

OUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE TO THE SICK AND DYING  
*Annotated Sections By Rev. Edwin G. Kaiser*

## HOLY COMMUNION

Willfully to neglect receiving capital **Holy Communion** before death is a mortal sin. In fact, if a dying person has received the Blessed Sacrament the day previous, he still must receive **Holy Viaticum**, as holy communion is called when given to those in danger of death.

Viaticum may be received frequently, even daily as long as the danger continues. There is no obligation to be fasting after midnight. The sick person may eat or drink anything whatsoever even though she could readily keep the fast. Sick persons not in danger of death do not receive **Holy Communion** as **Viaticum**; they are obliged to keep the fast from midnight previous to receiving.

There is one exception: all those who have been seriously though not dangerously ill for a month, and for whom there is no hope of immediate recovery, may receive **Holy Communion** twice a week without keeping the fast if fasting is very difficult for them. I may take solid or liquid medicine and drink any drink any liquid food but no solid food. There is no grave obligation to keep from eating and drinking after communion, but reverence for the Blessed Sacrament requires that they abstain for a short time unless there be a good reason to the contrary. In the case of the sick such reason is usually present, hence this point should occasion no worry.

If the sick person cannot easily swallow the sacred host, the priest may give him a very small particle; or the host may be given with a little water; or water may be given immediately after he has received. When water is this taken, even we're obliged to keep the fast from midnight need not worry if a little water should be swallowed before the sacred host.

The physician should be consulted in regard to the danger of vomiting. If there is no great danger that the patient will vomit shortly after communicating, especially if he has not done so for several hours then he may receive **Holy Communion**. If however the patient should vomit after he has received **Holy Communion** and even if there is no evidence of the secret species entire or in part, the whole should be burned. If the host can be discerned, then it should be reverently removed and given to the priest.

