

The Reception of Holy Communion at Mass

Return of Holy Communion from the Chalice

On November 26-27, 2022, the first Sunday of Advent, St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland Parish, within the Diocese of Baton Rouge, will return the practice of offering the Precious Blood of the Lord from the chalice at Mass after a two-year hiatus.

“While the heart of the celebration of the Eucharist is the Eucharistic Prayer, the consummation of the Mass is found in Holy Communion” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* #5).

To the best of our ability, our parish will return offering both species at celebrations of the Eucharist doing so with reverence and dignity.

Frequently Asked Questions About Receiving Holy Communion from the Chalice

References: General Instruction of the Roman Missal = GIRM ~ Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds = NDHC

1. Is receiving from the chalice a common practice?

From the first days of the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion consisted of the reception of both species in fulfillment of the Lord’s command to “take and eat...take and drink.” The practice continued until the late 11th century when the custom of only receiving the bread began to grow. In 1415 it was decreed that Holy Communion under the form of bread alone would be distributed only. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council restored Holy Communion under both kinds and became allowed in 1970. (*NDHC #17-18*).

2. Is it safe to receive from the chalice?

The risk for infectious disease transmission by a common Communion chalice is considered low when appropriate safeguards – that is wiping the interior and exterior rim and rotating the cup – are maintained. As always, when not feeling well, a person should refrain from receiving from the chalice.

3. Do I have to receive from the chalice?

The opportunity to receive the Precious Blood from the chalice always remains the choice of the communicant as an option and is not a requirement. (*GIRM #284 – NDHC #46*).

4. If I receive the host only and not from the chalice is my reception of Holy Communion full and complete?

“The real presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements, whole and entire – is in each element of consecrated bread and wine” (*NDHC #25*). The doctrine of concomitance states that since Christ is indivisible, no part of Christ’s substance can be divided. Thus, Christ’s body can not be separated from his blood which means that Christ’s full presence is in each element fully.

5. Can’t I just dip the host in the wine?

The normative way to receive the Precious Blood of the Lord is by taking a sip from the chalice. The practice of intinction (*dipping the host in the wine*) is not the ordinary way of receiving. Likewise, an individual is not permitted to intinct on their own. It must always be done by a minister. Furthermore, to receive in this way also eliminates the option to receive in the hand. (*GIRM #287 – NDHC #49-50*).

6. Why can’t we use individual cups?

The Lord himself gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper and it is directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through Communion. The practice of sharing a chalice mirrors and remains more faithful to the command and action of the Lord at the Last Supper. (*NDHC #6*).