



CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 18, 2011

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Worthy Reception of Holy Communion

Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man and center of the universe and of history, gives us a share in his divine life as we worthily receive him in Holy Communion. In thanksgiving for such a gift, it is fitting that we humbly prepare ourselves to receive him in two ways as outlined in “Happy Are Those Who Are Called to His Supper: On Preparing to Receive Christ Worthily in the Eucharist.” (See the full text of the statement issued on November 2006 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.usccb.org/doctrine/Eucharist.pdf.)

First, we approach the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by our **remote preparation**. This includes regular prayer and reading of Scripture, the faithful and loving fulfillment of the daily responsibilities of our state in life, and regular participation in the Sacrament of Penance, including daily repentance of sin by an examination of conscience and recitation of the Act of Contrition.

Second, our attentive **proximate preparation** includes our prayerful recollection as we come to Mass and fasting from food and drink for at least one hour prior to receiving Holy Communion as our health and age permit. (The *Code of Canon Law* notes in §919 that water and medicine are exceptions to the fast and that the elderly, the infirm, and those who care for them can receive Holy Communion even if they have eaten something within the previous hour. See www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_IND_EX.HTM.) Proximate preparation also includes dressing appropriately and modestly.

These ways of preparing culminate in our prayerful and active participation throughout the eucharistic celebration, as we join with the Body of Christ in gratitude for such a great gift.

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