

Acts of Spiritual Communion

The deepest longing of the Christian is for God; to receive a share in his love, and to offer ourselves back to God in love. This longing is expressed and fulfilled in the act of Holy Communion. It is a meeting and sharing of lives. When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus in the Eucharist, we share in the life of God, we receive his love. For most of us this longing is, and of necessity needs to be met in acts of Holy Communion celebrated in our local church, whether we have been able to attend online or offline. Yet there is also something special to us about those occasions when we can be part of Communion amongst others who are also members of our Mission Community.

The Church Army Mission Community is not a local church and cannot function as one. We are a dispersed community of missional disciples, living out the same vision and values, each in our local context. It's difficult for us to gather together to celebrate an act of Holy Communion, apart from at irregular special occasions when many people have travelled long distances. Even these occasions have not been possible throughout the pandemic. As restrictions have eased and acts of Holy Communion are now possible in most areas, we would like to see them returning to the life of the Church Army Mission Community as well. To begin with these acts will be celebrated at the Wilson Carlile Centre, and streamed for others to participate in. The choice of Wilson Carlile Centre is because it's where a group of people can gather offline, as well as being set up with the technology to allow people to join us online.

For those members of CAMC who are unable to join offline, but would like to gather online, then we would encourage you to make an act of "spiritual communion". Many of you will be familiar with this idea from the way that some of our churches have offered communion during the pandemic, but it isn't a recent idea. The Church has always taught that a Christian is able to receive a share in the life of God by making an act of spiritual communion when it is impossible for that gift to be received physically. We do this by making a prayer that has two parts:

*it tells God of our desire to receive Jesus in the sacrament

*it tells of our love for Jesus, and our desire for unity with him, as though we had received the sacrament physically.

A very simple act of spiritual communion might be something like this...

Lord Jesus, I love you and long for you. Since I cannot receive the sacrament in my body, let me receive it in my heart. As if I had received physically, I unite myself to you. Never let me be parted from you. Amen.