|  |
| --- |
|  A FORMOFSPIRITUAL COMMUNIONCOMPILED BYTHE BISHOP OF MELANESIA.[Bishop Cecil John Wood]\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    39826--Wilson & Horton, Printers, Auckland. [1916]  |

Transcribed by the Right Reverend Dr. Terry Brown

Bishop of Malaita, Church of the Province of Melanesia, 2006

[3] FOREWORD.

The Church clearly contemplates that the benefits of Sacramental Communion may be obtained by the faithful believer, when the actual reception of the Holy Sacrament is impossible owing to certain circumstances.

This is set forth in the rubric at the end of the Prayer Book Service for the Communion of the Sick.

The circumstances are these:--

1. In extreme sickness and consequent inability to communicate.

2. That a Priest cannot be obtained.

3. The absence of any fellow-communicants and consequent inability to fulfil other Prayer Book rubrics.

4. Any other just cause.

It frequently happens to missionaries and others that they are far removed from the ministrations of a Priest, and are unable to receive the Blessed Sacrament for weeks or months at a time.

[4] The following form of Spiritual Communion is compiled to meet these conditions.

It will be noted that the Church safeguards this privilege of Spiritual Communion from abuse by requiring the Communicant to consider:--

1. The need for repentance, as in the case of Sacramental Communion.

2. The need of a real faith that Christ died to save mankind, and that certain benefits are received by the soul as the result.

In recollection of these benefits and in thanksgiving for them the Communicant will receive the Body and Blood of Christ, to his soul's good as surely as if he were partaking of the consecrated elements in the service of the Church.

Thus the act of Spiritual Communion is not a substitute for Sacramental Communion, nor is it a make-believe. At the close of the devotion the Communicant gives thanks to God for something definitely received, and during the day he can look back to his morning devotion and say, This morning I received the Body and Blood of my Lord.

It would not be right to use this devotion of Spiritual Communion when the Sacramental Communion could be readily obtained. Care will be taken that neither unwillingness to rise in the morning nor slackness in preparing for Communion lead to the substitution of this devotion [4/5] for the Church's service. That God in His love provides many special means of Grace can never be sufficient warrant for neglecting the normal means.

This booklet is issued with the prayer that many lonely souls may be helped to the reception of that for which their souls are ever hungering.

I acknowledge gratefully the valuable assistance given to me by the Rev. C. Mutter, Diocesan Missioner of Christchurch, New Zealand, in this compilation.

CECIL JOHN MELANESIA.

Easter, 1916.

[6] SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

This form of service to be used by communicants when no Priest is present, and when therefore a celebration of the Holy Communion is impossible.

Prepare yourself as you would do for Communion in the ordinary way, then go apart where you are likely not to be disturbed. Kneel, if the conditions of your environment allow it. Otherwise take such posture as is not inconsistent with the reverence due to the Lord whom you are seeking.

THE APPROACH.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Our Father, etc.

Almighty God unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name; through Christ my Lord.--Amen.

[7] Realise yourself specially in the presence of Jesus and say,

Listen to His words--

"Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden and I will refresh you."--St. Matt., xi., 28.

Pray,--

O my Lord Jesus, I desire to come to Thee, not that I am worthy, but because Thou dost so lovingly call. Receive me as Thou didst receive St. Peter after that he had denied Thee, and as Thou didst the woman who was a sinner.--Amen.

Listen to the words of St. Paul,

"This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."--I. Tim., i., 15.

Pray,--

Therefore, O my Lord, because Thou didst come to save me a sinner, I desire with all my heart to repent of all my sin and to put away whatsoever displeases Thee. Grant me to grow in Thy grace that with all Thy blessed saints I may continually praise Thee.--Amen.

[8] Here, think of the temptations which you find difficult. Think of the failures of the past week: Think of any sins you have committed since your last Communion: Think of what has been left undone that you ought to have done: Think whether you have wronged anybody. If so, have you done your best to make up to them for the injury?

Then confess,

Almighty God and Heavenly Father I am heartily sorry in that I have sinned against Thee. I have sinned by thought, word and deed, especially (here name the special sins your self-examination has shown you) and I have sinned in ways I know not of. For these my sins and those I know not of I am sorry. Have mercy upon me, and according to Thy loving mercy forgive me for my Saviour Jesus Christ's sake.--Amen.

It is certain God hears and forgives you. Consider St. John's consolation to the penitent,

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins."--I. Jno., ii., 1.

Accept this for yourself, saying:--

Thanks be to God for His forgiveness.

Now make an act of Faith, Hope, and Love.

Lord I believe in Thee, help Thou mine unbelief.

Lord I hope in Thee, help me to trust more firmly.

Lord I love Thee, help me to love more truly.

[9] ACT OF COMMUNION

Now make a special effort to realize the presence of Jesus in your soul, and make your act of Spiritual Communion, remembering how at countless altars of the Church the Holy Sacrifice is being pleaded and souls fed sacramentally by the Body and Blood of Christ.

In union, O Dear Lord, with the faithful at every Altar of Thy Church, where Thy blessed Body and Blood are being offered to the Father, I desire to offer Thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to Thee my soul and body, with the earnest wish that I may ever be united to Thee. And since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I beseech Thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to Thee, and embrace Thee with all the affections of my soul. O let nothing ever separate me from Thee. Let me live and die in Thy love.--Amen.

Grant, O Lord Jesus Christ, that as the hem of Thy garment, touched in faith, healed the woman who could not touch Thy Body, so the soul of Thy servant may be healed by like faith in Thee, Whom I cannot now sacramentally receive; through Thy tender mercy, Who livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost ever one God.--Amen.

[10] [You may say Collects for Fourth Sunday after Easter and Sixth Sunday after Trinity, or make a meditation from the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel of the week.]

Ask Jesus for the spiritual gifts you most need.

Ask Him for any other needs for yourself, you school, and your friends.

Pray,--

O Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who hast promised to be with Thy Church even to the end; grant to Thy children the sense of Thy abiding presence, and bless our Bishop, clergy, and teachers, that Thy Kingdom may be spread and all brought to the knowledge of Thy saving grace.--Amen.

THANKSGIVING.

Praise the Lord, O may soul: and all that is within me praise his holy Name.

Praise the Lord, O may soul: and forget not all his benefits.

Who forgiveth all thy sin: and healeth all thine infirmities;

Who saveth thy life from destruction: and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness.

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things: making thee young and lusty as an eagle.

The Lord executeth righteousness and judgement: for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

[11] The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: long-suffering and of great goodness.

He will not always be chiding: neither keepeth he his anger for ever.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.

For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth: so great is his mercy also toward them that fear him.

Look how wide also the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us.

Yes, like as a father pitieth his own children: even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him.

O praise the Lord, you angels of his, ye that excel in strength: ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words.

O praise the Lord, all ye his hosts: ye servants of his that do his pleasure.

O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion: praise thou the Lord, O my soul.

[12] O Jesu, Blessed Lord, to Thee

My heartfelt thanks for ever be,

Who has so lovingly bestow'd

On me Thy Body and Thy Blood.

Break forth, my soul, for joy, and say,

What wealth is come to me to-day!

My Saviour dwells within me now;

How blest am I! how good art Thou!--Amen.

Lord Jesus, I thank Thee that Thou has now fed me with Thy Body and Blood, and imparted to me Thy life. Teach me to live with a grateful heart, and as Thou hast to-day come anew into my soul so abide in me continually, till in Thine own good time I may see Thee face to face where Thou livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost one God world without end.--Amen.

Blessed, praised and hallowed be Jesus Christ on His Throne of Glory and in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.