

Catechesis on the Diocesan Practice of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds



On Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024, Bishop Ricken published an Instruction on the Diocesan Practice of Holy Communion under Both Kinds. In his letter to the Priests and Pastoral Leaders of the Diocese introducing the Instruction, Bishop Ricken stated. “As we continue on our diocesan journey to Christ in these Worship Jesus years dedicated to Eucharistic revival in our diocese and nation, we are taking time to review and revise our liturgical practices around worship and the Eucharist. These years give us ample time and raise the need for renewal within our liturgical practices and worship of our Lord in the Eucharist. One question that has come up often is around the distribution of Holy Communion under both species.

To provide some context to the question and some of the doctrine and principles that guide our practice of the distribution of Holy Communion, I am issuing the [attached] *Pastoral Instruction for the Diocesan Practice of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*.

It is my hope that this pastoral instruction provides some of the history, principles, doctrine and best pastoral practices around this important aspect of liturgy. It is my hope that our diocesan practices align with the heart and mind of the Church as found in the Liturgical Norms and Directives.”

To assist in the understanding of the Instruction, Catechesis on the Diocesan Practice follows.

Holy Communion Under Both Kinds

1. In the earliest days of the Church, there seemed to be a common practice of offering the faithful both Eucharistic species (i.e., under the forms of both bread and wine). Over time, this practice became less and less frequent. Following the Second Vatican Council, however, the Church restored the practice of offering the Precious Body and Blood to the faithful during some of the most important feasts of the liturgical calendar to mark the greater solemnity of these celebrations. A practice which was intended only for special occasions, however, became the norm in many parishes across the United States, including in the Diocese of Green Bay, as the Precious Blood was offered at every Mass. While this practice was undoubtedly well-intended, it oftentimes fails to consider the following liturgical principles on the Eucharist.

The Doctrine of Concomitance

1. There is a common misconception among some Catholics that a person receives “more Jesus” when they receive both the Body and the Blood than the person who only receives the Consecrated Host. This misconception is

evidence of a certain confusion about the Doctrine of *Concomitance*. Through the doctrine of *Concomitance*, the Church teaches that the entire Christ is fully present – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – within each Eucharistic element. Therefore, anyone who receives the Eucharistic Lord in the Consecrated Host is receiving the whole Christ – nothing more, nothing less.

The Principle of Progressive Solemnity

1. By their very nature, Masses of the greatest solemnity within the liturgical year demand a higher and a fuller ritual. This is the principle of progressive solemnity, namely that the greater liturgical solemnities 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; regular Sunday Masses are shorter and less ceremonious than Christmas liturgies. These varying degrees of solemnity help the faithful to understand the importance of each respective celebration. It is in keeping with this principle of progressive solemnity that the Second Vatican Council proposed the offering of the Precious Blood to the faithful as a sign of the special solemnity of certain liturgies.

The Preservation of Unity

1. The Eucharist is the sacramental source of the Church's unity. In recent years, however, the various forms of distribution of the Eucharist have sometimes been a cause of division among Catholics. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to avoid all forms of division in the Church and stand for the unity we share as members of the Body of Christ. It is in keeping with this call for the

preservation of unity that the Church calls us to uniformity in the distribution of Holy Communion throughout the Church of the Diocese of Green Bay.

2. In keeping with these liturgical principles, the Diocese of Green Bay's practice for the distribution of Holy Communion is that distribution under Both Kinds is only to take place on special liturgical celebrations. 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.

Celebrations at which Holy Communion under Both Kinds is that Distribution of Holy Communion from the Cup **may** only take place and is *encouraged*.

- 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.
- 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.