



Reintroduction of the Distribution of the Precious Blood

Given the declaration of the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency May 11, 2023, the distribution of the Precious Blood may be reintroduced into parish Masses, at the pastor's discretion in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, beginning on the Transfiguration of the Lord, August 5-6, 2023.

Bishop Persico expects pastors to take this opportunity to reflect on the spiritual meaning of this sacred action established by the Lord Himself, to offer Eucharistic catechesis to members of the faithful, and to refine parish liturgical practices in accordance with ecclesial norms.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that the diocesan bishop has the faculty to allow Communion under both kinds, whenever it seems appropriate to the Priest to whom charge of a given community has been entrusted as [its] own pastor, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and there is no danger of the profanation of the Sacrament or that the rite would be difficult to carry out on account of the number of participants or for some other reason (no. 283). The GIRM notes that it is necessary to provide proper catechesis to a parish community prior to introducing (or reintroducing) the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass.

It is important to note that each person must make their own decision when it comes to receiving one or both species. If one is immunocompromised, has respiratory symptoms, or believes they may have been exposed to COVID or flu, it may be best to receive only the Precious Body.

Amongst the various matters to be presented, the USCCB's Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds recommend giving special attention to the following:

- the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist as the means by which all the faithful are gathered into one Body in Christ
- the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, his death and resurrection, and as the sacred banquet
- the Real Presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements, whole and entire—in each element of consecrated bread and wine (the doctrine of concomitance)
- the kinds of reverence to be shown to the Eucharist, both during and outside of Mass
- the distinction between the roles of Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Parishes that will reintroduce the practice of distributing the Precious Blood in the coming months will also want to be especially attentive to the following practical considerations and liturgical norms:

- In distributing the Precious Blood, a sufficient number of chalices should be prepared prior to Mass. Wine may be poured into these vessels from a common flagon, but this should occur during the Presentation of the Gifts, and never following the consecration in the Eucharistic Prayer.
- When approaching the chalice, the communicant should bow as a sign of reverence and respond “Amen” to the words offered by the minister, “The Blood of Christ.” After the communicant has received the Precious Blood, the chalice should be wiped with a purificator and turned before presenting it to the next communicant.
- It is not permitted for communicants to intinct the host themselves and then self-communicate, as this would detract from the sign value of being fed by the Lord in Holy Communion.

The Holy See has stated that “the chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ’s faithful where there is such a large number of communicants that it is difficult

to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist...or where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated” (Redemptionis Sacramentum, no. 102).

Additional information and instructions on proper practice for distributing the Precious Blood can be found at <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/norms-for-holy-communion-under-both-kinds>

Diocesan guidelines and instructions for “The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at Mass” may be found on the diocesan website at <https://www.eriescd.org/images/sections/bishop/pdf/Eucharistic%20Minister%20Formation.pdf> This resource should be used when training (or re-training) extraordinary ministers.

The reintroduction of this practice in our diocesan parishes serves as an opportunity to reflect on the great gift of the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Christ Himself, to the People of God.

Source: Adapted from the Archdiocese of New York, Office of Liturgy, Liturgy Update, Vol 10.2-March 2023