

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Can My Marriage Keep Me From Holy Communion?

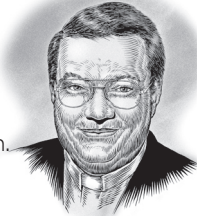
Know This...

If we knowingly receive the Sacraments when we are not properly disposed, we damage our souls and harm our salvation. We should not take Communion when we are in a state of mortal sin. We must first confess our sins to a priest and receive absolution. Marriage is governed by divine law. If one spouse is Catholic, canon law must also be followed. Married Catholics living as husband and wife must be in a valid marriage to receive Holy Communion; otherwise, they commit sacrilege when they receive.



John: For a marriage to be valid, a couple must be free, in the eyes of the Church, to marry. A priest or deacon conducts a "Pre-Nuptial Investigation" to confirm this.

James: Spouses must give their consent in the presence of the local bishop, the pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them. Two witnesses must also be present.



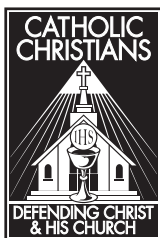
John: When one or both spouses are Catholic, their marriage is invalid if they did not exchange vows in the presence of a properly-delegated witness of the Church (e.g., priest or deacon), or the Church has not declared that all prior marriages were null.

James: Don't be led astray by clergy, family, or friends who may be confused on this issue. If a married couple is living as husband and wife (engaging in marital relations) in either of these situations, they are not free to receive Holy Communion.

John: If you did not profess your wedding vows before a priest or deacon, or the Church has not declared your prior marriages null, do not take Communion until the Church recognizes your marriage.

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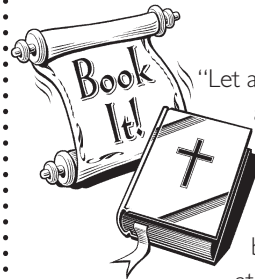
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Jesus told the Pharisees, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am He [God]." *Jn 8:22-23* "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." *Jn 9:41* Jesus told the Apostles, "If I had not come and spoken to them [the people], they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." *Jn 15:22* Jesus gave the Apostles the authority to discipline and legislate through His Church. "If he [the Christian] refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." *Mt 18:17-18*

"Even if only one party is baptized, the marriage of Catholics is regulated not only by divine law but also by canon law." *Code of*

Canon Law, Canon 1059 "Before marriage is celebrated, it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration." *Canon 1066* "A person who is held to the bond of a prior marriage...invalidly attempts marriage." *Canon 1085* "Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local ordinary or the pastor or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and in the presence of two witnesses." *Canon 1108* "A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession." *Canon 916* "[Based on Mk 10:11-12] the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was...[To do this] objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists." *ccc 1650*



"Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." *1 Cor 11:28-29* "Beloved, if our consciences have nothing to charge us with, we can be sure that God is with us and that we will receive at his hands whatever we ask. Why? Because we are keeping his commandments and doing what is pleasing in his sight." *1 Jn 3:21-22* "Everyone should live as the Lord has assigned, just as God called each one...Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called." *1 Cor 7:17, 20*

Father, You made the bond of marriage a holy mystery. Your Son made it a Sacrament: a source of grace, if we follow His teaching revealed through His Church. She says we are not to receive Holy Communion unless we are in a state of grace. I pray that all Catholic couples, invalidly married in the eyes of the Church, will study Church teaching and work with a priest or deacon who cares about their salvation and his own. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

