



## Receiving from the Cup

Of all seven sacraments Holy Communion, or Eucharist, is the most central and important to Catholicism and offered at every Mass. Transubstantiation is the act of changing the substances of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood and we as Catholics believe that this consecrated bread and wine are the body and blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. For Catholics, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist isn't just symbolic, it's real. We fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Communion in the form of consecrated unleavened hosts made from wheat flour and water, just like the unleavened bread used by Jesus at the Last Supper. Low gluten (not gluten free) hosts are available for those sensitive to gluten.

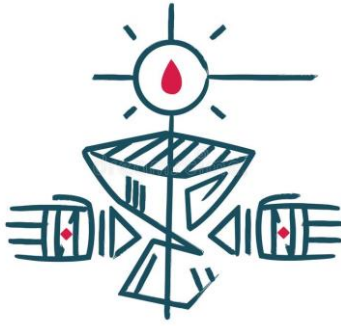
Before receiving Communion, the priest and assembly have acknowledged their unworthiness to receive so great a gift. The priest receives Communion first and then the people come forward. Those who receive Communion should be prepared to accept this great gift and are encouraged to receive devoutly and frequently. We should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive Communion without prior sacramental confession. A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged for all. The Church sees the two sacraments as connected, and urges us, when we can, to join frequent Confession with frequent Communion.

Because sharing at the Eucharistic Table is a sign of unity in the Body of Christ, only those in spiritual union with the Catholic Church may receive Communion. To invite others to receive Communion implies a belief and unity which does not exist.

The Communion procession is an action of the Body of Christ. At Christ's invitation, extended by the priest acting in Christ's person, we move forward to share in the sacred meal, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ as the sign and the source of our unity. Our procession should move with dignity; our behavior should be that of those who know they have been redeemed by Christ and are coming to receive their God!

Communion should be received standing and with a bow as an act of reverence made by those receiving. Those who receive Communion may receive either in the palm of the hand or on the tongue; it is not appropriate to reach out with the fingers and pinch the host from the person distributing. As we receive, we respond "Amen," a Hebrew word meaning "So be it!" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2856), indicating our belief that this small wafer of bread and the wine in this cup are the body and blood of Christ. It is never permissible for a person to dip the host he/she has received into the cup. It is acceptable to receive either the host or the cup to receive the grace of the sacrament, but you should reverence both the host and the cup with a bow even if you choose not to receive both.

As we receive Communion, a chant or song is sung. The unity of voices echoes the unity the Eucharist brings. All may spend some time in silent prayer of thanksgiving as well. The Communion Rite ends with the Prayer after Communion which asks that the benefits of the Eucharist will remain active in our daily lives.



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In the gospels, drinking from the cup is a sign of courageous discipleship. “Can you drink the cup that I will drink?” Jesus challenges. In the Garden of Gethsemane the same image expresses the ordeal awaiting Jesus. Not surprisingly, then, Communion from the cup implied for the early Christians an openness to martyrdom, a willingness to lay down one’s life.

If the Eucharist is the renewal of our covenant relationship, it is the cup that explicitly conveys this. In biblical accounts of the first Eucharist, and in our recollection at every Mass, each invitation to the chalice includes a reference to covenant. Our sacramental participation in the new covenant is most clearly expressed by sharing in the cup because—as Hebrews 9 reminds us—blood is a central sign of covenant.

Receiving from the cup of Christ is a powerful and important spiritual experience. Jesus tells us that the cup is his blood poured out for us; it evokes the image of the lamb’s blood on the doorposts of the Hebrew people in Egypt, on the night that God led them from the Land of Death and delivered them from bondage. For many, drinking from the chalice is an important part of their life of piety.

The Second Vatican Council made a deliberate effort to recover and clarify the sacramental signs, including the decision that “Communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit.” Documents inspired by the council continued the restoration. The General Instruction at the front of the Roman Missal advised that the faithful should be guided to desire Communion under both species because “Holy Communion has a more complete form as a sign when it is received under both kinds.” Repeatedly we are invited to seek fullness rather than legal minimums.

How should I receive the cup? You should consume the host and then make a bow to the cup whether you are going to receive it or not. If receiving from the cup, you will hear, “The Blood of Christ.” After which you take the cup in both hands and consume a small amount. After consumption, offer the cup back to the minister. Please be cognizant of the number of people behind you who wish to receive. The Cup Minister will then wipe the cup and rotate it to allow the next person a cleaner opportunity. If you approach the cup and the purificator (white covering) is over the chalice, this means the cup is empty.



***“O Lord, we cannot go to the pool of Siloe to which you sent the blind man.***

***But we have the chalice of Your Precious Blood, filled with life and light.***

***The purer we are, the more we receive.” – St. Ephraem***