

Suggested Prayers for Spiritual Communion

The house of Bishops has come up with these prayers below because of Christmas and that we are meeting in limited numbers for Communion, There is a way of connecting to the bread and wine even if you are not physically partaking, It is called Spiritual Communion. This practice has been considered since the Middle Ages. So hopefully although not the same, it can mean some kind of connection and feeling of connection to God in this time.

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.

- The Church of England, after the prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Jesus, I believe that you are present with us in the sacrament of bread and wine.

I love you and I desire your presence afresh in my life.

Since I cannot now receive the bread and wine of the altar, come spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you and unite myself to you; never let me be separated from you. Amen.

- The Diocese of Niagara, after a prayer of St Alphonsus Maria de'Liguori

O loving God,

in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries

gathered to make Eucharist,

hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son,

I offer you praise and thanksgiving.

Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life

I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised

and with your Son who gave his life for us.

Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit

that I may be filled with your presence.

Jesus, as the hem of your garment, touched in faith,

healed the woman who could not touch your body,

so may the soul of your servant be healed,

for though I cannot receive you in the sacrament

I can, through this offering of my prayer, receive you in my heart;

grant this for Christ's sake. Amen.

- The Diocese of Chelmsford

Special Q&A Bulletin

[The following question and related queries were discussed at yesterday's College of Bishops meeting. This Q&A is published today to inform any decisions being made for Christmas services.]

Q: I am no longer hearing about a "Eucharistic Fast"; can the Eucharist be celebrated even if only 10 persons are in the gathering, and if all other guidelines for Eucharist are observed? Can it be livestreamed?

A: Absolutely. Neither the Ecclesiastical Province nor the Diocese of Toronto is calling for a Eucharistic Fast at this time. We believe that we are in a different place than we were in the spring, and our guidelines allow for the safe celebration of the Eucharist, whether your parish is operating under the Amber Stage or the Red Stage guidelines.

In these extraordinary times, although we have lifted the Eucharistic Fast, many parts of the Diocese are still necessarily limited in their access to Holy Communion due to gathering restrictions, and out of an abundance of care for our neighbour. We believe however that the presence of Christ is available to us in a real, albeit different, way through our participation in livestreamed worship.

'Spiritual Communion' has a long tradition in the Anglican Church, and indeed in the larger Christian tradition. In the Middle Ages, Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote that 'Some eat this sacrament spiritually ere they receive it sacramentally . . . from desire of receiving the sacrament itself'. The practice of spiritual communion is found in the office of the Communion of the Sick in our 1962 Book of Common Prayer (p. 584), a rubric retained from the Archbishop Cranmer's first Prayer Book (1549) and subsequent revisions. We believe that this current Covid-19 global pandemic, and the governmental and health restrictions that we are currently experiencing, would certainly constitute a "just impediment" to receiving the sacrament "by mouth".

If you are livestreaming the Eucharist, we recommend that some theological teaching around spiritual communion be provided, as well as devotional prayers (some suggestions are [here](#)) for those who are not present to receive the consecrated bread and wine.

May the Christ-child be born anew in us, as we welcome Him at the altar of our hearts this Christmastide.

We hope you have found this Special Q&A Bulletin helpful. The next Weekly Q&A Bulletin will be sent to you next Wednesday. In the meantime, send us your questions to info@toronto.anglican.ca.