

## **What do you believe about Communion?**

Do you believe that Holy Communion is a representation, a reenactment, or memorial of the Last Supper, and do you believe Jesus Christ is present there in the host as a symbol, or a sign, or by his power?

Or, do you believe that the Holy Communion you receive at each Mass, is truly the body and blood of Jesus Christ, as well as His soul and divinity, and therefore, He is truly, really, and substantially present in the sacrament?

This is a very important question. The correct answer to this question is the second question posed above- Catholics must believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The first question above most closely matches the many Protestant religions. There are an estimated 3,000 to 40,000 versions of Protestantism. Lutherans and Methodists are two exceptions because of their belief in the Real Presence.

Most Protestants otherwise, believe that the Communion in their churches is merely a reenactment of the Last Supper- or that the Host is a sign, or symbol of Christ. They merely think of it as bread- they are breaking bread with Jesus, and their fellow parishioners. Even the wine used is in some cases, is substituted with grape juice, and sometimes served in disposable plastic cups.

Catholics must believe in the Real Presence. Catholics believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated Host in Holy Communion. The Host, the Eucharist is Christ's true body. The consecrated wine, in the Holy Chalice, is Christ's true blood.

Although the belief or disbelief in the Real Presence is a primary difference between Catholics and Protestants, many Catholics today seem to be unsure of the Church's teaching on this issue. The newest poll on this issue seems to say that there is a direct correlation between frequency of Mass attendance and belief in the Real Presence.

# Poll of U.S. Catholics by CARA, Nov. 2023

**New Research contradicts the findings of the Pew Research Center poll of U.S. Catholics.**

Source: Georgetown Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), which was commissioned by the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life.



## **Is the Eucharistic Host the Real Body of Christ?**

**64% of U.S. Catholics say Yes.**

**80% of U.S. Catholics who attend Church Monthly say Yes.**

**95% of U.S. Catholics who attend Church Weekly say Yes.**

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**Those people who served in a parish ministry, attended a Catholic school at any level, or those who entered the Catholic faith as an adult polled higher concerning the Real Presence than those cited above.**

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## **How did you learn about the Catholic church's teachings concerning the Real Presence?**

**Of those who learned on the Internet, 60% believe**

**53% from their parents, and 67% of those people believe**

**44% from religious education or 1st Communion preparation, and 73% of those people believe**

**40% learned at Mass**

**37% learned Catholic school, and 75% of those people believe**

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## **How often do you go to Mass?**

**Pre-Covid 19 (before 2019) 24% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass Weekly**

**Post-Covid 19**

**17% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass Weekly**

**20% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass only Monthly**

**26% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass a few times per year**

**35% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass rarely or never**

**Excerpt from the 13<sup>th</sup> Council of Trent in October, 1551, Decree 4 Chapter 4 concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist:**

CHAPTER IV  
**TRANSUBSTANTIATION**

But since Christ our Redeemer declared that to be truly His own body which He offered under the form of bread, [Luke 22: 19; John 6:48 ff.; 1 Cor. 11: 24], it has, therefore, always been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy council now declares it anew, that by the consecration of the bread and wine a change is brought about of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church properly and appropriately calls transubstantiation.

**Excerpt from the 13<sup>th</sup> Council of Trent in October, 1551, Decree Chapter 7 concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist:**

CHAPTER VII  
**THE PREPARATION TO BE EMPLOYED THAT ONE MAY RECEIVE THE SACRED EUCHARIST WORTHILY**

If it is unbecoming for anyone to approach any of the sacred functions except in a spirit of piety, assuredly, the more the holiness and divinity of this heavenly sacrament are understood by a Christian, the more diligently ought he to give heed, lest he receive it without great reverence and holiness, especially when we read those terrifying words of the Apostle: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." [See 1 Cor. 11:29]

Wherefore, he who would communicate, must recall to mind his precept: "Let a man prove himself." [See 1 Cor. 11:29]

Now, ecclesiastical usage declares that such an examination is necessary in order that no one conscious to himself of mortal sin, however contrite he may feel, ought to receive the Sacred Eucharist without previous sacramental confession.

*Indeed, there is a public announcement before Holy Communion, at each weekend Mass at Our Lady of the Lake Roman Catholic church, in Lake Havasu, AZ. It reminds the congregation that to receive, they must be Catholic, have received their First Communion Sacrament, and be in a state of Grace, without Mortal sin.*

**To further amplify the importance of the initial question concerning the belief in the Real Presence, the pertinent sections from the Council of Trent are reproduced below:**

**Excerpts from the 13<sup>th</sup> Council of Trent in October, 1551, The 11 CANONS concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist:**

Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist:

**Canon 1.** If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but says that He is in it only as in a sign, or figure or force, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 2.** If anyone says that in the sacred and, holy sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denies that wonderful and singular change of the whole substance of the bread into the body and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the appearances only of bread and wine remaining, which change the Catholic Church most aptly calls transubstantiation, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 3.** If anyone denies that in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist the whole Christ is contained under each form and under every part of each form when separated, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 4.** If anyone says that after the consecration is completed, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are not in the admirable sacrament of the Eucharist, but are there only while being taken and not before or after, and that in the hosts or consecrated particles which are reserved or which remain after communion, the true body of the Lord does not remain, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 5.** If anyone says that the principal fruit of the most Holy Eucharist is the remission of sins, or that other effects do not result from it, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 6.** If anyone says that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with worship, also outwardly manifested, and is consequently neither to be venerated with a special festive solemnity, nor to be solemnly borne about in procession according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of holy

Church, or is not to be set publicly before the people to be adored and that the adorers thereof are idolaters, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 7.** If anyone says that it is not lawful that the Holy Eucharist be reserved in a sacred place, but immediately after consecration must necessarily be distributed among those present, or that it is not lawful that it be carried with honor to the sick, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 8.** If anyone says that Christ received in the Eucharist is received spiritually only, and not also sacramentally and really, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 9.** If anyone denies that each and all of Christ's faithful of both sexes are bound, when they have reached the years of discretion, to communicate every year at least at Easter, [*annual Easter Duty*], in accordance with the precept of holy mother Church, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 10.** If anyone says that it is not lawful for the priest celebrating to communicate himself, let him be anathema. [See the definition of anathema following Canon 11]

**Canon 11.** If anyone says that faith alone is a sufficient preparation for receiving the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist, let him be anathema. And lest so great a sacrament be received unworthily and hence unto death and condemnation, this holy council ordains and declares that sacramental confession, when a confessor can be had, must necessarily be made beforehand by those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin, however contrite they may consider themselves. Moreover, if anyone shall presume to teach, preach or obstinately assert, or in public disputation defend the contrary, he shall be excommunicated.

Definition of Anathema: It refers to a form of excommunication, although the church no longer excommunicates individuals.

**When a person was excommunicated by anathema, a series of procedures had to be followed, including the bishop warning the person that he or she was committing a grave ecclesiastical crime, imperiling their soul.**

## **How to show proper reverence for the Host**

1) It would be a wonderful thing if the congregation automatically struck their breast three times, in unison, and said, **“My Lord and My God”**, each time the Body of Christ (the Host), or the Blood of Christ (the Chalice) was elevated. It was not one of the Novus Ordo Mass reforms that emerged after the Second Vatican Council in the late 1960s. There are four opportunities at each Mass. 1) Consecration of the Body 2)

Consecration of the Blood 3) Elevation of the Body and Blood at the 'Great Amen' 4) Elevation of the Host when we say, 'I am not worthy to receive you but...'

Try to remember to say **"My Lord and My God" to yourself while striking your breast three times**, when you attend your next Mass.

2) You may not be aware, but prior to about 1968-69, all Holy Communion was distributed with parishioners kneeling at a church-wide kneeler rail. All parishioners received on their tongue. An Altar Boy (no girls allowed), followed the Priest, (no Eucharistic Ministers), with a paten in his right hand. The paten was a gold plated small flat shallow plate with a long handle. The Altar Boy's job was to have the paten under each recipient's chin when the person received Holy Communion. It was there to catch any fallen Host, and to catch any host particles (visible or invisible), because even the smallest particle is truly Christ's whole body. Such was the respect that the Catholic Church had for the Communion Host before the Second Vatican Council, (4 sessions, about 8 to 12 weeks long between 1962 and 1965. The Mass reforms were about 1968 or 1969, depending on various parishes. Altars were turned around to face the congregation, and the former 100% Latin Mass was gradually replaced by the language of the vernacular by 1969).

To this day many theologians bemoan the reforms that allowed Communion in the hand, correctly fearing that the small invisible crumbs must inevitably fall to the floor, only to be trampled underfoot by unknowing and otherwise innocent parishioners.

## **How to receive Holy Communion**

**Obviously, one must be in a state of Grace. That means is that you must have no Mortal sins on your soul. A Mortal sin requires that three conditions were present, all at the same time, when the sin was committed.**

- A)** Its subject matter must be grave.
- B)** It must be committed with full knowledge (and awareness) of the sinful action and the gravity of the offense.
- C)** It must be committed with deliberate and complete consent.

**Do not receive Communion with a Mortal sin on your soul. Remain in your seat, or join the Communion line with you arms crossed over your chest to receive a blessing on place of communion. (You could look for the proper crossed arms position that children, who have not made their First Communion, use in Communion line.)**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

In addition to being in a state of grace -free from grave sin (Catechism #1415)- we must show reverent solemnity and be modestly dressed (#1387) and have fasted from all food and drink except water and medicines for one hour:

### THE CORRECT MANNER: BOW OR GENUFLECT, THEN:

IF YOU FOLLOW THE CHURCH'S UNIVERSAL NORM OF RECEIVING ON THE TONGUE  
*tilt your head back slightly,  
and protrude the tongue a little.*



IF YOU FOLLOW THE LOCAL OPTION OF RECEIVING IN THE HAND  
*cross your left palm over your right hand  
and keep them flat*  
*(only available as an option where the Bishops have received permission from Rome, it never displaces the Norm of reception on the tongue).*



### WHAT NOT TO DO

**Do not nod the head**  
*(You may be reminded to hold the head still)*



**Do not receive on dirty (or ink-covered) hands**  
*(This will necessitate Communion being administered on the tongue -no "dirty plates" for the Lord)*



**Do not attempt to receive single-handed**  
*(This will necessitate Communion being administered on the tongue)*



**Do not have your hands side by side**  
*(This will necessitate an instruction to change)*



**Do not splay the fingers**  
*(This will necessitate an instruction to change)*



**Do not try to take the Host with your fingers**  
*(This will necessitate an instruction to change)*



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Do not receive Communion if you are not Catholic, and have not joined the church officially, or made your First Holy Communion. (That's one of the Seven Sacraments).

Observe the one hour fast from food, before receiving Holy Communion.

Practice Courtesy and Reverence once you are out of your seat. Jesus is watching.

Fold your hands together at your waist, or at your chest, palms together, in Prayer Mode.

The Priest, Deacon, or Eucharistic Minister will say, “The Body of Christ”, and your response will be “Amen”.

At St. Mary’s, we are privileged to offer Communion under both species- Body and Blood. The first Saturday/Sunday Masses offering the Blood of Christ here, was May 20-21, 2023.

A) Host on the tongue, standing or kneeling on the red kneeler.

B) You may also receive in your hand, to be consumed immediately thereafter. VERY IMPORTANT- If you receive in your hand, put one cupped hand under the other, with outstretched hands in an elevated fashion. Your under hand will pick up the Host. The person distributing Communion has only a second or two to decide what your intention is. Leave no doubt in his mind. Provide a target of only ONE hand. Do not cup two hands together to ‘cradle’ the Host.

If you have decided to consume the Blood of Christ from the Chalice, stop in front of the minister, and make eye contact. Once you stop and make eye contact, they will know that you are not simply paying reverence to Christ on your way back to your seat. He or she will say “The Blood of Christ”. Your answer will be “Amen”.

Once you have returned to your seat, the proper thing to do is to kneel in prayer rather than simply sit down in your seat. You have the Body of Christ within you at that moment- What a privilege to thank Him, talk to Him, or to ask for your private intentions! You should remain kneeling until the Priest or Deacon has completed the consumption of the Blood of Christ, and removed all items from the Altar to the side table, and taken his seat. Take your seat then.