

## July 3 & 4 Homily Outline

*You've recently seen a lot in the media about the US Bishops debate concerning communion and politicians. I'm not particularly interested in this as a national issue or the issue of politicians – I am more interested in using this opportunity to talk about our faith in the Eucharist and being prepared to receive communion.*

### 1. Problem in misunderstanding of the Eucharist

Two things:

1. None of these sacrileges and desecrations happen if people would just receive communion in the normal way on the tongue.

2. “We live in an age in which many regard Jesus’ Body and Blood as the functional equivalent of cake at a birthday party: Everyone should get a slice out of hospitality. People who haven’t been to church in years, people who are not even Catholic, those who are involved in lifestyles seriously opposed to Jesus’ and the Church’s explicit teachings feel entitled to receive just by having shown up.” - *Holy Communion, the Bread of Life, Is for Defenders of Life Who Live in God’s Grace* by Roger Landry

**Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles.** Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger  
Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2003)

1. Presenting oneself to receive Holy Communion should be a conscious decision, based on a reasoned judgment regarding one’s worthiness to do so, according to the Church’s objective criteria, asking such questions as: “Am I in full communion with the Catholic Church? Am I guilty of grave sin? Have I incurred a penalty (e.g. excommunication, interdict) that forbids me to receive Holy Communion? Have I prepared myself by fasting for at least an hour?” The practice of indiscriminately presenting oneself to receive Holy Communion, merely as a consequence of being present at Mass, is an abuse that must be corrected (cf. Instruction “Redemptionis Sacramentum,” nos. 81, 83).

From today’s Gospel:

SO HE WAS NOT ABLE TO PERFORM ANY MIGHTY DEED THERE,  
APART FROM CURING A FEW SICK PEOPLE BY LAYING HIS HANDS ON THEM.  
HE WAS AMAZED AT THEIR LACK OF FAITH.

### 2. Reasons not to receive communion

**CCC 1387** To prepare for worthy reception of this sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in their Church.

Can. 919 §1. A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.

1 COR 11:27-29

THEREFORE WHOEVER EATS THE BREAD OR DRINKS THE CUP OF THE LORD UNWORTHILY WILL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD. A PERSON SHOULD EXAMINE HIMSELF,<sup>2</sup> AND SO EAT THE BREAD AND DRINK THE CUP. FOR ANYONE WHO EATS AND DRINKS

WITHOUT DISCERNING THE BODY, EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT<sup>2</sup> ON HIMSELF. THAT IS WHY MANY AMONG YOU ARE ILL AND INFIRM, AND A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER ARE DYING.

**CCC 1385** To respond to this invitation we must *prepare ourselves* for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

### 3. What is a mortal sin?

**CCC 1857** For a *sin* to be *mortal*, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent."

"The reception of Holy Communion by those who publicly and obstinately violate the moral law in its most fundamental precepts is a particularly grave form of sacrilege. In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us" (no. 2120). It not only merits eternal punishment for the one who receives unworthily but constitutes a most serious scandal for others, that is, it leads them into the false belief that one can publicly and obstinately violate the moral law in a grave matter and still receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. A thoughtful person, before such a situation, must conclude that either the Sacred Host is not the Body of Christ or that the promotion of procured abortion, for instance, is not a grave sin." - *Statement on the Reception of Holy Communion by Those Who Persist in Public Grave Sin.* – Cdl. Raymond Burke

### 4. Scandal

Pope John Paul II then proceeded to discuss the case of grave public sin, relating the self-judgment of unworthiness to receive to the refusal of Holy Communion to the person remaining in manifest grievous sin. He declared:

"The judgment of one's state of grace obviously belongs only to the person involved, since it is a question of examining one's conscience. However, in cases of outward conduct which is seriously, clearly and steadfastly contrary to the moral norm, the Church, in her pastoral concern for the good order of the community and out of respect for the sacrament, cannot fail to feel directly involved. The *Code of Canon Law* refers to the situation of a *manifest* lack of proper moral disposition when it states that those who "obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Eucharistic communion." *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. St. John Paul II 17 April 2003

### Conclusion

I love this first reading today as the Lord sends Ezekiel the prophet out:

BUT YOU SHALL SAY TO THEM: THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD!  
AND WHETHER THEY HEED OR RESIST—FOR THEY ARE A REBELLIOUS HOUSE—  
THEY SHALL KNOW THAT A PROPHET HAS BEEN AMONG THEM.