

QUAERITUR: In mortal sin, but I have to go to Mass. What do I do? Fr. Z rants.

Posted on [3 November 2010](#) by [Fr. John Zuhlsdorf](#)

From a reader:

I feel horrible I fell in to mortal sin today and I am supposed to go to Mass, what do I do?

Why is this hard?

You go to Mass anyway. Just go. If you shouldn't receive Holy Communion, then *don't*.

Go to confession as soon as possible.

Part of the confusion comes from the mistaken notion that people should or can receive Holy Communion *every time* they go to Mass without any consideration of the state of their souls. People go forward automatically these days. They connect going to Mass with going to Communion automatically. Therefore, if they go to Mass they *must* receive.

Folks, if you know you can't receive, go to Mass anyway! You still have your Sunday or Holy Day obligation to fulfill. You fulfill it by going to Mass, not by going to Communion. Catholics are obliged to receive Communion *once a year*, which also implies confession before that Communion. Let's leave aside here the issue of making a "perfect act of contrition" and then receiving Communion and stick to the obvious.

Who knows how long it has been since 95% of some congregations have been to confession? And yet they blithely troop up and stick out their hands.

We have a disastrous situation these days with the use/availability of the sacrament of penance.

Many people have no idea what is required to be properly disposed to receive Holy Communion.

Bishops and priests are to blame for this disastrous state of affairs. Through their neglect of teaching about and preaching about and trying to build up the sacrament of penance they have placed the souls of their flocks in danger of eternal separation from God in hell. They have endangered their own souls as well, because they will be held responsible for this before the King of Dreadful Majesty at their judgment.

And some of them – some of *you, Fathers* – are a lot closer to the end than the beginning.

