Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion

It is important from time to time for pastors to issue reminders about the guidelines for the reception of Holy Communion.

Such reminders could be given in print publications (e.g. worship aid program, bulletin, etc.) for funerals, weddings, or on days of the year when many people join us who don't practice the faith regularly (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Palm Sunday, etc.)

This could also be addressed verbally before Mass begins. The practice of verbally admonishing people right before Holy Communion is to be avoided.

EMsHC should not deny anyone Holy Communion, but rather speak privately to the pastor as soon as possible after Mass regarding any concerns they have about someone's worthiness to receive Holy Communion. The pastor may then follow up as needed with the individual Communicant. (cf. Canons 912, 915)

The following language is from the USCCB statement on the reception of Holy Communion (entire statement found here) and may be helpful:

FOR CATHOLICS
As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour.

FOR OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS
Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion.

FOR THOSE NOT RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION
All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

FOR NON-CHRISTIANS
We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.