



The Reception of Holy Communion at Mass

Every **procession** during Mass is a sign of the pilgrim Church moving to the Heavenly Jerusalem. **When we process, we are a sign, a symbol of the pilgrim Church ‘on the way.’** This is particularly so in the procession to receive the body and blood of Christ in Communion.

The Communion Procession is an action of the Body of Christ. The members of the community move forward to share in the sacred meal, to receive the body and blood of Christ which is the sign and source of their unity.

The Communion Hymn, sung by the united voices of those who believe in Jesus and share his life, supports the action of Christ’s Body. The hymn is the corporate thanksgiving prayer of the members of Christ’s Body, united with one another. **When we come together to participate in the Eucharistic celebration we come, not as individuals, but as united members of Christ’s Body.** God is asked to send his Holy Spirit to make us one body, one spirit in Christ.

The prayers of the Liturgy and the official norms for liturgical celebrations emphasize the fundamental concept of the unity of the baptized. Baptism has joined us to Christ and to one another as the vine is to the branches. **The Holy Spirit guides us together in our efforts to become one in Christ.**

Thus we are the Body of Christ, moving forward to receive the Christ who makes us one with Himself and with one another. Our procession should move with dignity. Our bearing should be that of those who know they have been redeemed by Christ and are coming to receive their God!

Unity in posture, gesture, and song is a symbol of our unity as members of the one Body of Christ. The meaning of this symbol should be the governing factor in the way we receive Holy Communion.

The bishops of our country have designated that in this country Communion will be received standing and that a bow will be the act of reverence made by those receiving. The person distributing Communion says audibly to each person approaching, *‘The Body of Christ’*. This formula is a proclamation which calls for a response of faith on the part of the one who receives. The communicant should audibly respond *‘Amen.’* That response indicates that his or her belief is that this small wafer of bread and the wine in this chalice are in reality the body and blood of Christ the Lord. When one receives from the chalice, the proclamation, *‘The Blood of Christ,’* is made by the person distributing Communion and the communicant again responds *‘Amen’*, as a profession of faith.