

Corpus Christi

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE CHURCH

After this, standing and turned toward the altar, the priest says quietly, *“Corpus Christi custodiat me in vitam aeternam”* (May the Body of Christ bring me to everlasting life) and reverently receives the Body of Christ. Then he takes the chalice, saying quietly, *“Sanguis Christi custodiat me in vitam aeternam”* (May the Blood of Christ bring me to everlasting life), and reverently receives the Blood of Christ (*General Instructions for the Roman Missal*, 158).

The priest then takes the paten or ciborium and goes to the communicants, who, as a rule, approach in a procession.

The faithful are not permitted to take the consecrated bread or the sacred chalice by themselves and, still less, to hand them from one to another. The norm established for the Dioceses of the United States of America is that Holy Communion is to be received standing, unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion while kneeling (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, no. 91). When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant (GIRM 160).

If Communion is given only under the species of bread, the Priest raises the host slightly and shows it to each, saying, The Body of Christ. The communicant replies, “Amen”, and receives the Sacrament either on the tongue or, *where this is allowed* (emphasis added), in the hand, the choice lying with the communicant. As soon as the communicant receives the host, he or she consumes the whole of it (GIRM 160).

HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION: GUIDANCE FROM YOUR PASTOR

It is worthwhile to be reminded every year how to extend one’s hands or open one’s mouth to receive Our Lord. Please make sure your hands are clean and your teeth are brushed. Extend your hands with one underneath the other. Please do not curl your fingers such that the Sacred Host cannot lay flat in the palm of your hand. Please do not stretch your fingers such that the Sacred Host might easily fall to the ground. In the same vein, please instruct your little ones not to extend their hands up above their faces.

Note that receiving Holy Communion in the hand is at the discretion of the local Bishop. Here and in most Dioceses it is permitted to do so in the Ordinary Form of the Holy Mass. But it is not part of the Extraordinary or Traditional Form of the Holy Mass, where the communicant is kneels, unless it is too painful, and simply opens the mouth to receive Our Lord, the priest meanwhile saying the only words: *“Corpus Domini Nostri Iesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.”* (May the Body of Christ bring your soul to everlasting life. Amen.).

If you employ the universal practice of receiving Our Lord on your tongue, please stand up straight without leaning forward, look at the Sacred Host and lower your bottom jaw and extend your tongue so that it covers your bottom lip. It might help to practice in the mirror.

Note also that the faithful always enjoy the option of being on their knees when they receive Holy Communion no matter what form of the Holy Mass is being offered. To that end we will be installing altar rail cushions for our sanctuary. And those who wish not to be standing while receiving Holy Communion will not have to put knee to marble anymore.

Lastly, please, please, please, when there are two lines for one Communion station, it would be most helpful if the front person in each line were all the way up at the step. Instead of approaching one at a time (as reverent and deferential as it seems), your being as far forward as possible affords you an extra second to pause before communicating and it allows the priest to proceed without pausing.



Short Insert for Mass Programs

*Before Holy Mass commences please join in the spiritual communion of silent prayer.
When the sacred rituals begin, you are invited to join in the spoken and sung prayers as you are able.*

*Please observe the ancient Christian tradition that only those in full communion with the Church
who are in the state of grace and keeping the Eucharistic fast may receive Holy Communion.*

Additional Long Insert for Mass Programs

THE FIRST APOLOGY OF ST. JUSTIN MARTYR

Letter written to the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, in the year 155.

CHAPTER LXV.—ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

CHAPTER LXVI.—OF THE EUCHARIST.

And this food is called among us ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΙΑ [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined (emphasis added). For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

CHAPTER LXVII.—WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.