

Does the Catholic Church *Exclude* People from the Lord's Table?

I. Not Receiving the Lord when We've Betrayed Him

- a. Mortal Sin vs. Venial Sin
 - i. Not relevant before you've sinned (just don't sin) – but afterwards it becomes very relevant (how badly did I just treat this person? What's it going to take to make things right?)
- b. It's always best to refrain from a gesture of intimacy when you've betrayed a relationship
 - i. E.g., the kiss of Judas
 - ii. You have to do whatever it takes to make the relationship right before you pretend that it *is* right.
- c. If the Church tells you that something is really, gravely wrong – and that you should go to confession before you receive communion – why would you not trust that?
 - i. Why would you trust the Church to give you Jesus, but not trust the Church to give you the truth about Jesus and what He wants for us?

II. Not Receiving the Lord when we don't fully believe in the Eucharist

- a. No one in the Gospels ever benefitted from an encounter with Christ when they didn't have faith in Him.
 - i. Jesus could only help those who believed the full truth about who He was.
 - ii. That's true when He comes in the Eucharist as well
- b. The Catholic Church does allow other Christians to receive the Eucharist with us – but first she wants to be sure that they believe the full truth about the Eucharist in the first place

III. Do we believe that the Eucharist is really Jesus?

- a. Our reverence should show it.
 - i. Our love and our awe and our righteous fear.
- b. When we see God face-to-face one day, we will be full of love and fear
 - i. Let's practice that approach whenever we approach the Eucharist

I Corinthians 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,* and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1399 The Eastern churches that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church celebrate the Eucharist with great love. "These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments, above all - by apostolic succession - the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy." A certain communion in sacris, and so in the Eucharist, "given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not merely possible but is encouraged."

1400 Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, "have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders." It is for this reason that Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible for the Catholic Church. However, these ecclesial communities, "when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper . . . profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory."

1401 When, in the Ordinary's judgment, a grave necessity arises, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who ask for them of their own will, provided they give evidence of holding the Catholic faith regarding these sacraments and possess the required dispositions.