

## *The Holy Mass – Making a Holy Communion – Part 4 of 4*

On, August 15, 2021, the Solemnity of the Assumption, the obligation to assist (be present) at Mass in-person is reinstated for Catholic Christians living in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This means that we are to be present for Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Our absence carries with it the pain of grave sin. Exceptions to this obligation ordinarily consist of those obstacles posed by grave physical (illness) or moral (excess fear, anxiety etc.) factors that would make assisting at Mass difficult if not impossible.

Over the past few weeks we considered from where the obligation to attend Holy Mass each Sunday comes. We then considered the way by which we might fruitfully “assist” or actively participate at Mass on Sunday. One of the central pieces we often associate with Mass is Holy Communion. Something we need to keep in mind is that Holy Communion is one part of the greater whole of the Mass.

Why do we participate in Mass however? Jesus’ total self-sacrifice on our behalf to the Father on the Cross happened once for all. The Mass perpetuates the sacrifice of the Cross. We who live several hundred years removed from that initial sacrifice may share in its fruits now. Whether or not we receive Jesus in the Eucharist at each Mass, we are called to be present for that sacrifice which defines us, which makes us who we are in Jesus Christ.

Receiving the Eucharist, we are offered an even more intimate share in that one sacrifice; receiving Jesus into our very bodies. Like anything else we can do that better or worse. **Holy** Communion means to receive Jesus in the Eucharist in a state of grace. A state of grace means to be free from mortal sin. Why is this so important?

The Eucharist, is Jesus. Jesus makes himself really and truly present to us body, blood, soul and divinity. Receiving Jesus in Holy Communion is a sign of our belief that Jesus present there in the Eucharist and also, of our actual and moral communion with Jesus. This means that first, we have faith Jesus is there in the Eucharist. Secondly, we are initiated into Jesus’ body on earth, the Church. Finally, it means that being a member of the Church, my life is in moral communion with Jesus and his way of life: his teachings, his law, and those promulgated by his representatives in the Church.

If we cannot say with a clear conscience that our life is both in actual and moral communion with Jesus in the Church, we ought to refrain from making an act of Holy Communion as we would be receiving Jesus unworthily. St. Paul noticed this disconnect among the Corinthians and reminded them:

***“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.”<sup>1</sup>***

The best way we can prepare to receive Jesus worthily is to make a good confession. There we may be forgiven any and all sins committed since our Baptism. Having been reconciled to Christ and to his Church in confession we may be confident of being in a state of grace. We may be confident of making a worthy, a holy communion glorifying God, and growing in the life of grace which prepares the way for heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 11:27-29