

Communion and the Chalice Q & A

Last week, all restrictions on the sharing of the Precious Blood with the assembly were lifted. After more than two and a half years, the chalice may once again be shared with the faithful.

Why is communion under both kinds important?

The Church teaches and believes that Christ is present, body and blood, soul and divinity, in the sacrament of his Body and Blood, and that Christ is fully present under the form of bread and under the form of wine. Thus, even when communion under both kinds is not possible, the presence of Christ is not diminished.

However, “sharing in both eucharistic species reflects more fully the sacred realities that the Liturgy signifies” (*Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 11). When we receive under both kinds, “we obey the Lord’s command and grow in the likeness of the Lord whose Body and Blood they both signify and contain” (Ibid, 2).

Is it safe to bring back the chalice now?

There have always been concerns around sharing germs when we share the chalice. However, many dioceses have already resumed the sharing of the chalice and have not had issues with transmission of Covid-19. The chalice is always optional, but it is important for the faithful to be able to partake of this fuller sign of Eucharistic sharing if they wish.

When should we bring back the chalice?

There is no mandated timeline for restoring the chalice to the assembly. It will be important to make all needed preparations before reintroducing it.

What are some things to consider as we prepare to bring back the chalice?

Sufficient ministers. After all this time, the parish may not have enough ministers to offer the chalice. You may need to recruit and train new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) to assist the priest and deacon. You may also need to offer the chalice in a limited way (only at one or two communion stations, or at certain Masses) until you have enough ministers.

Training. Communion ministers new and old will need to review the proper handling of the chalice, especially the wiping and turning of the cup which makes it safer for people to receive. Communion ministers should always sanitize their hands before and after distributing communion. Some communion ministers may wish to wear masks for the distribution of communion.

Comfort Levels. As we have discovered throughout Covid, every person’s comfort level is different and should be respected. In reintroducing the chalice, it will be important to ensure that EMHCs assigned to the chalice stations are comfortable giving from the chalice and consuming what remains in the chalice at the end of the Communion Rite. Deacons and priests, who are responsible for the purification rite, will need to rinse and drink from each chalice. Their comfort level with this should also be considered in planning for when and how to reintroduce the chalice.

“I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord” (Psalm 116:13)

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds:

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mas/norms-for-holy-communion-under-both-kinds>