

## WHY CATHOLICS MUST FAST BEFORE COMMUNION?

In our fast-paced world, where meals are quick and convenience is everything, the idea of fasting before Holy Communion may seem outdated or unnecessary. But the Church still calls us to fast or abstain—even today—and the reason isn't about rules. It's about reverence.

### 1. Fasting Prepares the Body to Receive the King

When you're about to welcome a guest into your home, you clean, prepare, and make space. Fasting before Communion is a way to prepare your soul and body to receive Jesus Christ Himself—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

It reminds us that the Eucharist is not ordinary food—it is sacred.

### 2. It's an Act of Sacrifice and Love

Fasting says to God:

"You matter more to me than food. You are my true nourishment."

Even abstaining for just one hour shows our desire to put Christ first, denying small comforts in honour of a much greater gift.

### 3. It's Required by Church Law

According to the Code of Canon Law (Canon 919):

"Whoever is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine."

This rule still applies today, and it reflects the seriousness of what we're doing—uniting ourselves to the Holy One.

### 4. It Revives an Attitude of Reverence

Fasting helps guard against the danger of receiving the Eucharist casually or mindlessly. It says, "This is holy. This matters! I want to be ready."

It builds expectation and awe, making our reception more intentional.

### 5. It Helps Differentiate the Sacred from the Ordinary

Everything in our lives isn't equal—and neither is every meal. The pre-Communion fast sets the Eucharist apart as something beyond human, reminding us that this meal is from Heaven.

The Eucharist is the most precious gift on earth. It deserves our preparation, our hunger, our full attention. Fasting reminds us that what we are about to receive is not ordinary—it is divine.

**POLITE REQUEST:** PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE ANY GUM UNDER THE BENCHES OR DROP THEM ON THE FLOOR, PLEASE BIN THEM BEFORE YOU ENTER THE CHURCH. CHEWING GUM IN THE CHURCH BREAKS THE PRE-COMMUNION FAST AND IT IS DISRESPECTFUL.



**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY:** We congratulate and pray for Fr Paul who will be celebrating 18 years of his ordination on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2026. We keep him in our prayers as he continues doing God's work here in our parish. After both Sunday 9am and 11.30am Mass there will be a celebration reception in the hall.

**JOURNEY IN FAITH:** We warmly invite those adults seeking Baptism/Confirmation/Holy Communion to be part of our Journey in Faith group. The weekly sessions involve learning about the Catholic faith and the truth and beauty of the Gospel. If you are thinking about becoming a Catholic, please call or email the Parish office. We would love to hear from you. Please email [streathamrcia@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:streathamrcia@rcaos.org.uk)

**PREPARATION FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2027:** Parents who are intending to register children for First Holy Communion 2027, please collect a leaflet "PRAYERS IN PREPARATION FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION" from the Church porch. These prayers will be helping the children in preparation to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and a Spiritual Foundation to receive the Most Holy Body of Christ reverently.

**A DAY OF RETREAT:** A day of retreat for **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AND READERS** for the South East area, will take place at Bishop Thomas Grant School, Belltrees Grove, SW16 2HY, on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2026 for Parishes in the Deaneries of Camberwell, Lewisham and Lambeth. If you would like to attend please give your name and contact details to the parish office **before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026**. More details of the programme for the retreat day will be available in September 2026.

**MASS ATTENDANCE:** Weekly Sunday (Saturday Vigil Mass) mass attendance is needed if you would like your child to receive Sacrament of Baptism, First Holy Communion or Confirmation. Please collect a Stamp card and get it stamped after Mass.

All sacraments should be received with great faith and eagerness because Christ instituted the sacraments to nourish Christian life. Coming regularly to Sunday Mass helps each and every one to grow in faith, not merely coming near to the Sacrament of preparation time.

**SACRAMENTS: BAPTISM** – Baptism is a Sacrament of faith, and the Church asks for a serious and loving commitment by the parents and godparents of a child to live the life of the Sacraments. Parents wishing to baptise their child at English Martyrs Church Streatham should be practising in the parish for more than 6 months. Please email the Parish office for an information pack.

**MARRIAGE:** You need to give 6 months' notice. Please email the Parish office to book an appointment to see the Parish Priest.

**PARISH DONATIONS:** If you wish to make a payment direct to our Bank Account these are the details:

A/C Name: RCAS STREATHAM A/C: 23416386 S/C: 60-20-39  
Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Aug 2026 - Offertory Loose Collection £534.88 Gift Aid Env £110.00 Total £653.88

**REF:** Offertory/ Your surname.... For Contactless Donation: Please use the Card Machines in the Church or the QR Code. The best way to support the parish is by standing order, you can use a Standing Order form from the Church porch or email the Parish office to get one.

**GIFT AID** – Are you registered on the Parish Scheme as yet? If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid is a great way to make your donations more valuable to the Church by an extra 25% at no extra cost to you! If you like to sign please email or fill a Gift Aid form from the Porch and hand it to the priest or the parish office.

**CHURCH MAINTENANCE:** For the upkeep of the Church Maintenance

A/C Name: RCAS STREATHAM A/C: 23416416 S/C: 60-20-39

*Thank you for your generosity*

