

Some Pastoral Guidelines for Worthy Reception of Holy Communion

(They apply to all of us, clergy and laity alike.)



- We must be Orthodox Christians in good standing.
- We must never take communion at other Christian gatherings.
- We must always live moral and upright lives: e.g., living faithfully either as spouses or celibates, being at peace with all, praying daily and reading the Holy Scriptures, and living lives of charity and repentance.
- We should go to confession four times a year, during the times of fasting, but also whenever our conscience directs us. If a serious sin weighs on us, we must go to confession before we receive Holy Communion (see 1 Corinthians 11: 29).
- We should follow the fasts of the Church, not only during Advent or Great Lent, but on Wednesdays and Fridays. It is very important to observe the pre-Communion fast. If the Liturgy is in the morning, this would mean for all over the age of seven or eight to fast from food or drink from midnight, and if the Liturgy is in the evening, from noon. This pre-Communion fast also includes a ban on smoking or chewing gum. Marital relations must be abstained from for at least 24 hours prior. Allowances are made for those who for medical reasons must take medicine or sustenance during the time of this fast.
- Because we believe that Holy Communion is the reception into our bodies of the Body and Blood of Christ, we must treat this event with the greatest reverence. Accordingly, we should prepare by reading the pre-Communion prayers, either in church before Liturgy starts or the evening before, and by abstaining from television/internet/games, etc., drinking alcohol, and sexual activity the night before. We should also make every effort to attend the Vespers and Orthros services prior to the Liturgy.
- When we prepare to go to Liturgy, we should wash, brush our teeth, put on clean and modest clothes--no jeans, shorts, short-sleeved or tee shirts, and women should have their shoulders covered (and preferably wear dresses or long skirts). It is especially important to arrive before the start of the Divine Liturgy so that we can compose ourselves, pray properly and light some candles.
- Because we are at the Supper of the Lamb who shed His blood for our salvation, we must be at peace with all people. Ask forgiveness of anyone you (may) have offended, and readily forgive those who ask your forgiveness. We should welcome one another in peace and humility and, above all, in love, as we partake of the Chalice.
- Give glory and thanksgiving to God for this boundless blessing of the Divine Liturgy!
- Sometimes it is best not to receive Holy Communion, but to prayerfully & gratefully attend the Divine Services and receive the Antidoron (Holy Bread).

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

1 Corinthians 11:28-30