

A FORM
OF
SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
COMPILED BY
THE BISHOP OF MELANESIA.
[Bishop Cecil John Wood]

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The Church clearly contemplates that the benefits of Sacramental Communion may be obtained by the faithful believer, when the actual reception of the Holy Sacrament is impossible owing to certain circumstances.

This is set forth in the rubric at the end of the Prayer Book Service for the Communion of the Sick. The circumstances are these:

- In extreme sickness and consequent inability to communicate.
- That a Priest cannot be obtained.
- The absence of any fellow-communicants and consequent inability to fulfil other Prayer Book rubrics.
- Any other just cause.

It frequently happens to missionaries and others that they are far removed from the ministrations of a Priest and are unable to receive the Blessed Sacrament for weeks or months at a time.

The following form of Spiritual Communion is compiled to meet these conditions.

It will be noted that the Church safeguards this privilege of Spiritual Communion from abuse by requiring the Communicant to consider:

- The need for repentance, as in the case of Sacramental Communion.
- The need of a real faith that Christ died to save mankind, and that certain benefits are received by the soul as the result.

In recollection of these benefits and in thanksgiving for them the Communicant will receive the Body and Blood of Christ, to his/her soul's good as surely as if they were partaking of the consecrated elements in the service of the Church.

Thus the act of Spiritual Communion is not a substitute for Sacramental Communion, nor is it a make-believe. At the close of the devotion the Communicant gives thanks to God for something definitely received, and during the day, can look back to their morning devotion and say, 'This morning I received the Body and Blood of my Lord.'

It would not be right to use this devotion of Spiritual Communion when the Sacramental Communion could be readily obtained. Care will be taken that neither unwillingness to rise in the morning nor slackness in preparing for Communion lead to the substitution of this devotion for the Church's service. That God in His love provides many special means of Grace can never be sufficient warrant for neglecting the normal means.

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CECIL JOHN MELANESIA.

Easter, 1916.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Prepare yourself as you would do for Communion at Church, finding somewhere quiet or where you will not be disturbed.

THE APPROACH.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Our Father,...

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Come into the presence of Jesus and say,

Come unto me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Matt 11:28.

Pause

Lord Jesus, I long to come to you, not because I am worthy, but because you through your generous love call me. Let me approach as you allowed Peter who had denied you three times or as the women who stood in your presence a sinner yet not condemned by you. Amen.

Hear also what Saint Paul saith:

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15

Pause

CONFESSION

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Lord I come to you to confess my sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep your commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

A time of reflection of any failure to love God and neighbour.

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that I have sinned in thought, word and deed. I have not loved you with my whole heart. I have not loved my neighbours as myself. In your mercy forgive what I have been, help me to amend what I am, and direct what I shall be; that I may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, my God. Amen.

It is certain God hears and forgives you. Consider St. John's consolation to the penitent,

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins¹ John 2:1

Accept this for yourself, saying:

Thanks be to God for His forgiveness.

Now make an act of Faith, Hope, and Love.

Lord I believe in you, help my unbelief.

Lord I hope in you, help me to trust more firmly.

Lord I love you, help me to love more truly.

You may use the Readings and reflections for the day at this point.

ACT OF COMMUNION

Make time to realize the presence of Jesus in your soul, and make your act of Spiritual Communion, remembering how at countless Churches throughout the world, bread and wine are offered in remembrance of the Sacrifice of Christ for us, and that we share in that remembrance through the sacrament of Bread and Wine, Christ's Body and Blood.

In union Lord with the faithful at every Altar of you Church, where they celebrate the Eucharistic Feast, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I present to you my soul and body, so as to be, by your gracious love, united with you. As I cannot at this time receive your love through the breaking of bread and sharing of wine with my brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray that you come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you and embrace you to the very depths of my soul. Lord let nothing separate me from you. Let me live and die in your love. Amen.

Grant, O Lord Jesus Christ, that as the hem of your robe, which was touched in faith and healed the woman who could not touch your Body, so I pray that the soul of you servant may be healed by like faith in you, whom I cannot now sacramentally receive. This I pray through your tender mercy, who lives and reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

¶ *The Church of Christ*

¶ *Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority*

¶ *The local community*

¶ *Those who suffer*

¶ *The communion of saints*

Or this may be said after a time of quiet:

O Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised to be with your Church even to the end; grant to your children the sense of your abiding presence, and bless our Bishop, clergy, and teachers, that your Kingdom may be spread and all brought to the knowledge of your saving grace. Amen.

THANKSGIVING.

Psalm 103: 1-5, 8-13, 20-22

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—
- 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- 5 who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;
- 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.
- 13 As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.
- 20 Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word.
- 21 Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will.
- 22 Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Post Communion Prayer or Additional Collect for the Day followed by a prayer that unites us with our brothers and sisters praying at this time.

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met me us your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who have shared in this Spiritual Communion, live his risen life and bring life to others. May we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Conclude with the Grace