

# Holy Communion Under Both Kinds

DIOCESE *of* ORANGE • OFFICE *for* WORSHIP



Photographer: Kaylee Toole  
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**ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

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January 9, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Most Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us in *Lumen Gentium* (11), calling all the faithful to deepen their love and reverence for this sacred sacrament. Our full understanding of the Eucharist—including how it is celebrated and received—is essential for living as a Eucharistic people.

After careful consultation with the Diocesan Council of Priests and the auxiliary bishops, it became clear that guidance regarding the proper distribution of the Eucharist in our diocese would be beneficial.

Under my direction, the Office for Worship has prepared the attached document, which presents norms for the distribution of Holy Communion. These norms, which I have approved in consultation with our diocesan priests, reflect the teachings of the Fathers of Vatican II and allow for the administration of Holy Communion under both species during specific celebrations.

These norms will become effective on Sunday, January 11, 2026, the celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

It is my hope that these norms will serve as a helpful guide for all of us in deepening our reverence for the Eucharist and fostering a greater sense of our identity as a Eucharistic people.

May this guidance strengthen our prayer, worship, and participation in the sacred mystery of Christ's Body and Blood.

With my prayers and blessings,

Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D., D.Min.  
*Bishop of Orange*





# HOLY COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

## Introduction

The Most Holy Eucharist, as we are reminded by the Second Vatican Council, is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” “At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.”<sup>2</sup>

The Eucharist, therefore, is at once a Holy Sacrifice and a Sacred Meal. In every Mass, the one sacrifice of the Cross is made present, and the faithful are gathered into communion with Christ and with one another as they partake in the heavenly banquet through Holy Communion. The Eucharist is thus a divine gift entrusted to the Church to cherish and celebrate faithfully until the Lord comes again.

The purpose of this document and accompanying norms are to provide a Diocesan policy and statement concerning the distribution of the Most Holy Eucharist, specifically focusing on catechesis regarding the Eucharistic Species and the conditions under which the Precious Blood may be distributed to the faithful during Holy Mass in the Diocese of Orange.

The central importance of the Most Holy Eucharist in the life of the Church is a key factor in understanding the norms that follow in this document.

## Importance of the Most Holy Eucharist

The Church teaches that the Most Holy Eucharist has been received from Christ “...not as one gift ... but as *the gift par excellence*, for it is the gift of himself, of his person in his sacred humanity, as well as the gift of his saving work.”<sup>3</sup> From this gift, the Church draws her life and the grace that sustains her mission throughout the world. For this reason, Eucharistic catechesis and devotion must stand at the heart of Christian formation, inspiring the faithful to deeper love, worship, and service.

Among the seven sacraments, the Eucharist occupies a unique place and is fittingly called the “Blessed Sacrament.” While the other sacraments make Christ present through sacramental signs, the Eucharist alone contains His Real Presence in the fullest sense. “The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the

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<sup>1</sup> LG 11

<sup>2</sup> SC 47

<sup>3</sup> EE 11



sacraments as ‘the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.’ In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.’ ‘This presence is called ‘real’—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.”<sup>4</sup>

## The Eucharistic Species

Our Lord becomes truly present under either of the Eucharistic species. When a communicant receives Holy Communion under the species of bread, he or she receives Christ whole and entire. The same is true when receiving under the species of wine. Because Christ is fully and substantially present in each species, the faithful who receive under only one species are not deprived of any grace of the Sacrament. The Council of Trent affirms this doctrine of concomitance, teaching that although the Lord instituted the Eucharist under both kinds, “...Christ whole and entire and a true sacrament are received under either species alone; and that therefore, as regards the fruit thereof, they, who receive one species alone, are not defrauded of any grace necessary to salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

The practice of offering Holy Communion under both kinds to the faithful is relatively recent in widespread usage and reintroduction. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, opened the possibility for this practice in particular circumstances stating, “[t]he dogmatic principles which were laid down by the Council of Trent remaining intact, communion under both kinds may be granted when the bishops think fit, not only to clerics and religious, but also to the laity, in cases to be determined by the Apostolic See...”<sup>6</sup> The Council and the Church Fathers of the time envisioned that any reintroduction of this practice would be limited, pastorally prudent, and always grounded in a firm understanding of the theology articulated by Trent.

The Church has repeatedly emphasized that Communion under both kinds requires proper catechesis. The instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* reminds us “[s]o that the fullness of the sign may be made more clearly evident to the faithful in the course of the Eucharistic banquet, lay members of Christ’s faithful, too, are admitted to Communion under both kinds, in the cases set forth in the liturgical books, preceded and continually accompanied by proper catechesis regarding the dogmatic principles on this matter laid down by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> CCC 1374

<sup>5</sup> Trent Session XXI, Ch. 3

<sup>6</sup> SC 55

<sup>7</sup> RS 100



This “fullness of the sign” highlights how the Eucharistic banquet “...shows more clearly how the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as it also expresses the relation of the Eucharistic banquet to the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of the Father.”<sup>8</sup> Catechesis must therefore make clear that “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.”<sup>9</sup>

While the faithful do not gain additional grace by receiving under both kinds, the opportunity can deepen their appreciation of the Eucharistic mystery and its sacrificial and banquet dimensions. The requirement that the Priest receive under both species pertains not to additional grace but to the integrity of the sacrificial action itself: the one who offers the sacrifice must consume the Victim offered. As the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* states, “[a] Priest must communicate at the altar at the moment laid down by the Missal each time he celebrates Holy Mass, and the concelebrants must communicate before they proceed with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Communion of Priest concelebrants should proceed according to the norms prescribed in the liturgical books, always using hosts consecrated at the same Mass and always with Communion under both kinds being received by all of the concelebrants.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Considerations for the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds**

The Church teaches that “[s]ince Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, communion under the species of bread alone makes it possible to receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace. For pastoral reasons this manner of receiving communion has been legitimately established as the most common form in the Latin rite.”<sup>11</sup>

When Holy Communion is distributed under the form of bread, careful planning should ensure that a sufficient number of hosts is prepared for the faithful at each Mass. As a general rule, Communion should be given from hosts consecrated at the same Mass rather than from those reserved in the tabernacle.<sup>12</sup>

Pastoral experience within the Diocese of Orange has shown that Eucharistic theology, particularly the doctrine of concomitance, is not fully understood among portions of the faithful. This is often reflected in questions phrased in terms such as, “When will the wine come back?”, which reveal a lack of awareness regarding Christ’s full and substantial presence under each species. To address this, the Church instructs that “[s]acred pastors should take care to ensure

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<sup>8</sup> EM 32

<sup>9</sup> ST, III, q. 80, a.12, ad 3

<sup>10</sup> RS 97-98

<sup>11</sup> CCC 1390

<sup>12</sup> Norms 30



that the faithful who participate in the rite or are present at it, are made aware by the most suitable means possible of the Catholic teaching on the form of Holy Communion as laid down by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.”<sup>13</sup>

The Church makes it clear that “...the faithful should be properly catechized on the following matters in the light of the teaching and directives of the *General Instruction*: the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist as the common possession of the whole Church; the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, his death and resurrection, and as the sacred banquet; **the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements, whole and entire—in each element of consecrated bread and wine (the doctrine of concomitance)**; the kinds of reverence due at all times to the sacrament, whether within the Eucharistic Liturgy or outside the celebration; and the role that ordinary and, if necessary, extraordinary ministers of [Holy Communion] are assigned in the eucharistic assembly.”<sup>14</sup> Above all, they should instruct the Christian faithful that the Catholic faith teaches that Christ, whole and entire, and the true Sacrament, is received even under only one species, and hence that as regards the resulting fruits, those who receive under only one species are not deprived of any grace that is necessary for salvation.”<sup>15</sup>

With regard to the distribution of the Precious Blood, the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are the Priest and the Deacon. The Church states that “the chalice is usually administered by a Deacon or, in the absence of a Deacon, by a Priest, ... or another extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.”<sup>16</sup> In many parishes within the Diocese of Orange, the assistance of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) will be necessary. However, the Church cautions that “[i]n practice, the need to avoid obscuring the role of the Priest and the Deacon as the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion by an excessive use of extraordinary ministers might in some circumstances constitute a reason either for limiting the distribution of Holy Communion under both species...”<sup>17</sup>

Practical considerations must also be observed. The Church teaches that “[t]he chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ's faithful where there is such a large number of communicants that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist and there is a danger that ‘more than a reasonable quantity of the Blood of Christ remain to be consumed at the end of the celebration’. The same is true wherever access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange, or where such a large amount of wine would be required that its certain provenance and quality could only be known with difficulty, ... or where a notable part of the people

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<sup>13</sup> GIRM 282

<sup>14</sup> Norms 25

<sup>15</sup> GIRM 282

<sup>16</sup> GIRM 284

<sup>17</sup> Norms 24



continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.”<sup>18</sup>

For these reasons, the Pastor of the parish, who is entrusted with the care of souls, is responsible for determining whether his parish is able to support a reverent, orderly, and theologically sound distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds. This includes discerning:

- whether the configuration of the church allows for dignified movement;
- whether the size of the congregation makes distribution feasible;
- whether an adequate number of properly trained ministers are available;
- whether the faithful are likely to approach the chalice;
- whether spillage, profanation, or excess of the Precious Blood can be reasonably avoided.

### **Diocesan Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds**

“The Diocesan Bishop may establish norms for Communion under both kinds for his own diocese, which are also to be observed in churches of religious and at celebrations with small groups.”<sup>19</sup> The following regulations for the Diocese of Orange are adapted from pertinent liturgical documents and reflect the prudent judgment of the Bishop of Orange.

In the Diocese of Orange, Holy Communion under the species of the Precious Blood *may be distributed in the following dates and/or circumstances, according to the pastoral judgment and discretion of the Pastor*. These shall be considered the Norms for the Distribution of the Precious Blood:

- 1) To those whose gluten intolerance or wheat allergy is so severe that they cannot receive Communion even with an approved low gluten host;
- 2) To the Elect who are baptized at the Easter Vigil or in the Mass which follows their baptism;
- 3) To baptized Christians who are received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church;
- 4) To those receiving First Holy Communion;
- 5) To bride and bridegroom within the Mass of their wedding;
- 6) To newly ordained Deacons within the Mass of their ordination;
- 7) To Deacons when they assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass;
- 8) To those consecrated to a life of virginity within the Mass of their Consecration;
- 9) To those making religious profession within the Mass in which they profess their vows;

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<sup>18</sup> RS 102

<sup>19</sup> GIRM 283



- 10) To members of religious communities within their conventual or “community” Mass, provided that only members of the religious community are present;
- 11) To all the faithful who choose to approach the chalice:
  - a. during Daily Masses (Monday through Saturday morning, provided that the conditions outlined in RS 102 have been prudently evaluated, particularly concerning the danger of spilling, the ability to estimate the proper amount of wine, and other logistical concerns.
  - b. during the celebration of the following Solemnities:
    - i. Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1)
    - ii. Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
    - iii. The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)
    - iv. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15)
    - v. Solemnity of All Saints (November 1)
    - vi. Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 7)
    - vii. Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12)<sup>20</sup>
    - viii. The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) (December 25)

It is the norm in the Diocese of Orange that distribution of the Precious Blood occurs only in sacred spaces, that is, within a church building, chapel, or other space permanently dedicated for the celebration of Mass. The Precious Blood is not to be distributed in school gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, temporary spaces, classrooms, retreat centers, nursing homes, or other locations not set apart for divine worship.

The Precious Blood may not be offered at Sunday Masses, Holy Days of Obligation, or any Mass with a large congregation where the risk of spillage, excess, or logistical difficulty would compromise reverent distribution.

The distribution of the Eucharist by intinction to the faithful is also prohibited in the Diocese of Orange.

The Church grants that “[t]he Diocesan Bishop is also given the faculty to permit Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the Priest to whom a community has been entrusted as its own shepherd, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and that there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or of the rite’s becoming difficult because of the large number of participants or for some other cause.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This Feast was elevated to a Solemnity in the Diocese of Orange

<sup>21</sup> GIRM 283



Therefore, Pastors have the authority to determine when it is pastorally suitable to offer the Precious Blood within the specific circumstances enumerated by the Bishop of Orange. However, the Pastor may not independently add new categories or expand the permitted situations beyond those established by the Local Ordinary.

For additional direction regarding extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, Pastors may consult the [\*Diocesan Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion\*](#).

These norms are promulgated on Friday, January 9, 2026 and are effective on Sunday, January 11, 2026, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.



## Abbreviations

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition, 1997
EE	Pope John Paul II, Encyclical, <i>Ecclesia de Eucharistia</i> , 2003
EM	Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, <i>Eucharisticum Mysterium</i> , 1967
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 2010
LG	Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution, <i>Lumen Gentium</i> , 1964
Norms	USCCB, Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America, 2002
RS	CDWDS, Instruction, <i>Redemptionis Sacramentum</i> , 2004
SC	Second Vatican Council, Constitution, <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , 1963
ST	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
Trent	Council of Trent
CDWDS	Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops