

It is for this reason that the 7th Ecumenical Council didn't even allow for secular flags, including the flag of the then Christian (but secular) empire, because everyone else belongs to the things that we want to advertise in this world, but the temple belongs to God and to things that are consecrated as holy unto Him. The Byzantine Emperor did not even wear a flag emblem of any kind even though it was a Christian Empire, the same as the other Empires and Kingdoms of the Church!

Guidelines for Holy Communion

One remains a member in good standing of the Orthodox Church by regular and prepared participation in and reception of Holy Communion in the unity of the Christian Orthodox Faith.

Be Prepared! One of the first principles for partaking of Communion comes directly from Scripture:

--Whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a person examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (Holy Scripture: 1 Cor. 11.27,28)

The following are proper points of examination that must be intact to receive in a proper manner:

General Conditions:

1. One must make an effort to live a Christ-centered life, following the precepts of Scripture to the best of one's ability.
2. One must be a Baptized Christian that has been received into the Communion of the Orthodox Church.
3. One must believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, adhering to the Creed and Scriptural precepts, and the efficaciousness of the Mysteries/Sacraments of the Church.
4. One must live a Christian life, abiding by God's commandments and repenting when one fails to do so.

5. One must not be living in a state of mortal or unrepented sin, of violating the Great or the Ten Commandments.

6. One must go preparedly (doing an examination of conscience first) to sacramental confession at least once a year, but preferably more often, such as during the four fast periods and at other times when sin has taken hold.

7. One must regularly pray and practice lovingkindness and justice (fairness) towards others, and repent when failing to do so. Repentance involves contrition, acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and acts of reparation toward one whom we have offended as much as possible, and periodic confession.

Specific Conditions:

Specific conditions for taking Communion are also governed by the Canons of the Church, and these include:

1. To partake of Communion on Sunday morning or any other morning Liturgy, one must be sober, fasting from the middle of the night before partaking for at least 9 hours, not eating or drinking anything until reception of Holy Communion in the morning (the canons give dispensation to drink water to those who will be singing, but not during Liturgy itself). For those who are in ill health or need to eat something with medication, eat a small amount of fasting foods (no meat, etc.) that is enough to maintain health, but still restrained eating, and soberly. Pregnant women are exempt from fasting the Eucharistic fast while they are pregnant. Evening Liturgies on fast days have different preparation, eating one midday meal (no meat and no alcohol), and collations (mini-meals) as needed for health, but altogether no eating or drinking for four hours prior to Communion.

2. Regularly attending Church. The Canons state that those who, without a just cause (illness, travel, etc.), miss a month's worth of Church, must come preparedly to sacramental confession before returning to Communion.

3. Showing up on time. We are to arrive on time for Liturgy, but if we are late *must* be in Church to hear the Holy Gospel in order to take Communion. This is *unless there is an irregular legitimate delay beyond that*, including travel issues, if coming from work, or urgent family concerns (such as needs of small children, elderly, disabled, etc.) on a given Sunday. The priest should be made aware of the need for repeated occurrences.

4. Periodic Confession during the periods of repentance (Nativity Preparation, Apostles' fast after All Saints, Dormition fast during August), but above all, Great Lent.

5. No one in a state of mortal sin should partake of Communion without first partaking of confession and fulfilling the spiritual acts of reparation for the restoration of the state of the soul.

6. Also, one should practice fasting on some level (at least some restraint in eating) on most Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year (with the exception of Fast-Free weeks). Those who live with non-Orthodox family or are travelling can still perhaps do one meal a day that is in accordance with fasting practices on these Wednesdays and Fridays.

Church School

Contact Pani Carrie for church school information: Volunteers are needed to help this year. If you can help in any way please contact Pani Carrie.

Prayer Corner:


Contact Cynthia Brown to add or delete names from the Prayer Corner lists. Cynthiaann36@live.com or (863) 223-6775.

Living: Please pray for the ailing: Graham, Virginia, Anton, Pearl, (grandmother) Mike, Stella, Amanda, Mike, Michael, Samuel, Vilma, Dan, Stacy, Arlene, Bruce, Laura, Christopher, John Sherrie, Chuck Rick, Darla, Trevor, Tony, Lars, Penny Lynzy, Tani, Avi, Michelle, Bradley, Jeffery, Reagan, Jana, Tony, and Cletus.

Reposed: Please pray for the departed: Virginia, Harry, Millie, Harry, Richard, Albert, Mary, John, Doris, Mary, Subdeacon John, Vera, Beverly, James, Dessie, Ernest, Elbert, Bill, Viva, Ina, Cynthia, Bernard, Finn, Marie, Kathy, Cassia, Francesca, Tina, Joan, Lennie, Walter, Bertha, and George.

Out Reach

Contact Arlene Tonjes (text or call), 863-221-1664 or Pani Carrie, 813-451-9829, for Out Reach input and information. Let us know of any special projects we could do this year. We can continue to provide a food basket for a needy family at Thanksgiving, and Pascha, decorated bags for the Homeless filled with healthy snacks and donations for the Pregnancy Center in Plant



**St. Sophia and her three daughters,
Faith, Hope and Love.**

Dismissal hymn. First tone.
Since Faith, Hope and Love were in truth sacred branches of venerable Sophia, the namesake of wisdom, by grace they have shown all men that Greek wisdom is foolishness, and in contest they proved to be prizewinning victors; wherefore, they received a crown that shall never perish from Christ God, the Lord of all.

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**St. Sophia and her three daughters
Faith, Hope and Love
September 17/30**

This family of mother and three daughters Faith age 12, Hope age 10 and Love age 9 lived in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian and were martyred in about the year 126. In those days one could be put to death for any kind of dissent. The Emperor was convinced that Christians, who aspired to the Kingdom of Heaven, were out to undermine the imperial authority. This holy quartet was brought before the magistrate Antiochos. It was his plan to get the mother to disavow Christ rather than see her children punished. However they came holding each others hands humbly but steadfastly confessing their faith in Christ the Lord and refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan god Artemis. Before all this the mother encouraged her daughters to endure to the end. "Your Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, inexpressible beauty and eternal life. When your bodies are slain by torture, He will clothe you in incorruption and the wounds on your bodies will shine as the stars in the heavens". When she pleaded to let her children go and to have the punishment inflicted upon her, the three girls with one voice cried that they would rather die with her and gain the Kingdom of Heaven rather than stay behind without her. That was her answer to the magistrate. Unmoved he put Faith under unspeakable torture and finally had her beheaded. When he saw that Sophia was unmoved, he did the same to Hope and then to the youngest, Love. They were all beaten and slashed, they were cast into fire and boiling pitch and finally beheaded. Sophia took their bodies out of the town and honorably buried them. She mourned over their graves for three days and three nights then reposed in peace. Because of her steadfastness in the face of her daughters suffering she is considered a martyr also. These names are; Pistis, Elpis and Agape in Greek, and Vera, Nadezhda and Lyubov in Russian.

**Tell us 5 things that you learned about these
holy martyrs.**

