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Documentation #1

Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship

INSTRUCTION

ON THE EXTENSION OF THE  
FACULTY TO DISTRIBUTE  
HOLY COMMUNION  
UNDER BOTH KINDS

# Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship

## INSTRUCTION

### ON THE EXTENSION OF THE FACULTY TO DISTRIBUTE HOLY COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

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Through sacramental communion the faithful take part more perfectly in the eucharistic celebration. This is the teaching of the entire tradition of the Church. By communion in fact, the faithful share fully in the eucharistic sacrifice. In this way they are not limited to sharing in the sacrifice by faith and prayer, nor merely to spiritual communion with Christ offered on the altar, but they receive Christ Himself sacramentally so as to receive more fully the fruits of this most holy sacrifice.

In order that the fullness of sign in the eucharistic banquet may be seen more clearly by the faithful<sup>1</sup>, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council laid down that in certain cases—to be decided by the Holy See—the faithful should be able to receive holy communion under both kinds. This leaves intact the dogmatic principles recognized in the Council of Trent, by which it is taught that Christ whole and entire and the true sacrament<sup>2</sup> are also received under one species alone.<sup>3</sup>

This desire of the Council has gradually been put into effect.<sup>4</sup> The preparation of the faithful has accompanied this gradual development, so that from this change in ecclesiastical discipline there should come ever more abundant fruits of devotion and spiritual growth.

As time has gone on it has been possible to witness an ever increasing desire that the number of cases, in which it is possible to administer communion under both kinds, should be further extended according to the needs of different regions and people.

Therefore this Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, taking into account the requests of numerous Bishops, and indeed of Episcopal Conferences, and the requests of the Superiors of Religious families, lays

down, by mandate of his Holiness the Pope, all that follows regarding the faculty of distributing holy communion under both kinds:

1. Communion under both kinds may be distributed, in accordance with the judgement of the Ordinary, in the cases determined by the Holy See—as given in the list adjoining this instruction.

2. Moreover, the Episcopal Conferences may decide to what extent, for what motives and in what conditions, Ordinaries may concede communion under both kinds in other cases which have great importance for the spiritual life of a particular community or group of the faithful.

3. Within these limits, the Ordinaries may indicate particular cases. This is on the condition however that the faculty should not be conceded indiscriminately, and that the celebration should be clearly indicated, together with those points to which particular attention must be paid. This faculty should not be granted on occasions where there are large numbers of communicants. The groups to whom the faculty is conceded should be well defined, ordered, and homogeneous.

4. The Ordinary of the place may grant these faculties for all the churches and oratories in his territory; the Religious Ordinary for those houses dependent on him. It is for these to ensure that the norms given by the Holy See or by the Episcopal Conference should be observed. Before they grant the faculty, they should be sure that everything will be carried out in a way befitting the holiness of this sacrament.

5. Before the faithful are to receive communion under both kinds, they should be adequately instructed on the significance of the rite.

6. In order that communion under both kinds may be properly administered, care should be taken to maintain due reverence and to carry out the rite in the way described in Nos. 244-251 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

That method of distribution should be chosen which best ensures that communion is received with devotion and dignity, and also avoids the dangers of irreverence. The nature of each liturgical group, and the age, conditions, and preparation of those wishing to receive communion must also be taken into account.

Among the ways of distribution given by the Instruction of the Roman Missal, the reception of communion by drinking from the chalice itself certainly has pre-eminence. However, this method should only be chosen when everything can be carried out in an orderly fashion and

without any danger of irreverence towards the Blood of the Lord. If there are other priests present, or deacons or acolytes, they should therefore be asked to help by presenting the chalice. On the other hand, it does not seem that that manner of distribution should be approved in which the chalice is passed from one to another, or in which the communicants come up directly to take the chalice themselves and receive the Blood of the Lord. When the ministers mentioned above are not available, then if the communicants are few in number and communion is taken directly from the chalice, the same priest should distribute communion first under the species of bread and afterwards under the species of wine.

Otherwise the rite of communion under both kinds by intinction is to be preferred in order that practical difficulties may be avoided and that due reverence might more aptly be given to the sacrament. In this way access to communion under both kinds is offered more easily and more safely to the faithful, whatever their age or condition, and at the same time the fullness of sign is preserved.

On 26 June 1970 His Holiness Pope Paul VI confirmed and ratified the present Instruction, and ordered that it be promulgated.

From the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 29 June 1970.

Benno Card. Gut  
Prefect

A. Bugnini  
Secretary

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis romani*, n. 240

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Conc. Trid., Sess. XXI, Decr. de Communionem eucharistica, c. 1-3: Denz. 929-932 (1725-1729).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Const. de sacra Liturgia, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n.55

<sup>4</sup>S. Congr. Rituum, Decretum generale quo ritus concelebrationis et Communionis sub utraque specie promulgatur, *Ecclesiae semper*, 7 martii 1965: A.A.S. 57 (1965), pp. 411-412; Instructio de cultu mysterii eucharistici, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 25 maii 1967, n. 32: A.A.S. 59 (1967), n. 32: A.A.S. 59 (1967), pp. 558-559; *Institutio generalis Missalis romani*, nn. 76, 242.