

Parish of St Peter & St Paul

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Holy Communion under both kinds

Holy Communion under both kinds was introduced into our parish on Corpus Christi, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Thursday 14th June 2001. Since then Holy Communion has been offered under both kinds at every Mass, whenever practical.

This is what the Bishops of Britain and Ireland teach¹ us:

*We receive the whole Christ when receiving Holy Communion either under the form of bread or under the form of wine, but Catholics are 'encouraged to desire Communion under both kinds in which the meaning of the Eucharistic banquet is more fully signified.'*²

*Cyril of Jerusalem, in the fourth century, summed up the practice of the early Church for coming forward for Holy Communion: 'Make your left hand a throne for your right, since your right hand is about to welcome a king. Cup your palm and receive in it Christ's body, saying in response "Amen" After partaking of Christ's body, go to receive the chalice of his blood. ... Bow your head and say "Amen" to show your homage and reverence, and sanctify yourself by partaking also of Christ's blood.'*³

Receiving from the chalice expresses powerfully the sacrificial nature of the Mass. By taking part in the Eucharist we are drawn deeper into the new and everlasting covenant which was sealed with the blood of the Lamb. Our communion together in the blood of Christ is our communion with the sacrificial self-giving of Our Lord.

As we take the cup of salvation, we say that we are ready to drink from the cup that he drank,⁴ to give ourselves in sacrificial love as servants of salvation.

¹ One Bread, One Body: a teaching document on the Eucharist from the Bishops of Britain and Ireland. 1998. Paragraph 52.

² General Instruction on the Roman Missal, no. 240; cf. *ibid.* no. 241.

³ Mystagogical Catecheses, Sermon 5, 21-22, as translated in *The Awe-inspiring Rites of Initiation* by Edward Yarnold, Slough 1971.

⁴ Cf. Mark 10.35-40.

We enjoy the privilege of Holy Communion under both kinds because we have enough extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to make it possible. Thank God for those people who've taken on this responsibility, and pray for them!

Practical hints

- We do *not* talk about “taking the wine” - we are receiving the Blood of Christ under the *form* of wine.
- You're encouraged to receive from the chalice, but you're not obliged to. If you have a cold, flu, a sore throat, a mouth ulcer, or another illness that might be passed on by sharing a cup, it's better not to receive from the chalice until you're well again. Remember that even if we only receive Christ under the form of bread, we still receive the fullness of Christ as nourishment for our spirit.
- If you're not receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice, remember to show reverence to the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as you pass the chalice. Don't just walk past the minister with the chalice, but stop for a moment, face the minister, and bow to the chalice to honour the sacramental presence of Christ; then move on.
- Please don't wear the sort of lipstick that will be left on the chalice after you've drunk from it.
- If, for any reason, you have a blessing instead of receiving holy communion, then you don't, of course, receive from the chalice.
- Anyone, of any age, who receives holy communion is encouraged to receive Our Lord both in the Sacred Host and from the chalice.
- In the event of a flu pandemic (which God forbid), it may be necessary to suspend the reception of Holy Communion from the chalice.

How we receive Our Lord from the chalice

1. After consuming the Sacred Host, you move to the side to take your place in the queue of people waiting to receive from the chalice.
2. When you come to the minister, the minister shows you the chalice.
3. The minister says, "The blood of Christ."
4. You say, "Amen."
5. The Minister hands the chalice to you.
6. Holding the chalice carefully, you drink from it, and then carefully hand it back to the minister.
7. The minister will then wipe the chalice with the purificator, and rotate it so the next person drinks from another place.

Some thoughts from the saints

You come to me and unite Yourself intimately to me under the form of nourishment. Your Blood now runs in mine, Your Soul, Incarnate God, compenetrates mine, giving courage and support. What miracles! Who would have ever imagined such! - *St. Maximilian Kolbe*

O Lord, we cannot go to the pool of Siloam 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*

I hunger for the bread of God, the flesh of Jesus Christ ...; I long to drink of his blood, the gift of unending love. - *St. Ignatius of Antioch*

Since Christ Himself said in reference to the bread: "This is My Body," who will dare remain hesitant? And since with equal clarity He asserted: "This is My Blood," who will dare entertain any doubt and say that this is not His Blood?... You have been taught these truths. Imbued with the certainty of faith, you know that what seems to be bread is not bread but the Body of Christ, although it seems to be bread when tasted. You also know that what seems to be wine is not wine but the Blood of Christ although it does taste like wine. - *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

If the Word of God is living and powerful, and if the Lord does all things whatsoever he wills; if he said, "Let there be light", and it happened; if he said, "let there be a firmament", and it happened; ...if finally the Word of God himself willingly became man and made flesh for himself out of the most pure and undefiled blood of the holy and ever Virgin, why should he not be capable of making bread his Body and wine and water his Blood?... God said, "This is my Body", and "This is my Blood." - *St. John of Damascus*

He who receives Communion is made holy and Divinised in soul and body in the same way that water, set over a fire, becomes boiling... Communion works like yeast that has been mixed into dough so that it leavens the whole mass; ...Just as by melting two candles together you get one piece of wax, so, I think, one who receives the Flesh and Blood of Jesus is fused together with Him by this Communion, and the soul finds that he is in Christ and Christ is in him. - *St. Cyril of Alexandria*

When we ingest the Eucharist in reality we are ingesting the Godheadbecause His Body and Blood are diffused through our members we become partakers of the divine nature. - *St. Cyril of Alexandria*

In the Blessed Sacrament
God loves us so tenderly,
He empties Himself completely.
O, who could believe it?
Withholding nothing, He gives his all.
He gives his flesh for us to eat
He gives his blood for us to drink.
He gives his soul, his infinite being
To transform us into Himself.
Praised be the Blessed Sacrament!

- *St. Louis de Montfort*