

GUIDELINES FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION FROM THE CUP

The Church states clearly in her documents that the practice of distributing Communion from the Cup is to be encouraged as much as possible. The practical difficulties which may arise stem from a lack of experience and planning of the details involved in distributing in a dignified and appropriate manner.

The points set forth here are meant to be a help in preparing our people to become at ease with Communion from the Cup. They are not meant as a rigid methodology.

I. The People

1. Who may receive Communion from the Cup?

1.1. *It is to be given only to those who have been confirmed.* Perhaps the time of confirmation itself is the best time to initiate young people into this practice. However, *no one is obliged to receive from the Cup* and no one should be made to feel negligent if they choose not to. The option is similar to that of receiving Communion in the hand: it is the choice of the recipient, not the priest or the other communion minister.

1.2. It should be emphasized that we receive Jesus totally under either form. It is the sign value that is increased by receiving from the Cup, not our reception of Jesus.

2. When is the practice to begin?

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2.2. A suitable catechesis both on the Eucharist and on Communion from the Cup is the first step. *Articles on the Eucharist* have been prepared by the Liturgical Commission and may be used by those preaching as a source for their homilies. *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, no. 41 (Second edition, 1975), states: **A**It (the homily) should develop some point of the readings or of another text from the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass of the day, and take into account the mystery being celebrated and the needs proper to the listeners. **@** Teaching on the Eucharist itself is certainly covered in that statement.

2.2. These articles are in the format of a booklet. It is intended that they be distributed to the people during the time of preaching on the various eucharistic topics.

2.3. Once the catechesis is concluded, the practice may be introduced. Practical concerns might indicate beginning at one Mass, announced beforehand. As the comfort level rises, the frequency can increase. Daily Mass would seem to be an ideal setting as well, but it should be introduced at one Sunday Mass at least.

2.4. It is left to the discretion of the pastor and his Parish Pastoral Council as to the time this should be introduced, bearing in mind that some people might have a real longing for this fuller sign of participation.

3. Correct Terminology

The correct terms to use are:

\$ ACommunion from the Cup**@**; drinking from the Cup

\$ AThe Cup**@**; **A**The Precious Blood**@**

\$ AConsuming the Precious Blood**@**

*Never use the term **Awine@** when referring to Communion or to the species at any time after the words of institution. Parents and teachers must be carefully instructed in this matter of terminology because their faith may not be so accurate in this regard.*

4. Extraordinary Ministers of the Cup

4.1. Proper catechesis and training is essential. This training will encompass the theology of Communion from the Cup, as well as the practical procedures to be followed.

4.2. The people should normally (except for the feeble, paraplegics, retarded, etc.) be encouraged to take hold of the Cup themselves, and they must be shown how to accept the Cup. It is helpful for them if they can see the quantity of liquid in the cup as they approach. In some places, clear glass cups are used.

4.3. Ministers should therefore be taught how to pass the cup to a communicant. The ministers must also learn how to hold the purificator in order to wipe both the inside and the outside of the cup at the one time. The more knowledge and practice is required by the ministers for distribution from the Cup than for the distribution of hosts.

II. The People and the Things

1. *How much wine!* Sufficient for the number receiving! Trial and error, as well as careful thought, seem to be the best method for determining the amount. It seems better to run out at first than to have a huge amount left over.

2. How to distribute

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2.1. The ideal sign we look for is the visual image of *one* Bread and *one* Cup. Do not clutter the altar with cups and ciboria during the preparation of the gifts, Eucharistic Prayer and Communion preparation. *Two cups are required for every ciborium*, so you can see the clutter that could arise.

2.2. One solution which, in turn, requires some care and thought, is the use of a decanter(s) or a flagon(s).

2.2.1. The container itself should not look like a **Abar@** item, but a fine cut glass decanter, or similar fine container is appropriate. It should not be excessively fragile. It should be stable with a thick and large bottom to avoid being tipped over.

2.2.2. A decanter which is round for easy pouring, with a spout to avoid dripping and a large handle that allows for a firm grip is preferable. Always test any proposed container before buying. Be patient in your search!

2.2.3. A decanter which is chosen should be used *exclusively* for the service of the altar as a genuine sacred vessel. It would be quite in keeping to bless it in a public ceremony with the new rite for the blessing of a Chalice and Paten (*Dedication of a Church and Altar*, Chapter VII, Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments, 1977). [See Appendix A]

2.2.4. Large concelebration cups with spouts which are advertised should be avoided. They tend to obscure the true sign of the **AOne Cup@**.

2.2.5. The cups themselves may be of metal, ceramic or glass, i.e., non-porous substances. Like the decanters, they must be reserved for sacred use. Great care should be given to their

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choice: depth, width (not too wide), thickness, attractiveness.

2.3. The Preparation of the Gifts

2.3.1. The decanter(s) should be brought to the altar along with the other elements carried in procession.

2.3.2. Accuracy in measuring the amount required will be acquired with practice and experience.

2.3.3. Placement of the decanter(s) on the altar should be done with care to avoid the look of **A**clutter@, the danger of knocking it (them) over, and the obscuring of the sign of the **A**One Bread; One Cup@.

2.3.4. There will be one cup on the altar with any decanter: the adding of a small amount of water is a symbolic gesture and need be done only to the cup.

2.3.5. All auxiliary cups for distribution should be left on the credence table until needed.

2.3.6. To be consistent with **A**One Bread; One Cup@, only one container for hosts is preferable, if at all possible.

2.4. Distribution of Communion

2.4.1. The auxiliary cups should be brought to the altar at the Lamb of God, at which time the Precious Blood should be poured carefully and reverently by the priest or deacon only. If there is no deacon and time or decorum requires, one of the extraordinary ministers may assist. *There should be two cups for each ciborium or paten.*

2.4.2. The Precious Blood should be poured into the cups

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only at the altar. To refill, return to the altar.

2.4.3. If a some of the Precious Blood is left over, it should be consumed reverently at the altar, not at the communion station nor still less, **A**on the way@. No one from the congregation should be called forward for **A**seconds@. (See also number 3 below.)

2.4.4. Except for priest celebrants and deacons, the cup should be given with the accompanying words **A**The Blood of Christ@. The **A**self-serve@ practice of taking the cup is a significant contra-sign to the practice that we are *offered* the Body and Blood of the Lord and we accept by our **A**Amen@. (See also I-4.2. above)

2.4.5. The practice of **A**intinction@ is strongly discouraged by the Canadian Bishops. **A**Intinction@ adds nothing to the basic sign, **A**eat and drink@.

2.4.6. Medical authorities are not in agreement that no hygienic problems exist in having people drink from the one cup, provided the cup is wiped each time people sip, both inside and out. In fact, fewer problems exist with colds, flu, mouth sores, etc. should be discouraged from receiving the cup.

2.4.7. When a small amount of the Precious Blood remains in one cup, it should be consumed. People should not keep attempting to sip from that small amount.

3. Reservation/Purification

3.1. If a significant amount of the Precious Blood is left over, the decanter should be reverently carried to the tabernacle or altar of

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reservation. It should then be placed in the tabernacle to be consumed at a subsequent Mass. If it is more appropriate and necessary (e.g. tabernacle is too small) to consume the remaining Precious Blood, it should be done following Mass by a sufficient number of people with careful dignity. The Precious Blood should never just be carried into the sacristy or passed around after Mass.

3.2. If the sacred vessels, including the decanter, are to be left at the credence table for purification after Mass, it is perhaps fitting that they be covered with a corporal or purificators or some other visual sign that they will in fact be purified. People are often very sensitive to a seeming lack of concern on the part of the priest and communion ministers. The purification should be done by a suitable minister with all care and dignity.

APPENDIX A

Blessing of Paten and Chalice During Mass

After the General Intercessions, the cups, decanters, patens, that are to be blessed are brought to the altar by the community. Meanwhile the following antiphon is sung, or a similar song.

I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

The Presiding Priest approaches the altar to receive the vessels. When the singing is finished, he says:

Let us pray.

All pray in silence for a brief period. Then he continues.

Lord,
with joy we place on your altar
this cup and paten [decanter(s)],
vessels with which we will celebrate
the sacrifice of Christ=s new covenant.
May they be sanctified,
for in them the body and blood of Christ
will be offered, consecrated, received.

Lord,
when we celebrate Christ=s faultless sacrifice on earth,
may we be renewed in strength
and filled with your Spirit,
until we join with your Saints,
at your table in heaven.
Glory and honour be yours for ever and ever.

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The procession with the gifts then follows, and Mass continues as usual.
