

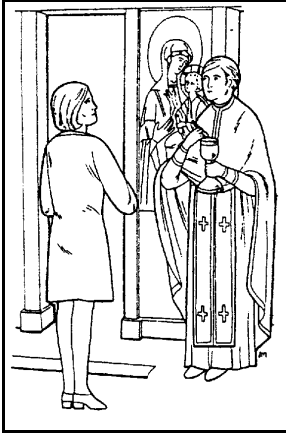


Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes

(Psalm 119:12)



“Father, what is the proper way to prepare for Communion?”



When we come to Holy Communion there should be a proper and conscientious preparation. First, as I mention often, and as has been printed in the bulletin periodically, frequent participation in the Mystery of Holy Confession should go hand-in-hand. We should take advantage of this as a means to cleanse our hearts from sin. Technically speaking, if we are to participate in Holy Communion we should be present at the celebration of Vespers (unless something worthy of a blessing conflicts). The evening before we should not go out partying and doing things that are not spiritually profitable, but rather spend a quiet evening in prayer and with our families. Before we go to bed, or when we wake up in the morning, say the special prayers of preparation (that are found in the back of the Liturgy books), and not just say them just to say them, but **REALLY MEAN** what we are saying.

Now to be very honest, we can never be fully prepared for Holy Communion, and we are never “worthy” of it. Christ makes us worthy because of His great mercy.

Also, we fast. From midnight the preceding night we should abstain from food and water (with some exception for medicinal purposes). This also includes smoking. The idea is that our bodies should be pure and nothing else should enter into our systems before the Body and Blood of Christ. While that morning cup of coffee might be just what we need, I assure you that Holy Communion is much more helpful to us in the long run!

It should be noted too that when we come to the Chalice it is serious business. While it retains the physical properties of simple bread and wine, mysteriously they are mystically transformed into the very Body and Blood of Christ Himself. If we approach haphazardly and “just because” then we are causing ourselves great damage, and it can be for the detriment of our souls and bodies - rather than its healing! St. Paul says in his second epistle to the Corinthian Church:

“Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 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.” (1 Cor. 11:27-29)

So take seriously what we are doing when we come to the Chalice, and make the effort to make time to prepare for this amazing gift of God, which He gives to us, freely, and abundantly.