori, though many others can easily be found online as well.

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to possess Thee within my soul. Since I am unable now to receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as being already there, and unite myself wholly to Thee; never permit me to be separated from Thee. Amen.