

Tribunal Office • Catholic Diocese of Lexington

As Roman Catholics we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion, in fulfillment of Christ's command to eat His body and drink His blood. The Eucharist is the *source and summit* of our faith. The Eucharist is what makes us distinctive as Christians. We in effect become tabernacles, carrying our Lord to the world.

Therefore, our Church tells us that we must be "*properly prepared.*" This means that we should have confessed our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, seek to live in love and charity with our neighbors, and fast for one hour before receiving Communion.

Sins sometimes seem so easy to commit; we all understand that we often find ourselves in need of confession. Additionally, there are some marriage situations that make us unable to receive the Eucharist. Some examples:

- ✠ Catholics who marry *outside of the Catholic Church* without the dispensation from their bishop. The proper form for all baptized Catholics is to be married in a Catholic church before a priest or deacon and two witnesses, unless they request dispensation from this required canonical form.
- ✠ Catholics who are *divorced and remarried* without first obtaining a decree of nullity from their previous marriage and convalidation of the current civil union.
- ✠ Catholics who *marry a divorced person* without a declaration of nullity of this person's previous marriage

and convalidation of the present union.

- ✠ Catholics who are *cohabitating* with another person outside of the marriage covenant.



Often Catholics are misinformed regarding divorce. It is not divorce that makes a person improperly prepared to receive Communion, but the presence of grave sin in a person's life. So, if divorce occurred in your life, you are still a member of the Catholic Church and as long you are not engaged in any subsequent marital or similar relationship, you may participate fully in the sacraments.

The tribunal's ministry through the declaration of nullity procedure attempts to bring justice, healing and hope. The Church is giving the victims of broken marriages an opportunity to recover. Any person, Catholic or not, whose marriage ends in divorce and who wishes to remarry to a Catholic - or intends to become a Catholic themselves - may petition a competent ecclesiastical tribunal to investigate the validity of their previous marriage. A granted decree of nullity permits a future marriage in the Catholic Church.

Please let us help you! Contact your local parish advocate so they may assist you in this journey. For more information or any questions you may have, please call Fr. John List or Mrs. Renata Babicz-Baratto at (859) 253-1993 or email if that is easier at jlist@cdlex.org • ribabicz@cdlex.org.