

Encountering the Eucharist

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Two very important vessels used in the Mass are the chalice and paten. The paten is technically a small round metal plate on which is placed the large host that the main priest celebrant will elevate, consecrate, and consume. Sometimes instead of a flat plate, it is in the shape of a bowl. In that case it's called a *bowl paten*. Some patens can fit on top of the chalice to form a cover or lid. The chalice is a goblet or footed cup that is used to hold the Precious Blood. Sometimes they can be very ornate reflecting the fact that, among all the vessels of the altar, the chalice holds a "pride of place." In 2011, the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal replaced the word "cup" in the Eucharistic Prayer with *chalice* to emphasize the special dignity of this vessel.

What We Believe...

The Doctrine of Concomitance

The word "concomitance" (pronounced: KUHN+KOM+I+TUHNS) is a word that means occurring or existing together or in connection with one another. It refers to the teaching on the Eucharist that, during holy communion, the whole Christ is equally present in the consecrated bread just as He is present *fully* in the consecrated wine. In other words, the complete substance of the risen Jesus Christ—His body and blood with His soul and divinity—exists under the appearance of bread in connection with the appearance of wine. Accordingly, when you only receive the host in communion, you are truly receiving the blood of Christ as well as His body. St. Thomas Aquinas put it like this, "nothing is lost by the body being received by the people without the blood: because the priest both offers and receives the blood in the name of all, and the *whole Christ* is present under *either species*" (Summa Theologiae, III, q. 80, a. 12, ad 3). So, under the species of bread there is also present, by *concomitance*, the precious blood. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many dioceses (including all the dioceses of the Indianapolis Ecclesiastical Province) have suspended the reception of the chalice. Meaning that during the distribution of holy communion at Mass, only the consecrated host has been given out while the Precious Blood has only been consumed by the priest and/or the deacon. This has left many parishioners to wonder if they were only receiving Christ *in part*. The 2011 Vatican document, "Doctrinal Formation and Communion Under Both Kinds" put out by the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff is instructive in this case:

"The purpose, then, of receiving Holy Communion under both kinds, is not that the faithful receive more grace than when they receive it under one kind alone, but that the faithful are enabled to appreciate vividly the value of the sign. Sadly, this distinction has not always been made clear and some people, when not offered Holy Communion under both kinds, have expressed a sense of bewilderment, even thwarted entitlement, or a feeling that Holy Communion under one kind alone was, to some extent, deficient."

Rest assured then, that when you receive only the sacred host, your experience of the sacrament is not deficient or in some way is lacking efficacy. On the contrary, during holy Communion, whether we receive both species or one species, we receive our Divine Savior whole, entire and undivided.



Sharing Our Very Life: How to Receive Communion



Because the Eucharistic bread is by no means just “ordinary food” but the very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, we must make it a point to receive holy communion in a manner that reflects what we believe as Catholics. Our bodies speak a “language.” Therefore, we communicate with our bodies what we *really believe* about what the Church teaches regarding the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In the dioceses of the United States, Catholics may receive holy communion in their hand. This is a special “permission” granted by Rome and we need to be aware of how to do it properly. Firstly, a person needs to ensure that their hands are not dirty or wet so that the host is not soiled in any way. Second, right before being presented with the Body of Christ, a person should make a bow of the head as the required act of adoration. Then, as Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in 350 AD instructs: “When you go to receive communion, go not with your wrists extended, nor with your fingers separated, but placing your left hand as a throne for your right, which is to receive so great a King, and in the hollow of the palm receive the body of Christ, saying, ‘Amen’” (Catechesis mystagogica V, xxi-xxii, Migne Patrologia Graeca, 33). Receiving the Sacred Host on the tongue is the normative way of receiving Holy Communion in the Latin Rite. After saying “Amen” in response to the minister of Holy Communion, the communicant should open the mouth wide and extend the tongue far enough so that the Sacred Host can be placed upon it without danger of falling. It is most important to extend the tongue, not just open the mouth.

Someone once said to St. Teresa of Avila, “If only I had lived at the time of Jesus . . . If only I had seen Jesus . . . If only I had talked with Jesus.” Teresa responded, “But do we not have in the Eucharist the living, true and real Jesus present before us. Why look for more?”



Life in the Eucharist: St. Tarcisus



Not a lot is known about this boy-martyr of the Eucharist. He lived during the Christian persecution of emperor Valerian, around 257 AD. He was most likely an acolyte. The Christians would secretly gather for Mass and then

deacons would take the Eucharist to the prisoners. That particular day there were no deacons so Tarcisus, being an acolyte, was given the duty. On his way, he met a group of boys his own age. They wanted him to play but he refused. The boys noticed he was carrying something and tried to take it away.

Tarcisus wouldn't let them see the “holy Mysteries” and so the group beat him up very severely. He died from his injuries. It is said that when they searched him after beating him to death, the Hosts had miraculously disappeared. Tarcisus' defended the Eucharist out of his devotion to the Real Presence.

Adoro te Devote: Making A Holy Hour

One of the simplest, yet profound things we can do to show our devotion to the Eucharist is making what's called a “Holy Hour.” This is the Catholic practice of sitting in church for an hour either before the Tabernacle, or before the exposed host in the monstrance. Making such a “visit” to the Blessed Sacrament regularly is one of the best ways to increase your love for Jesus in the Eucharist as well as advance in holiness. Most of us want to be “closer to God” but it doesn't just happen! Like every relationship, we've got to be intentional. St. John Vianney once asked a farmer what he was doing in the church all day. The man humbly said, “Nothing. I look at Him and He looks at me.” Something so simple, even for a few minutes, is beneficial for us.

