

they partake of the chalice (cf. GIRM 283), so that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated (GIRM 85).

Before receiving Holy Communion, the faithful are invited to bow - perhaps while the person in front is receiving - as a sign of reverence for the Body of Christ. The communicant is then invited to respect the Church's tradition of receiving the consecrated host, in the hand or on the tongue. After consuming the host, the communicant is invited to drink the consecrated wine, when offered, from the chalice in fulfilment of Christ's invitation. The Church's teaching is that the whole Christ is received under the form of either the consecrated bread or the consecrated wine (GIRM 282).

## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE - BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR LITURGY

Communion Under the Form of Bread and Wine (1986, rev. 2008)

<https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/downloads/councils/national-liturgical-council-2/national-liturgical-documents-for-australia-1/bishops-commission-for-liturgy-2/1268-communication-under-the-form-of-bread-and-wine-1986-rev-2008-1/file>

"Some Changes in the Celebration of Mass" May 2008) (on National Liturgical Council website above).

## SAMPLE DIOCESAN PUBLICATIONS

- *Ministers of Life: A Handbook for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* (Melbourne: James Goold House Publications 2009, 2013).

Most Reverend Patrick O'Regan, Chairman  
Dr Paul Taylor, Executive Secretary

## OFFICIAL REFERENCES – HOLY SEE

- Vatican Council II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963).
- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal: Final Text for Australia* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 2012) nos. 281-287.
- Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum: On Certain Matters To Be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist* (2004) nos. 87-107, 154-160



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# BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR LITURGY GUIDELINES ON REVERENT RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

JULY 2018



The following guidelines are based on the Catholic Church's liturgical norms and offered in order to encourage reverent reception of Holy Communion in the Latin Rite, under the form of consecrated bread and wine, as the highpoint of sacramental participation in the Celebration of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life [cf. Vatican Council II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963) art. 10].

## GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

1. Come forward as the presiding celebrant receives Holy Communion (GIRM 162) and stand at the side of the altar in preparation to receive communion.
2. After receiving Communion, and when all the ministers are ready, move reverently to your station.
3. If you are ministering the Body of Christ, raise the host slightly and show it to each of the communicants saying "The Body of Christ" and allow them to respond "Amen".
4. Place the host in the person's hand or on their tongue, remembering that the mode of reception is for the communicant, not the minister, to choose (GIRM 161). If communion is to be received on the tongue, place the host in the communicant's mouth without allowing your fingers to touch the tongue. Access to a purifier can be useful at this point, as required.
5. Ensure the communicant consumes the Body of Christ in order to prevent profanation of the Blessed Sacrament [*Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004) 92].
6. When ministering the Blood of Christ, hold the chalice up as the communicant comes before you and address them with the words "The Blood of Christ" and allow them to reply "Amen". These ritual dialogues are expressions of the Catholic Church's faith and are spiritually formative. They should, therefore, not be replaced by other words.

7. Carefully hand the chalice over to the communicant and allow them to take a sip from the chalice and hand the chalice back to you. Be ready to provide assistance to children, the disabled and the elderly, as required.
8. Wipe both sides of the rim of the chalice with the purifier, then rotate the chalice enough to offer the next communicant a fresh surface from which to consume (GIRM 286).

## GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICANTS

9. When possible, join in the singing of the Communion chant/hymn/song during the Communion procession. This gesture helps to express the spiritual union of the communicants by the unity of voices, it shows gladness of heart, and it helps to bring out more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive the Body and Blood of Christ (GIRM 86).
10. In the dioceses of Australia, standing is the most common posture to receive Holy Communion, though individual members of the faithful may choose to receive Communion while kneeling (GIRM 160).
11. When approaching to receive Holy Communion, bow in reverence of the Sacrament you are to receive (GIRM 160). A common posture and gesture helps to symbolise the assembly's unity in Christ and also helps the communion procession to flow smoothly.
12. When receiving Communion in the hand, the communicant might be guided by the words of St Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386AD): "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" (*Cat. Myst V. 21-22*). Communicants who are left-handed are obviously free to receive Communion on whichever hand they feel most comfortable.

13. As a sign of reverence for the Body of Christ, communicants and ministers should ensure that their hands appear clean.
14. When the minister says "The Body of Christ", reply "Amen" (GIRM 161). When receiving in the hand, step to one side after receiving the host and consume the whole of it immediately. When receiving on the tongue, communicants should open their mouths sufficiently and position their tongue to facilitate easy reception of the host.
15. If desired, move to the minister with the chalice. When the minister says "The Blood of Christ", reply "Amen," receive the chalice, drink a little from it, and return the chalice to the minister.
16. In keeping with Christ's command to take and drink and consistent with the Church's tradition that the sacraments be ministered, it is not permitted for communicants to self-intinct (or dip) the host in the chalice. The practice of dipping fingers with the host in the chalice can also lead to other hygiene issues.
17. Return reverently to your place.

## A CATHOLIC WAY OF RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

The Catholic way of receiving Holy Communion is a response to Christ's command at the Last Supper to "take and eat" and to "take and drink" in his memory. Sharing in the Body and the Blood of Christ is a sacramental expression of Communion with Christ, the Catholic Church and the local community. Holy Communion signifies participation in the new covenant established by the shedding of Christ's Blood, and is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet in God's kingdom (cf. GIRM 281).

In addition, it is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Body of Christ from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the cases where this is foreseen,