

Many years ago, I worked with a man who inspired me in many ways. George was a devout Jewish man, a husband and father who really lived his faith. We were usually two of the first ones to arrive at work in the morning. One day as we walked up the stairs to the office, he told me that he was coming from his Temple. I asked him if it was a “special” day and he told me it wasn’t. He prayed at Temple each day before he came to work. The thought of his getting up early every day to pray at his Temple made me stop and look at myself, a devout Catholic and a woman of faith. Yet I never thought I could get up earlier to start my day at Mass and be nourished by daily Eucharist before I went about my day. That next day I set my alarm for one hour earlier to go to Mass and give it a try. It turned out to be just the nourishment of Word and Eucharist that I needed, and I have greatly appreciated going to Mass every day since.

Mostly attended by retired and seniors, I was so inspired by my brothers and sisters! I see many of the same faces each day – the same lectors rotating their days of proclaiming the Word and the same beautiful woman who ministers as the altar server each day. There are normally about 15-20 people in attendance; but more during Advent and Lent.

Since our morning Masses were suspended last February, I have so greatly missed beginning my day at Mass. However, we are very blessed at my parish to have our pastor offering Mass online each evening at 6:30 PM. It is truly a blessing to worship together! The change in time has provided the opportunity to attend daily Mass for those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Unfortunately, some of the parishioners do not have the internet and cannot attend. Their absence is certainly felt, and we offer our prayers for them in hope that we will someday soon begin our day together at Mass.

“Fasting” from the Eucharist has been the most difficult part of this last year for all of us. Like other online Masses we pray the Act of Spiritual Communion – a very beautiful way of expressing the feelings of sacrifice that we are making by not actually receiving Eucharist.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Thankfully many of us are now able to be present at Mass on the weekends (with restrictions in place, of course). We are blessed to be able to receive Eucharist once again. The first time I attended Mass, I found myself missing the Act of Spiritual Communion and I pondered the words. If we change the words just a little bit, it is a perfect prayer as we prepare to receive the Sacrament!

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

*I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.*

After reciting the prayer before Communion that I learned as a little girl, I have now also included praying the prayer above as I've found it expresses the essence of what we believe and ask of our Savior. A very simple prayer, yet so profound! Jesus calls us to be his heart, his hands, his feet, his body reaching out to *be* Eucharist in and for the world. This is what we have been called to as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament. We have promised to do this!

"Do This in Memory of Me."

Felice Werwin
Associate of the Blessed Sacrament
Saint Philip Parish
Norwalk, CT

Let Us Pray,

Thank you Jesus for the most precious gift of your Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrament. May I always be aware of your awesome presence within me. I offer you my heart, my eyes, my ears, my hands, my steps, your presence within me, that I may be Eucharist to all I may encounter. Walk with me, Lord, and guide me.