



Introduction: A longing that touches Heaven

At the heart of the Christian life is the Eucharist: the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, offered in love at every Holy Mass. But what happens when a soul longs to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament yet cannot do so physically? Is it entirely deprived of that grace?

This is where one of the Church's most beautiful, ancient, and often forgotten devotions shines: **Spiritual Communion**.

In a world marked by busyness, restrictions, physical distance, and at times the inability to attend Mass—due to illness, persecution, remoteness, or extraordinary circumstances like the pandemic—Spiritual Communion re-emerges powerfully as an **invisible bridge of love between the soul and its God**.

What is Spiritual Communion?

Spiritual Communion is a **deep and sincere act of desire** to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist when one is unable to do so sacramentally. It does not replace sacramental Communion but **disposes the soul to receive abundant graces** and intimately unites the faithful with Christ.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, taught that **Spiritual Communion is a true way of receiving Christ**, even though the consecrated Host is not physically received. It is an act of love that springs from the heart—a cry of the soul that says: “Lord, I cannot have You at the altar, but I desire You more than anything in this world.”

Origins and historical development

The practice of Spiritual Communion has ancient roots in the life of the Church. Although it was not institutionalized in the early centuries as sacramental Communion was, **the idea of uniting spiritually with Christ** is present from the time of the Church Fathers.

St. Ambrose, in the 4th century, already encouraged those unable to approach the altar to do so **with faith and devotion from the heart**. Later, saints like St. Augustine spoke of a “communion of desire,” understood as the sincere intention to receive Jesus.



But it was in the Middle Ages—especially through the work of **St. Thomas Aquinas**—that the doctrine became clearer. He taught that just as there is a baptism of desire for those who cannot receive the sacrament, **there is also a communion of desire**. This thought was later echoed and promoted by great mystics and theologians.

In the 16th century, during the Protestant Reformation, the **Council of Trent reaffirmed the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist** and emphasized the importance of fervent desire to unite with Him. Spiritual Communion was confirmed as a pious and beneficial practice.

In later centuries, saints such as **St. Teresa of Ávila, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Francis de Sales, and St. John Vianney** actively promoted it. St. Teresa once said:

“When you do not receive Communion and do not attend Mass, you can make a Spiritual Communion, which is extremely beneficial; through it, much love of our Lord is impressed upon the soul.”

The spiritual value of Spiritual Communion

Some might ask: “What good is it to make a Spiritual Communion if I don’t really receive Christ’s Body?” The answer is deeply consoling.

While Christ is not received sacramentally in Spiritual Communion, **a real outpouring of grace is received**, proportionate to the faith, love, and desire with which it is made. **God is never outdone in generosity**, and He responds tenderly to a heart that longs for Him.

The soul that makes a Spiritual Communion with humility, devotion, and sincere love **is interiorly transformed** and united with Christ in a mystical but true way. This act can inflame charity, renew fervor, strengthen faith, and bear abundant spiritual fruit.

St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, reminded the faithful that “Spiritual Communion, so dear to the Church’s tradition, should be encouraged.” And Pope Benedict XVI said this practice “helps us remain united with Christ even when we cannot approach the altar.”



When can Spiritual Communion be made?

One of the beautiful aspects of Spiritual Communion is that **it can be made at any time**. Though especially recommended when one attends Mass but cannot receive Communion (due to mortal sin, not having fasted, not yet having made First Communion, etc.), it can also be made **multiple times a day**, in any place or situation.

Some ideal moments include:

- During Eucharistic Adoration.
- While watching or listening to a livestreamed or televised Mass.
- When passing by a closed or locked church.
- In moments of illness, solitude, or persecution.
- During times of Eucharistic fasting or voluntary penance.

How to make a Spiritual Communion

There is no single required formula. The Catechism and the Magisterium do not impose a specific prayer, but they do encourage the act to be done **with faith, love, and sincere longing**.

You can follow these simple steps:

1. **Make an act of faith** in Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist.
2. **Express your love and deep desire** to receive Him.
3. **Invite Him spiritually into your soul**.
4. **Remain in silence for a few moments**, adoring His spiritual presence in you.

A traditional formula, promoted by St. Alphonsus Liguori, says:

*"My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul."*



Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

As though You have already come, I embrace You and unite myself entirely to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

Spiritual Communion and today's world

In a hyperconnected world where many Catholics do not have regular access to the sacraments—due to social, political, health-related, or pastoral reasons—Spiritual Communion becomes a **lifeline**, a refuge for the soul.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions were unable to attend Mass, Pope Francis strongly encouraged this practice, reminding the faithful that “the Lord does not abandon us” and that “a true spiritual communion can be made from home.”

Moreover, in a world that often takes the Eucharist for granted or receives it without proper preparation, Spiritual Communion teaches us to **value sacramental Communion more reverently**, to long for it, to prepare better, and to never receive it out of routine, but with burning love.

Now more than ever, we need **souls who live Eucharistically**, who keep the fire of love for Christ burning—even when they cannot physically receive Him.

Conclusion: A simple act, a boundless love

Spiritual Communion is a hidden treasure of our faith—a quiet prayer that can change a day, a life, a soul.

It doesn't require open churches or sacred vestments—just a willing heart.

It is the echo of the soul's cry:

“Lord, come to me. I need You. I desire You. I love You.”



No matter how far you feel from God, no matter how many times you've fallen: **if you can desire Him, you can make a Spiritual Communion.** And that desire, offered with humility and faith, may be the beginning of a radical transformation in your relationship with Him.

Final Prayer of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus,
I firmly believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy
Sacrament of the Altar.
I adore You and love You with all my heart.
I am sorry that I cannot receive You now sacramentally,
but I ask You to come spiritually into my soul.
I receive You as if You were already here,
I unite myself entirely to You and I never want to be
separated from Your presence.
Keep me always united to Your Sacred Heart,
and make of my life an offering of love.
Amen.*