

Restoring the Practice of Distributing Holy Communion from the Chalice to the Faithful

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Communion - January 8, 2023

Office of Worship ~ Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston ~ Revised, December 2022

In response to the recent announcement by Cardinal DiNardo to restore the practice of distributing Holy Communion from the Chalice to the faithful, the Office of Worship offers resources for formation of ministers. This document and several others are available for catechesis. Cardinal DiNardo states:

“Beginning Sunday, January 8, 2023, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, I am restoring the practice of distributing Holy Communion from the chalice to the faithful throughout the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. I ask that all parishes resume their customary pre-pandemic practice of distributing Holy Communion from the chalice to the faithful on this date. I understand there may be some members of the faithful who are not comfortable receiving Holy Communion under this form due to ongoing health concerns related to the pandemic. However, as has always been the case, reception of Holy Communion from the chalice is left to the discretion of the communicant, and therefore does not constitute a reason to delay distributing Holy Communion from the chalice to the faithful.” (10/24/22)

Cardinal DiNardo’s teaching on the Eucharist to the faithful in 2007 gave a beautiful theological foundation to the communion practices revised that year. His instruction is timely for us again today in this post-pandemic time in our archdiocese. We begin this resource with his words from that letter:

“Our relationship to Jesus in the Eucharist is the measure of the validity of our Catholic faith. Love and devotion to the Eucharistic Christ and the careful respect we render to His presence in this sacrament is at the center of who we are as Catholics. Nothing is more important in parish life than the proper celebration of the Eucharist. The Church draws its strength for its mission in the world from the Eucharist. It is indeed the summit and source of all the Church’s activities.

We must continually rediscover the centrality of the Eucharist in parish life and in our personal lives. The action of Jesus who gave himself completely to the Father on the cross for our salvation, is re-presented in every Eucharistic Liturgy and demands our prayerful attention and careful reverence. Eucharistic devotion and adoration are wonderful encounters with the living Christ and a powerful means of parish spirituality and renewal in the gospel spirit of service and salvation to all.

This profound truth is the motivation for keeping before all Catholics the Church’s regulations on the celebration of the Eucharist and the proper care of this sacrament as distributed within and outside of Mass and reserved in our churches. The following regulations are to be faithfully observed in every church and chapel and posted in all sacristies.” - 2007, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

Each parish is asked to take this opportunity to retrain and catechize your liturgical ministers and parishioners in the months ahead on the proper way to distribute and receive Holy Communion under both forms.

Two Reminders: Be prudent when you restore the chalice on January 8. The faithful may need time to get used to receiving from the chalice again. Be mindful of the amount of wine needed for the first few weeks.

We are grateful for your perseverance during these past years. Please be assured of our prayers for you as we receive our Lord in the great gift of Christ’s Body and Blood in which we celebrate communion.

These **8 Guides** are an **update** based upon the guidance and instructions of the USCCB and Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, archbishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. It builds upon over two decades of practicing the USCCB [Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the United States](#) in our archdiocese (Click **ctrl + enter** to access the link to the document). The contents and comments added by the Office of Worship are based upon the teaching of the magisterium that is used in our Deacon, Instituted Acolyte, and EMHC formation programs. This summary also reflects instructions from [Redemptionis Sacramentum](#) (RS) for purification of vessels by clergy and instituted acolytes.

1. The USCCB’s [Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion](#) (Norms) describes proper catechesis for all ministers (#25, Norms). **The Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion:**

- are bishops and priests, in addition to the deacon who assists the bishop or priest in distributing.
- offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church. [Note: [*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*](#) states that the laity must learn to offer the sacrifice through and together with the priest – full, conscious and active participation.]
- receives gifts of bread and wine from the faithful,
- offers the sacrifice to God and returns to them the very Body and Blood of Christ, as from the hands of Christ himself.

When the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, "**the deacon ministers the chalice.**"

(#27, *Norms*) - In every celebration of the Eucharist there should be a sufficient number of ministers for Holy Communion so that it can be distributed in an orderly and reverent manner. Bishops, priests, and deacons distribute Holy Communion by virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (#28, *Norms*):

- When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops, priests, or deacons.
- If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, "the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., formally instituted acolytes or even some of the faithful who have been commissioned according to the prescribed rite. In case of necessity, the priest may also commission suitable members of the faithful for the occasion."
- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence.
- When recourse is had to use Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, especially in the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, their number should not be increased beyond what is required for the orderly and reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord.
- In all matters such Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop.

3. Reverence (#29, *Norms*)

All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine. Should there be any mishap--as when, for example, the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice--then the affected "area . . . should be washed and the water poured into the sacarium."

NOTE: Cardinal DiNardo has instructed that proper dress for liturgical ministers includes coat and tie for men, dress or professional attire for women.

4. Plan for Sufficient Amounts of Bread, Wine, and Ministers (#30, *Norms*)

- Sufficient bread and wine are consecrated for communion for the faithful at each Mass.
- As a general rule, Holy Communion is given from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and not from those reserved in the tabernacle.
- Precious Blood may not be reserved at one Mass for use at another
- A suitable number of ministers of Holy Communion are to be provided at each Mass.
- For Communion from the chalice, it is desirable that there be generally two ministers of the Precious Blood for each minister of the Body of Christ, lest the liturgical celebration be unduly prolonged Initially we recommend one, until more of the faithful regularly receive.

Option 1: ~ Empty ciboria may be brought to the altar if necessary. (Lay ministers may assist.)
~ Empty chalices are brought to the altar and filled during the Preparation of the Altar

and Gifts. The Precious Blood may not be poured from one vessel to another. Deacons or Instituted Acolytes may fill the cups with unconsecrated wine during the preparation.

Option 2: ~ Pre-filled ciboria may be brought to the altar if necessary. Lay ministers may assist.
~ Pre-filled chalices are brought to the altar if necessary. The Precious Blood may not be poured from one vessel to another. Deacons, Instituted Acolytes, or lay ministers may prepare the cups with unconsecrated wine before mass.

5. **Breaking of the Bread** (#37-40, *Norms*)

- As the *Agnus Dei/Lamb of God* begins, the bishop or priest alone, or with the assistance of concelebrating priests, breaks the eucharistic bread.
- At the Breaking of the Bread, the priest and/or deacon distributes the Body of Christ into ciboria. Additional priests and deacons may assist with this. This action normally occurs at the altar although a side table in the sanctuary may be used.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) approach the altar as [after] the priest (and deacon) receives Communion. After the priest receives Communion, he ministers Communion to the deacon and extraordinary ministers, assisted by the deacon (and Acolyte or EMHC if necessary).
- Deacons, Acolytes, or Lay ministers do not receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest by taking the host or the cup themselves.
- In accord with liturgical law, EMHCs and Acolytes must receive Holy Communion before distributing to the faithful.
- After all ministers of Communion have received Communion, the bishop or priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The deacon (but not the extraordinary ministers) may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

6. **Distribution and Reception of Communion** (#41-47, *Norms*)

- Holy Communion under the form of bread is offered to the communicant with the words "The Body of Christ." (No other form may be used. Ministers are not to include the name of the communicant.)
- The communicant chooses whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive him, taking care that nothing is lost."
- **The communicant consumes the host in the presence of the minister** (*RS*, #92).
- **The chalice is offered to communicant with the words, "The Blood of Christ," to which the communicant responds, "Amen." No other words may be used.**
- The chalice may never be left on the altar or another place to be picked up by the communicant for self-communication (except in the case of concelebrating bishops or priests), nor may the chalice be passed from one communicant to another. There shall always be a minister of the chalice.
- **Important: It is the choice of the communicant, not the minister, to receive from the chalice.**
- **After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a fresh section of the purificator.**
- **This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the**

minister turns the chalice slightly (about a quarter turn) after each communicant has received the Precious Blood.

- **Children are encouraged to receive Communion under both kinds provided that they are properly instructed and that they are old enough to receive from the chalice (that is, won't spill the chalice).**
- The bishops' instructed that a sign of reverence is to be made by each communicant before receiving communion under either form. (This is described in the *Roman Missal, 3rd ed., #160.*)
- The normal posture for receiving communion in the United States is standing, although the individual communicant may choose to receive while kneeling. Ministers are not to refuse communion to those who kneel.

7. Intinction

- #287, [*GIRM*](#), The Diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups. The Diocesan Bishop is also given the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the Priest to whom a community has been entrusted as its own shepherd, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and that there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or of the rite's becoming difficult because of the large number of participants or for some other cause.
- **No Intinction** - If your parish had the pre-pandemic or post-pandemic practice of distributing Holy Communion by intinction, this is not the regular practice of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and the Cardinal asks that intinction not be used as the normal method of distributing Holy Communion. The practice of receiving from the cup more effectively follows the Lord's instruction to "take and eat" and "take and drink."
- In no case is the communicant to self-communicate (#50, *Norms*).

8. Purification of Sacred Vessels (#51- 55, *Norms*)

- **Remaining consecrated bread is consumed by ordained ministers or placed in the tabernacle. The priest or deacon consumes any fragments at the altar.**
- **When Precious Blood remains, extraordinary ministers have permission to consume what remains. They should do this at the credence table or the altar. They are not to consume at their communion station or while walking.**
- **If not purified by the priest or deacon at the altar, the empty chalices and ciboria are placed on the credence table, suitably arranged. They may be covered and purified after Mass.**
- **Only a priest, deacon and/or instituted acolyte may purify the vessels.**
- **The Precious Blood may not be reserved from one Mass to the next.**
- **Purification**
 - ❖ **Remaining Eucharistic fragments\Precious Blood consumed (Precious Blood may never be poured into the Sacramentum.)**
 - ❖ **Chalices**
 - Vessels lightly rinsed with water and the water consumed**
 - Chalices wiped with purificator**
 - ❖ **Ciboria**
 - Fragments are wiped from the vessel into a chalice, or the vessel is lightly rinsed with the contents being poured into a chalice**
 - Water is poured into the chalice and all the Eucharistic fragments are consumed.**
 - If water was used to rinse ciboria, they are wiped dry with a purificator.**