

Receiving Worthily Is Your Responsibility

To know that you are receiving the Lord in Holy communion worthily,

- *Go to confession frequently.*
- *Be sure that you get to every obligatory Mass.*
- *Be sure that you reaffirm your faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist every time you receive Him.*
- *Work hard to grow close to God and avoid sin.*

be sexually intimate with someone who is not one's spouse to sin gravely.

Offenses against the 7th commandment

All manner of thievery (stealing) must be con-fessed, even if it is 'small stuff.' Let me say it again, if you have committed at least one mortal sin and not confessed that mortal sin, you may not go to communion until you go to confession. See Father before Mass if you cannot come on Satur-day.

We want you to receive the Lord without any guilt—unreservedly. His Grace makes you wor-thy, and availing yourself of that grace after bap-tism is your responsibility, just as avoiding sin is your responsibility. Please take this teaching to heart and may the Good Lord bless you richly with His Divine Mercy and pardon.



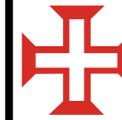
Saint Peter's Catholic Church

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Serving the People
of God

Receiving the Lord Worthily In Holy Communion



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Looking out for your soul...

In St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, he writes that those who receive the Lord unworthily without recognizing the Body, are eating and drinking their own condemnation. The Church has always interpreted this as a question of one's being in a state of mortal sin, in a state of disbelief in the Real Presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, or in a state of disunity with the Apostolic See. Therefore, with the 'Power of the Keys' (cf Matt 16:16ff), the Church has placed restrictions on who may worthily receive the Eucharist. Those in a state of grace, who are members of the Roman Catholic Church, or are members of other churches in union with the Pope may all receive. There are other requirements for non-Catholics to receive communion in the Catholic church, but they are already spoken to in the missalette, so we won't go into them here. The corollary to this restriction is that Catholics may not receive communion in any non-Catholic church. That includes the so-called mainline Protestant churches like the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists, to name a few. All Protestant churches are off-limits when it comes to Catholics sharing in their communion services. The Catholic Church is very concerned that her faithful avoid sin at all costs, and so has laws to protect us from 'eating and drinking our own condemnation. First, let us define what it means to be worthy to receive: One must be baptized to be admitted to communion. One must be in the state of Grace—that is—one must not have any unconfessed mortal sins. This requires confession to a priest.

If there are any unconfessed sins, and you want to go to receive Eucharist, you can approach the priest before Mass or, better yet, at the regular confession time.

Another part of the worthiness package comes when one has been responsible to one's obligations as a Catholic. That means that one must obey the 5 precepts of the Church: to attend all obligatory Masses, confess once a year, go to communion during Eastertide, fast and abstain from certain foods on fast days, and provide for the material needs of your parish and the Church at large.

The Obligation to attend Mass

The teaching of the Church regarding the Sunday Obligation and worthiness to receive communion are listed below.

One must go to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation to be worthy to receive communion. Even if one is not properly disposed to receive communion (in mortal sin), one must always attend Sunday Masses and all Holy Days of Obligation. The Sunday Obligation can only be satisfied by attending a Catholic Mass at which the Sunday Liturgy is celebrated. In the Diocese of Pueblo, these Masses are generally:

- anticipated Sunday Masses which are to be celebrated after 4:00 pm on Saturday or,
 - Masses celebrated on Sunday before 6:00 pm.
- If you missed any Sunday Mass or Mass on a Holy Day of Obligation, you must confess to a priest before going forward to receive Communion. You can catch Father before Mass and get either a dispensation or absolution. It is objectively a mortal sin to miss Mass. You cannot presume you have a dispensation, even if it is regularly given, and 'just go' to communion anyway.

Common excuses don't cut it

Everyone who misses Mass on Sunday thinks their case is the exception. Let me answer some of these assumptions:

Going to work is no excuse for missing Mass. Going to a wedding or quinceañera or funeral on Saturday does not satisfy the Sunday Obligation—you must go to Mass on Sunday.

Going to a Protestant Church on Sunday (or a Saturday anticipated mass) does not satisfy the Sunday Obligation for a Catholic. If you go there, you must also go to Mass

Mortal Sins rob you of your right to receive Communion

These days there aren't too many murderers of adults attending Mass on weekends. Yet there are some who have killed an innocent who blithely receive communion in the state of mortal sin. The other most common sins that people commit and still go to

communion are against the 6th commandment (adultery/fornication), against the 7th Commandment (stealing), and offenses against the 3rd commandment (missing obligatory Mass).

Sins against the fifth commandment to not kill

You may not know this, but the 5th commandment includes a couple of such offenses that people usually don't think about. To have an abortion is to automatically incur the penalty of excommunication. Luckily for those who have done this, the priest in the confessional can lift the excommunication at the same time as you go to confession. The other is using artificial contraception to avoid having children; it is forbidden by the Church and is objectively a mortal sin. You must see your priest and resolve the issue.

Cases of adultery abound in today's culture

If you are living with someone as if with a spouse, or in a sexual relationship with someone that you are not married to, or your marriage was not witnessed by a Catholic priest and 2 witnesses, you may not go to communion until you have resolved the issue with your parish priest.

Finally, one does not have to copulate to commit adultery or fornication. One merely has to

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