



The Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Thunder Bay

The Eucharist  
Guidelines

June 2008

This booklet contains a compilation  
of letters, instructions and clarification on the  
celebration of the Eucharist (Sunday Mass)  
in the Diocese of Thunder Bay.

## The Eucharist

My Dear People,

As we celebrate the joy of this Jubilee Year, our diocesan family is reflecting on the importance of the most Holy Eucharist in our lives. Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II has asked that the entire Church centre its attention on our Sunday celebrations in order to deepen our respect and awareness of the great mystery we share in Christ when we gather as a faith family.

The Second Vatican Council has noted in its earliest documents, that the liturgy is the 'source and summit' of our faith life as a community. In order for this to be true, each of us, clergy and laity, must make a concerted effort to share our gifts and talents when we gather to participate in this awesome Sacrament.

In conjunction with this call to renew our participation and love of the Eucharist, I have asked the priests, deacons and each of you to share with me in implementing some very simple and yet meaningful directives in our celebration of Sunday Mass.

The first is the option to receive Holy Communion under two species or two kinds during the Mass. As the Lord Jesus took the bread and took the cup of wine, giving both to his disciples at the Last Supper, I am encouraging that in each of our parishes, the same be done for our reception of Holy Communion.

Where possible, and in particular on Holy Thursday, which commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and at each Sunday celebration of the community, when Holy Communion is distributed, there should be sufficient ministers to assist with both the Body of Christ and the cup of the Blood of Christ for communicants to partake. This will mean an adjustment in some cases as to how Holy Communion is distributed in our parishes, and more importantly, it will require more trained auxiliary ministers of Communion to assist with the cup.

This directive, during this year of the Eucharist is most appropriate as we deepen our appreciation of this sacrament. Our Office of Worship at the Pastoral Centre will be available to assist any parish with information and tools for training auxiliary ministers in this new responsibility. Permanent deacons, who are the 'first minister of the cup of the Lord', should recognize their important role in assisting to implement this directive.

I must emphasize that the reception of Holy Communion under both kinds is by invitation. We believe that Christ is truly and totally present both under the form of bread and under the form of wine. Care, sensitivity and discretion must come into play when people are ill with colds etc. or do not wish to partake of the cup for some other reason. Parishes will need to be instructed as to the significance of this choice, and recommendations should be issued where necessary.

A second directive that I have called our priests to maintain is to use at each celebration of the Mass, an adequate supply of bread and wine for those who will partake of communion at that particular Mass. Auxiliary ministers of communion and those who prepare the elements for Mass must take note of this. I know that this can be a difficult thing to discern – the numbers who will partake of communion at each Sunday Mass. However, after careful scrutiny and over a period of Sundays, I am sure that a general count is very possible.

With this directive in mind, it will be evident from the celebration, that the Eucharist we are sharing, is the one bread, and the one cup, consecrated at this Mass for all. It will emphasize our unity as the Body of Christ, and will better direct our celebrations according to the norms given to us in the General Instructions on the Roman Missal and by our National Liturgical Office.

We should avoid going to the tabernacle for Holy Communion during Sunday Masses – and we must remember that the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle, primarily for the sick and those who are unable to attend our Sunday Eucharist. Use of the consecrated bread in the tabernacle would be appropriate only after the bread used at a particular Mass proved to be insufficient for the number of communicants.

The third directive which will help us to better share in our celebration of Mass is the posture we use during the Eucharistic Prayer. The General Norms for the Liturgy note that ‘for the sake of uniformity in movement and posture...the people should stand from the prayer over the gifts to then end of the Mass. They should kneel for the words of consecration unless prevented by the lack of space, the number of people present, or some other good reason.’ (No.21)

With this norm in mind, I am asking that as a faith community in our diocese, we follow this directive, which is to remain standing from the ‘prayer over the gifts’ until the end of Holy Communion. The assembly should kneel only at the ‘epiclesis’ (the beginning of the consecration) but stand again for the ‘acclamation of the mystery of faith’ when they are called to do so by the presider.

Again this directive will require some instruction on the part of our parish liturgy committees to the assembly. I ask that this be done through preaching, bulletin announcements or instruction, and the publication of this letter. The proper posture for a faith people in pilgrimage is that of ‘standing’ as was noted to the bishops of Canada in a recent annual meeting. We ‘stand’ because we are people who await the return of the Lord and the resurrection from the dead. We stand in anticipation of that great day! Our posture at this most important part of the Mass reflects this anticipation and joy.

Conscious that at times, the period of standing might be a little lengthy for some, especially the elderly, they are requested to be seated when necessary for the sake of their health and stability.

I am aware that these directives might seem a bit strange to some of our clergy and faithful, and might at times pose a conflict with norms or practices that have been timely for many years. I trust that through our prayer, our desire to be united as a faith family in our diocese, through careful and clear instruction, each of us will appreciate how these norms will strengthen and enhance our celebration of Sunday Mass as a 'community of the Lord'.

These norms are only a part of our reflection on this most important sacrament. I commend to each and everyone, the invitation to study and pray the readings, the prayers and especially the Eucharistic Prayers of our Sunday Liturgy. If we take these to our personal prayer – the Lord will help us to appreciate and give thanks for the gift of Jesus Christ in whom we share.

I request that these directives be initiated no later than Easter of this Jubilee Year.

May God's blessings be upon each of you.

Sincerely in Christ  
Most Rev. Fred J. Colli  
Bishop of Thunder Bay

April 01, 2000

## Liturgical Note

### Proposition 41 from the Synod on the Holy Eucharist Reception of Holy Communion for non-Catholic Christians

*In this proposition, the Synod reaffirms that “it must be made clear that the Eucharist does not designate and effect only our personal communion with Jesus Christ, but above all the full ‘communio’ of the Church. We ask therefore, that non-Catholic Christians understand and respect the fact for us...”*

A request has been brought to the Office of Worship for some instruction as to how our understanding of intercommunion can be made clear at a celebration of the Eucharist. The response is this:

1. At a regular Sunday Eucharist of the faithful in parish churches, there is no announcement necessary and the liturgy does not allow for any announcement being made before the reception of Holy Communion, concerning those who can and cannot or should not receive. Clarity of our practice is to be made either in bulletin announcements or in sermons or by other means. The liturgy does not allow or indicate a place for any such announcement about the reception of Holy Communion in Sunday Eucharist.
2. In celebrations of the Eucharist in which a fair number of the faithful present might not be of the Catholic faith, (v.g. a funeral Mass, a wedding Mass) then a brief announcement similar to the following may be given to the faithful before Holy Communion is distributed:

*“For those of the Catholic faith, who are going to receive Holy Communion at this Mass, we ask that you please come forward as you would normally do for reception at your parish church. We ask those who are not going to receive communion, to please be seated at this time.”*

This announcement designates 'Catholics' and allows for a choice for them, and also gives the non-Catholic a polite instruction as per our policy and what procedures they are to follow, i.e. sitting.

3. Bulletin Announcement: To assist those attending Mass and also to remind our Catholic people about our teachings of Holy Communion, the following bulletin announcement may be used:

“Intercommunion”: Our Catholic faith teaches us that Holy Communion is a sign and symbol of our full union and oneness in faith, life and worship with our Church and our belief in the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Someone who does not share these beliefs does not participate in our communion.

In a similar way, Roman Catholics do not receive communion in non-Catholic churches because in doing so, you are indicating your full communion with them and their church beliefs, and this full union is not true.

Those who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

## Liturgical Norms Update

March 17, 2001  
Feast of St. Patrick

To the Priests, Deacons & Members of Parish Liturgical Committees:

As we celebrate the feast of St. Patrick, the secondary patron of our diocese, I take this opportunity to write this letter in order for us to reflect once again upon the liturgical developments and changes that we have shared over the past year. During Lent of the Jubilee Year I asked that we deepen our appreciation of Holy Eucharist and participate more actively and prayerfully in the celebration of our Sunday Mass. In my pastoral letter on the Eucharist, I instructed that we be invited to partake of the Lord's body and blood in our communion by receiving both the consecrated bread and consecrated wine at Mass. I also asked that we use sufficient amounts of these elements at each Mass for the number of the communions needed. Finally, I requested that our posture during the Eucharist be one of a people on a journey, standing for action, awaiting the Lord's coming with hope and joy. This posture can unite us as a family of faith, devout in heart, seeking to meet the Lord.

Our Office of Worship conducted a small survey of the parishes in our diocese seeking input, concerns and questions concerning these changes, and offering to assist where necessary, any parishes experiencing difficulties. The results of the survey were very favourable to these directives, and for the most part, parishes found the adjustments relatively simple.

I feel however, I should once again, stress some of the points mentioned and clarify any concerns. These norms are still in effect for all our diocesan parishes, and the pastor is to use his discretion in implementing them for his people. I request that they not be dismissed outright, but that these norms be taught to the parish community through bulletin inserts, homilies or other means of instruction.



### Communion from the cup

Since the partaking of the Blood of Christ would not be acceptable to all people, and should not be taken by those who are ill, with colds etc, I emphasized that this is an 'invitation' for those who 'wish' to partake of the precious Blood of the Lord. More people will respond to this invitation in time, so we must be patient. As you are aware, intinction of the Precious Blood is not an acceptable practice in Canada. Deacons and other ministers of the cup must be vigilant and attentive that proper handling, wiping and purification of the cups are done reverently and carefully both during communion and after the Mass.

The wine used for Holy Communion must be 'natural wine of the grape and not corrupt' according to Canon Law no. 924. Therefore no substitutes for grape wine are to be used for the people, unless express permission is given by the bishop.

### Eucharist and small children

The reception of the Precious Blood of the Lord by smaller children who have made their First Communion but who are not yet Confirmed, is at the discretion of their parents. Parents are to be careful in allowing their smaller children to partake of the cup. They are to see that proper instruction is given to them and that parents accompany and/or assist them, when necessary, at the time of reception of the cup from the minister.

### Posture

It was also noted in the survey that some find it awkward to kneel for the words of consecration at the 'epiclesis' or the 'calling of the Holy Spirit to make these gifts holy'. Some parishes are kneeling at the 'holy, holy, holy' and then are standing at the acclamation of faith. I will not discourage this practice, however care should be taken to realize that the Preface prayer is also a part of the Eucharistic prayer as it leads into the singing of the 'holy, holy, holy'. We sing with all of creation in order to reflect our joy in God's goodness.

The priest-president is to recite the Eucharistic prayer as the congregation prayerfully listens and responds with the appropriate acclamation responses. This prayer ends with the priest singing the

“Through Him, with Him...etc.” and the people’s response with the ‘Great Amen’. After the reception of Holy Communion, some have expressed a desire to sit or kneel in personal thanksgiving, and this, of course, is most acceptable.

### Tabernacle

A concern has been expressed in the survey about use of the consecrated bread from the tabernacle. Again, I emphasize that the priest or Eucharistic ministers should use common sense in their approach to this directive. Eucharistic bread from the tabernacle may be used at Mass for Holy Communion, however, care should be taken that the proper sign of the ‘one bread and one cup’ from the altar, for the people of God, not be significantly diminished at the celebration.

I wish to thank everyone for their cooperation and input concerning these liturgical changes. Their purpose is to unite us as a faith community at prayer and worship, and to help us to better understand and share in the great mystery of the Mass. These norms are not new to the Church, but they have been a part of the liturgy of the Mass since the change of Vatican II and are found in the General Instructions for the Roman Missal published in 1970.

As the bishop of our diocese, I do my best to see that all liturgical norms are carefully followed by everyone, clergy and laity, since the liturgy is not ours to change, but only ours to share. It is the liturgy of the universal Church and we must never become too accustomed to so great a mystery entrusted to our care. If we do, it could lead to some laxity or carelessness on our part in our worship. I ask everyone, priests, deacons, and laity, to be attentive to their liturgical celebrations in every respect and to use the words of our liturgies, especially the words of our Eucharistic prayers, for prayerful reflection.

I ask that priests, deacons and members of the liturgical committees of our parishes decide when it is opportune to make known the information in this letter to the people of their faith communities.

Let us ask St. Patrick, who was also a bishop and leader in the Church, to pray for us and with us, as we give praise and worship to our God through Jesus His Son, not only in the Mass but in all our prayer and good works.

Sincerely in Christ,

**+Fred J. Colli**

Most Rev. Fred J. Colli  
Bishop of Thunder Bay

### MINISTERS OF THE CUP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make careful judgements as to how much bread and wine need to be ready for the communication of the faithful.
2. Wine may not be consecrated at one Mass and reserved for use at another.
3. There should normally be only one chalice on the altar. The use of a dignified carafe for extra wine is preferable along with the chalice. Additional cups are to be filled with the Precious Blood just before Communion. Try to keep the altar uncluttered.
4. When offering the blood of Christ under the form of wine, it is important to use the best quality of material for the cups. The cup that holds the Blood of Christ should be dignified, worthy, and beautiful. It is preferable that it be of metal with gold plate on the inner cup. Glass cups or goblets are not recommended.
5. To wipe the chalice between each communicant some of the following procedures may be helpful:
  - a) carefully wipe the rim of the cup after **each** communicant.
  - b) wipe the cup on the **inside** of the rim as well as the **outside**.
  - c) open the purificator so that a clean part of it can be used for **each** communicant.
  - d) rotate the chalice so that the next communicant does not drink out of the same place on the cup.
  - e) in parishes where a large number of communicants receive from the cup, two or more purificators might be used by the ministers. Altar servers could take a clean one to each minister of the cup periodically.
  - f) purify each cup at the credence table after the celebration or after communion. This includes rinsing the chalices and wiping them.

6. Eucharistic cups should also be washed well with soap and hot water following each Eucharistic liturgy.
7. The remaining blood of Christ is to be consumed reverently by the deacon, Eucharistic minister, or presider immediately after Holy Communion or after the celebration, either at the credence table or in the sacristy.
8. Return leftover consecrated bread to the tabernacle.
9. After the communion rite, return to your place in the assembly to participate in the closing prayer and song.
10. Thank God for the opportunity to serve your brothers and sisters and to build the Body of Christ

Bishop Fred Colli  
Diocese of Thunder Bay, Office of Worship  
2001

#### HYGIENE AND COMMUNION FROM THE CUP

There is much concern regarding the spread of diseases such as AIDS through the communion cup. In the latest and most complete study that has been carried out in Canada and the United States, the Anglican paper entitled "AIDS & the Common Cup" states that HIV infection is not possible through the common cup. Other risks to colds and flues are also a concern, however, it was noted that "the transmission of the disease never has been traced to the shared communion cup among any religious denomination that has this practice." It is a matter of common courtesy that individuals not feeling well should avoid receiving from the cup. Here are some points that can help alleviate some fears of receiving from the common cup:

1. The high quality material that the cup is made from itself deters bacteria from clinging to it – gold, silver, and a high glaze are not good conductors of germs.
2. Alcohol in the wine is itself a disinfectant.
3. A clean absorbent cloth used after each communicant can remove lip moisture from both the inside and outside of the cup rim.
4. Each cup is thoroughly washed after each celebration.

## RESOURCES

Glendinning, Barry, Preparing the Eucharistic Table, Novalis, 1997.

Preparing to Serve at the Altar, Novalis, 1997.

"Communion from the Cup", a Report by the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Liturgy Office, 1996.

### Videos:

"Say Amen to What You Are" VHS - 264, (LTP Production)

"Training Eucharistic Ministers" a video with Barbara O'Dea, D.W. VHS 264.2 (Tabor, Argus Communication)

"Training the Eucharistic Minister" VHS 264.3 (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Mn)