Preparation for receiving Holy Communion

Our practice of the church and at our parish:

* You should be an Orthodox Christian in good standing

* Keeping the regular Wednesday and Friday fasts is generally considered part of living the Orthodox Christian life, therefore part of the preparation for receiving Communion. The Wednesday and Friday fasts include abstaining from meat, poultry, fish with a backbone, and dairy products (including eggs)

* Fasting from ALL food and drink from midnight the night before receiving Communion (those with medical needs, young children, the elderly, or pregnant women may receive a blessing for a modified fast from the priest)

* Regular confession

* Reading the prescribed "Prayers Before Holy Communion" the evening before and/or the morning of the Liturgy

* Repentance and reconciliation. This includes sincerely repenting of sins and seeking reconciliation with others when possible.

* Participation in the complete Divine Liturgy rather than arriving at the time of Communion and remaining through the end of the Liturgy (staying and quietly listening to the thanksgiving prayers are included in this time).

* When receiving Holy Communion, please cross your arms over your chest (do not make the sign of the cross or bow), open your mouth wide (no need to stick your tongue out), and if desired slightly tilt your head back. Please resist the urge to close your eyes (yes, this is a deeply spiritual moment to receive our Lord, but we do so with attentiveness and reverence. In order to avoid a possible accident, it is best for you to keep your eyes open). Once the priest places the spoon in your mouth, close your mouth on the spoon. After this, DO NOT make the sign of the cross or say Amen or anything, but reverently step aside and make your way to the servers table for the after Communion zapivka (blessed bread and wine).

A word for inquirers and catechumens:

While you are not yet able to receive the Life-Giving Body and Blood of Our Savior, you are indeed united to Him in a blessed, spiritual way through your participation at the Liturgical services. Please understand that you undertake the same efforts and take on the same observances as the one stated above, even though you do not yet receive Holy Communion at Liturgy. By your presence and prayer, Christ, through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, still unites you with the church community and Her worship during the service.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

—Fr. Alexis