



Take or Receive?

As Orthodox Christians we know that the Sacrament of Holy Communion plays an extremely important role in our spiritual lives. If we take a moment to think about our participation in this sacrament, we should realize that we do not "take" communion, but instead, we "receive" it. At first it may seem that there really isn't any difference between "taking" and "receiving." This difference can be more clearly seen, however, if we recognize that the Eucharist is a gift. We wouldn't speak of taking a birthday present from someone, but rather, we would receive it from them.

Holy Communion is a gift that Christ, through sacrificing Himself, has given to us. It is the precious body and blood of our Savior which He presents to us as an expression of His incredible love for us. Christ gives part of Himself to us as a gift so that we can grow closer to Him. As Orthodox Christians we work toward becoming one with God. Having the body and blood of Jesus Christ within us helps us to achieve this goal. It allows us to move toward salvation in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Knowing these things we can see how important it is for us to receive communion. Further, if we are prepared to receive, we must also act appropriately when we approach the chalice. This is not a time for day-dreaming or joking around, but a moment of respect and prayer. During the Liturgy the priest says, "With the fear of God, faith, and love, draw near." Hearing these words we must keep in mind our fear of God's great power, our faith in Jesus Christ, and our love for one another.

When we attend the Divine Liturgy it is essential that we are aware of what is taking place. Christ is giving us the greatest gift the world has ever known. He is sharing Himself with us so that we can attain eternal life with Him. Holy Communion is not something that we simply can take, but instead it is the gift of life that we are called to receive from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.