

Spiritual Communion and Coronavirus

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 normally be present at the Eucharist.

As we celebrate the sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour in a '*socially distanced*' way, it's instructive to refer to the rubrics in the service for "*Communion of the sick*" in the **Scottish Prayer Book**, dealing with the situation where someone is unable to "*receive the Sacrament with his mouth*":

"If a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the Priest, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood: the Priest shall instruct him that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him, and shed his Blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefor; he doth eat and drink the Body and Bread of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth."

So clearly we may truly "*eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ*", even though we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves. Making a Spiritual Communion is particularly fitting for those who for whatever reason cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun or Pentecost.

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?*

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.

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.

Amen.

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.**