



Ask, Father James:

I have celiac disease. I am allergic to the smallest amounts of gluten in wheat and allergic to wine. What should I do when I attend Mass?

Hosts are available that contain 0.01% of gluten and that is considered valid matter for the Eucharist and usually does not cause a reaction. But, for various reasons one may be prevented from receiving the Eucharist at Mass. Like in your case, you have a very advanced case of celiac disease that prevents you from receiving the Bread and Cup, the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass. What the church encourages is that you pray the prayer of "***Act of Spiritual Communion***" as below while still in the pew, and then join the Holy Communion procession to the priest for blessing and to bow before the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You have already come, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas once defined a Spiritual Communion as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament [in Communion at Mass] and in lovingly embracing Him as if we had actually received Him.

When we make an act of spiritual communion, we unite ourselves to God and express to God our desire to be united with him even though we are at the present unable to complete that union in the reception of Holy Communion.

ease email your Faith Questions to Father James at: frjowolagba@gmail.com

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