

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
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The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: *“The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different.” “And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner....this sacrifice is truly propitiatory.”* (C.C.C.1367)

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that there are both sacramental and spiritual communions. Sacramental communion refers to the physical reception of the Eucharist. Spiritual communion involves “a real longing for union with Christ.” Ideally, reception of the Eucharist involves both dimensions. One must always want to receive regular sacramental Communion. However, St. Thomas tells us that a “complete spiritual Communion can even take place when we are unable to receive sacramentally, because ‘the effect of a sacrament can be secured if it is received by desire.’”

In 2003, Pope John Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: it seek to live their life In the Eucharist, *“unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union.”* Precisely for this reason it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of “spiritual communion,” which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. St. Teresa of Jesus wrote: *“When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you”* (*The Way of Perfection*, Ch. 35.)

Prayers

**My Jesus, I believe that You are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I long for You in 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.**

Act of Spiritual Communion of St. Francis of Assisi

**I believe that You, O Jesus, are in the most holy Sacrament.
I love You and desire You.
Come into my heart. I embrace You.
Oh, never leave me. May the burning and most sweet power of your love,
O Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech You,
absorb my mind that I may die through love of your love,
who were graciously pleased to die through love of my love.
Amen.**