

# Pastoral Instruction for the Diocesan Practice of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds



## Introduction

As we continue the journey of missionary discipleship, we are in the midst of the Worship Jesus years. During these years, our focus is on our relationship with Jesus in the Word and Eucharist, continuing on the roadmap provided in my pastoral letter, “Encountering Jesus in the Eucharist: Disciples Called To Worship.” Providently at the same time, the bishops of the United States saw a great need for a Eucharistic Revival: a time for the Church of the United States to revive the teaching of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and to deepen our relationship with Jesus as Savior and friend.

With this renewed focus on the Eucharist, and as we moved through the pandemic, some Pastors and members of the faithful have inquired about and requested a return to the practice of the Distribution of Holy Communion from the Cup. To be sure, it is a wonderful gift for the Church to have the faithful receive the Precious Blood at Mass. Such a practice is in fact the fuller sign of the Eucharist, and it adds greater solemnity to the Mass. While the Bishop understands the genuine desire for the option to receive Holy Communion under Both Kinds on a regular basis, the Bishop cannot mandate the practice in the Diocese.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal indicates that the Diocesan Bishop may lay down norms for the distribution of Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which must be observed. The Diocesan Bishop also has the faculty to allow Holy Communion under both kinds, whenever it seems appropriate to the Pastor, provided that the faithful have been well formed and there is no danger of the profanation of the Sacrament or that the distribution would be difficult to carry out because of the large number of participants or for some other valid reason.

## History of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds

In the earliest days of the Church, there seemed to be a common practice of offering both Eucharistic species (i.e., under the *forms* of both bread and wine) to the faithful. Over time, however, this practice gradually became less and less frequent, until it virtually disappeared around the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Many early Protestant theologians rejected the belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and insisted that the “Chalice” be offered to all members of their congregations at every celebration. So as to uphold the Church’s teaching on the Real Presence and the Doctrine of Concomitance, the Council of Trent determined that it was pastorally inappropriate to return to the early Church’s practice of offering Holy Communion under both kinds to the lay faithful.

The Second Vatican Council, and the liturgical documents that have followed, encouraged that the Church restore the practice of offering the Precious Blood to the faithful during some of the most important celebrations of Mass within the liturgical year. The documents also extended widely the faculty of the Diocesan Bishop to establish norms for Communion under both Kinds for his own diocese, as he sees pastorally appropriate.

Like other liberties taken with liturgical practices in recent years, Holy Communion under both kinds to the faithful seems to go beyond what was called for by the Church’s documents promulgated during and after the Second Vatican Council. What was intended to only happen on particular Solemnities, Feasts, and Celebrations

had become the norm. Many parishes throughout the United States, including the Diocese of Green Bay, offered the Precious Blood to everyone at every Mass. While this change was doubtlessly well-intended, it oftentimes failed to consider the following liturgical principles.

### **The Catholic Doctrine of *Concomitance***

This doctrine teaches that the entire Christ is fully present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity within each Eucharistic species. The Church came to understand that because Christ's Eucharistic presence is entirely dependent upon His presence in heaven (which is undivided), He must be present in the Eucharist as He is present in heaven. Being integral and undivided at the right hand of His Father, so too Christ's Body and Blood cannot be separated or divided in the Eucharist. Rather, the whole Christ is present within each Eucharistic element. This document must be upheld by all the faithful.

Consequently, a person who receives only one species without the other does not receive less Christ or less grace, nor one part of Christ at the exclusion of any other, nor even less grace, than a person who receives both species. It is not infrequent that Pastors hear their parishioners discuss the Eucharist in a way that evidences a certain ignorance of the Doctrine of Concomitance. While a deficiency in catechesis about Eucharistic theology is primarily the cause of this error, it is not difficult to see how insisting that the Precious Blood be offered to everyone at every Mass could also foster this misunderstanding. Rather than giving the communicant "more Jesus," reception from the Cup offers another or a different opportunity to receive the same Eucharistic Lord who was already fully received within the Consecrated Host.

### **The Principle of Progressive Solemnity**

By their very nature, Masses of the greatest solemnity within the liturgical year demand a higher and a fuller ritual. They include various ritual elements that are not usually contained in ordinary or regular celebrations. We see this principle at work throughout our liturgical year: for example, daily Masses are shorter and less ceremonious than Sunday Masses. Masses within the Octave of Easter are more solemn than Masses in Ordinary Time. Music, the use of incense, and the environment all helps to express the practice of progressive solemnity. These varying degrees of solemnity help the faithful to understand the importance of each respective celebration.

### **The Preservation of Unity**

The Eucharist is the sacramental source of the Church's unity. This has been stressed since the beginnings of the Christian tradition. As mentioned previously, the Diocesan Bishop cannot mandate reception of Holy Communion under both kinds in the Diocese. He can, however, give permission to Pastors who request it in their parish. This practice, however, could set up the possibility of parishioners traveling to churches to find where Holy Communion is offered from the Cup. In addition, since the practice is dependent on the Pastor's request to the Bishop, the way the parish receives Holy Communion could change with a new Pastor. Unity is continued by the uniformity of distribution of Holy Communion throughout the Church of the Diocese.

### **The Care and Reverence for and Protection of the Precious Blood**

The accident rate for spilling the Precious Blood during distribution is, relatively speaking, much greater than that for the Body of Christ. Unfortunately, many of us have memories of the Precious Blood being spilt. Such an accident is more difficult to reverently purify than the dropping of a Host. Purification becomes more difficult in churches that are carpeted. As small as this risk might be, it is an unnecessary one to take at every Mass.

### **Intinction**

Although the practice of intinction is allowed in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, it is not to be considered an acceptable form of distribution of Holy Communion in the Diocese of Green Bay. The history of

this practice in recent years has led to disunity. Thus, at any Mass celebrated within the Diocese of Green Bay, the practice of intinction must immediately stop.

### **Diocesan Practice for Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds**

Therefore, in keeping with the Liturgical Norms and Directives promulgated and contained within the Church's various liturgical books and documents, and in consideration of the aforementioned liturgical principles, effective on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (Corpus Christi), June 2, 2024, the Diocesan Practice of Holy Communion under Both Kinds is that Distribution of Holy Communion from the Cup **may** only take place and is *encouraged* on the following liturgical celebrations:

- All the faithful who participate in the Easter Vigil, particularly the newly baptized;
- The Christmas Mass During the Night (Midnight Mass);
- Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper;
- All weekend Masses on:
  - Divine Mercy Sunday;
  - The Solemnity of Pentecost;
  - The Solemnity of The Most Holy Trinity;
  - The Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (Corpus Christi);
  - The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

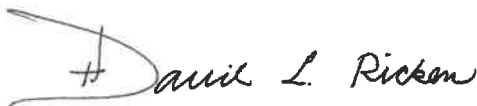
It is, furthermore, *left to the discretion of each Pastor* to distribute the Precious Blood to all the faithful present at the following celebrations:

- First Holy Communion (Only First Communicants);
- Wedding Mass (Only Bride and Groom);
- The Mass celebrating the patronal feast of each oratory, church, parish, or mission;
- The anniversary Mass celebrating the dedication of each church.

The intention of this policy is to express in our practice the mind of the Church. It is the hope that these opportunities to receive the Precious Blood of our Savior will deepen the love for the Lord Jesus truly present in the Eucharist.

March 28, 2024  
Holy Thursday

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The Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL  
Bishop of Green Bay



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Tammy Basten  
Chancellor