

Communion Under Both Species: Is it Required?

"If any one saith that the precept of God or by necessity of salvation all and each of the faithful of Christ ought to receive both species of the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist: let him be anathema." (Council of Trent)

- ★ Introduction of Communion Under Both Species in the 20th Century
- ★ So Communion Under Both Species is Not Required?
 - ★ Problems / Concerns / Abuses...

Note: Of course, the following refers to the reception of Holy Communion under both species by the laity (not priests).

Introduction of Communion Under Both Species in the 20th Century

Introduction of Communion under both species for lay persons in the 20th century began as a result of disobedience to the Pope. It has contributed to irreverence, desecration, and sacrilege. It has caused some Catholics to erroneously (and heretically) believe that it is necessary to Communicate under both species or that they receive Christ "more fully" if they receive Holy Communion under both species. It has also led to the widespread proliferation of 'Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion' (lay persons dispensing Holy Communion), a practice always condemned by the Church. *[Note: For more information on this topic, see fier: "Lay Eucharistic Ministers": Why Not?"]* Many Catholics mistakenly believe this practice is the norm in the Church, however, the truth is that Communion under both species may be allowed only under certain conditions. And, even this limited toleration was extracted from the Holy See due to widespread disobedience on the part of certain of the faithful (e.g. liberals/modernists, feminists).

So Communion Under Both Species is Not Required?

No, it is not required. Although the celebrating priest is obliged to receive Holy Communion under both species (bread and wine), the laity are not required to receive Holy Communion under both species. Although in the early days of the Church Holy Communion was given to the laity under both species (bread & wine), the Church practice of Communion under one species (bread) - instituted the - "influenced by numerous and weighty reasons" - anathematized any who condemned this practice (see quotations below).

Why Has the Church Permitted Communion Under One Species?

Although the practice of communicating under both species is not in itself theologically objectionable, its actual practice has led to many serious problems, concerns, and abuses. For example:

- Danger of spillage & profanation
- Confusion of teaching regarding the Real Presence in one species (e.g. thinking Christ is not received fully and entirely under one species alone)
- Concern regarding unsanitary conditions when using a 'shared cup' (including concerns regarding remnants of lipstick, saliva, etc. which may remain in the chalice)
- Danger of infection/spread of disease (now potentially including AIDS and other untreatable conditions). *Note that the use of a shared cup*

has been called a "dangerous health practice" and that the mere wiping of a cup is wholly insufficient to prevent the transmission of disease. (It is shown to be an entirely false claim that the species of wine kills any significant amount of bacteria.)

- May interfere with medications
- Concern regarding the inability of some (including children) to use with due caution
- Concern regarding the inability of some persons to tolerate the species of wine
- Prohibitive cost and difficulty of obtaining enough wine for all the faithful present (in some areas)
- Etc.

Hundreds of years ago, in consideration of various concerns such as those above, the Church approved of Communion under one species for the laity. And clearly, numerous saints have communicated under the species of bread alone, with no detriment to their holiness or salvation.

Reintroduction of Communion Under Both Species

As indicated above, introduction of Communion under both species for lay persons in the 20th century began as a result of disobedience to the Pope. It has led to irreverence, desecration, and sacrilege and has confused the faith of Catholics (many of whom now believe they receive Christ "more fully" if they receive Holy Communion under both species). Further, as indicated above, reintroduction of the practice has led to the widespread proliferation of 'Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion' (lay persons dispensing Holy Communion), a practice always condemned by the Church. *[Note: For more information on this topic, see fier: "Lay Eucharistic Ministers": Why Not?"]*, a confusion of priestly roles, and has had the effect of confirming Protestants in their accusations against the Church. *"Communion under both kinds is accepted as the Protestant symbol of true Bible Christianity, in contrast to Romish corruptions."* (Davies); it further leads to disparaging of the Church's various rulings regarding Communion under one species.

As a direct result of the calculated disobedience to papal authority perpetrated by the modernists in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the practice of Communicating under both species may be tolerated by the Church ("the Vatican reluctantly surrendered on this point due to widespread and blatant disobedience"), but only under limited circumstances and under certain conditions. It should also be noted that the Second Vatican Council never commanded this practice - and that, in many cases, the practice is not allowed and is an abuse. *Even where it is tolerated, however, it is not required - that is, the faithful are never required to Communicate under both species. Christ is contained fully and entirely under one species and is not received "more fully" under both species than under one species.*

Some relevant quotations regarding Communion under both species include those below...

- "If any one saith that the precept of God or by necessity of salvation all and each of the faithful of Christ ought to receive both species of the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist: let him be anathema." (Council of Trent)
- "If any one denieth that in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist the whole Christ is contained under each species, and under every part of each species, when separated; let him be anathema." (Council of Trent)
- "If any one denieth, that Christ whole and entire - the fountain and author of all graces - is received under the one species of bread; because that - as some falsely assert - He is not received, according

to the institution of Christ himself, under both species; let him be anathema." (Council of Trent)

- "If anyone says that the holy Catholic Church has not been influenced by just causes and reasons to give communion under the form of bread only to layman and even to clerics when not consecrating, or that she has erred in this: let him be anathema." (Council of Trent)
- "The holy council, guided by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of godliness (see Isa. 11:2), and following the custom and the judgment of the Church itself, teaches and declares that the laity and clerics who are not celebrating are not bound by any divine command to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist under both species. And faith leaves no possibility of doubting that Communion under one species is sufficient for salvation." (Council of Trent)
- "As to the rite to be observed in communicating, pastors should teach that the law of the holy Church forbids Communion under both kinds to anyone but the officiating priests, without the authority of the Church itself. Christ the Lord, it is true, as has been explained by the Council of Trent, instituted and delivered to His Apostles at His Last Supper this most sublime Sacrament under the species of bread and wine; but it does not follow that by doing so Our Lord and Savior established a law ordering its administration to all the faithful under both species. For speaking of this Sacrament, He Himself frequently mentions it under one kind only, as, for instance, when He says: 'If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever,' and: 'The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world,' and: 'He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.'" (Catechism of the Council of Trent)
- "The most Holy Eucharist is to be given only under the form of bread." (1917 Code of Canon Law)
- "The Church does not give Holy Communion to the people as it does to the priest under the appearance of wine also, to avoid the danger of spilling the Precious Blood; to prevent the irreverence some might show if compelled to drink out of a chalice used by all, and lastly, to refute those who denied that Our Lord's blood is present under the appearance of bread also." (Baltimore Catechism)
- "Christ is so contained, whole and entire, under either species, that, as under the species of bread are contained not only the body, but also the blood and Christ entire; so in like manner, under the species of wine are truly contained not only the blood, but also the body and Christ entire." (Catechism of the Council of Trent)
- "Augustine says in a sermon (Gregory, Sacramentarium): 'Each receives Christ the Lord, Who is entire under every morsel, nor is He less in each portion, but bestows Himself entire under each.'" (St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church and "greatest theologian in the history of the Church")
- "Jesus Christ is whole and entire under both the form of bread and under the form of wine." (Baltimore Catechism)
- "We know that under the appearance of bread we receive also Christ's blood and under the appearance of wine we receive also Christ's body; because in the Holy Eucharist we receive the living body of Our Lord, and a living body cannot exist without blood, nor can living blood exist without a body." (Baltimore Catechism)
- "Both under the species of the bread and under the species of the wine the living Jesus Christ is all present, with His Body, His Blood, His Soul and His Divinity." (Catechism of Pope St. Pius X)
- "[T]he Sacrifice of the Mass represents in a sensible way the shedding of the Blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross, because, in virtue of the words of consecration, only the Body of our Savior is made present under the species of the bread and only His Blood under the species of the wine; although by natural concomitance and by the hypostatic union, the living and real Jesus Christ is present under each of the species." (Catechism of Pope St. Pius X)

Continued on reverse...

"The most holy Eucharist has indeed this in common with the rest of the sacraments, that it is a symbol of a sacred thing, and is a visible form of an invisible grace, but there is found in the Eucharist this excellent and peculiar thing, that the other sacraments have then first the power of sanctifying when one uses them, whereas in the Eucharist, before being used, there is the Author Himself of sanctity. For the apostles had not as yet received the Eucharist from the hand of the Lord, when nevertheless Himself affirmed with truth that to be His own body which He presented (to them). And this faith has ever been in the Church of God, that, immediately after the consecration, the veritable Body of our Lord, and His veritable Blood, together with His soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine; but the Body indeed under the species of bread, and the Blood under the species of wine, by the force of the words; but the body itself under the species of wine, and the blood under the species of bread, and the soul under both, by the force of that natural connexion and concomitancy whereby the parts of Christ our Lord, who hath now risen from the dead, to die no more, are united together; and the divinity, furthermore, on account of the admirable hypostatical union thereof with His body and soul. Wherefore it is most true, that as much is contained under either species as under both; for Christ whole and entire is under the species of bread, and under any part whatsoever of that species; likewise the whole (Christ) is under the species of wine, and under the parts thereof." (Council of Trent, 1551 A.D.)

"It is clear that the Church was influenced by numerous and most cogent reasons, not only to approve, but also to confirm by authority of its decree, the general practice of communicating under one species. In the first place, the greatest caution was necessary to avoid spilling the blood of the Lord on the ground, a thing that seemed not easily to be avoided, if the chalice were administered in a large assemblage of the people. In the next place, whereas the Holy Eucharist ought to be in readiness for the sick, it was very much to be apprehended, were the species of wine to remain long unconsumed, that it might turn acid. Besides, there are many who cannot at all bear the taste or even the smell of wine. Last, therefore, what is intended for the spiritual health should prove hurtful to the health of the body, it has been most prudently provided by the Church that it should be administered to the people under the species of bread only. We may also further observe that in many countries wine is extremely scarce; nor can it, moreover, be brought from elsewhere without incurring very heavy expenses and encountering very tedious and difficult journeys. Finally, a most important reason was the necessity of opposing the heresy of those who denied that Christ, whole and entire, is contained under either species, and asserted that the body is contained under the species of bread without the blood, and the blood under the species of wine without the body, in order, therefore, to place more clearly before the eyes of all the truth of the Catholic faith, Communion under one kind, that is, under the species of bread, was most wisely introduced. There are also other reasons, collected by those who have treated on this subject, and which, if it shall appear necessary, can be brought forward by pastors." (Catechism of the Council of Trent)

"Two points should be observed regarding the use of this sacrament, one on the part of the sacrament, the other on the part of the recipients; on the part of the sacrament it is proper for both the body, and the blood to be received, since the perfection of the sacrament lies in both, and consequently, since it is the priest's duty both to consecrate and finish the sacrament, he ought on no account to receive Christ's body without the blood. But on the part of the recipient the greatest reverence and caution are called for, lest anything happen which is unworthy of so great a mystery. Now this could especially happen in receiving the blood, for, if incautiously handled, it might easily be spilt. And because the multitude of the Christian people increased, in which there are old, young, and children, some of whom have not enough discretion to observe due caution in using this sacrament, on that account it is a prudent custom... for the blood not to be offered to the reception of the people, but to be received by the priest alone... The perfection of this sacrament does not lie in the use of the faithful, but in the consecration of the matter. And hence there is nothing derogatory to the perfection of this sacrament, if the people receive the body without the blood, provided that the priest who consecrates receive both... Our Lord's Passion is represented in the very consecration of this sacrament, in which the body ought not to be consecrated without the blood. But the body can be received by the people without the blood; nor is this detrimental to the sacrament.

Because the priest both offers and consumes the blood on behalf of all; and Christ is fully contained under either species, as was shown above (Q76A2)." (St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church and greatest theologian in the history of the Church)

"Certain people, in some parts of the world, have rashly dared to assert that the Christian people ought to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist under the forms of both bread and wine... Therefore this present general council of Constance, legitimately assembled in the Holy Spirit, wishing to provide for the safety of the faithful against this error, after long deliberation by many persons, learned in divine and human law, declares, decrees and defines... that this Sacrament ought not to be celebrated after a meal nor received by the faithful without fasting, except in cases of sickness or some other necessity, as permitted by law or by the Church. Moreover, just as this custom was sensibly introduced in order to avoid various dangers and scandals, so with similar or even greater reason was it possible to introduce and sensibly observe the custom that, although this sacrament was received by the faithful under both kinds in the early Church, nevertheless later it was received under both kinds only by those connecting it, and by the laity only under the form of bread. For it should be very firmly believed, and in no way doubted, that the whole body and blood of Christ are truly contained under both the form of bread and the form of wine. Therefore, since this custom was introduced for good reasons by the church and holy fathers, and has been observed for a very long time, it should be held as a law which nobody may repudiate or alter at will... Those who stubbornly assert the opposite of the aforesaid are [considered heretics]... This holy synod also decrees and declares, regarding this matter, that instructions are to be sent to the most reverend fathers and lords in Christ, patriarchs, primates, archbishops, bishops, and their vicars in spirituals, wherever they may be, in which they are to be commissioned and ordered on the authority of this sacred council and under pain of excommunication, to punish effectively those who err against this decree." (Council of Constance, 1415 A.D.)

"Wherefore, this holy Synod, - instructed by the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of godliness, and following the judgment and usage of the Church itself, - declares and teaches, that laymen, and clerics when not consecrating, are not obliged, by any divine precept, to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist under both species; and that neither can it by any means be doubted, without injury to faith, that communion under either species is sufficient for them unto salvation. For, although Christ, the Lord, in the last supper, instituted and delivered to the apostles, this venerable sacrament in the species of bread and wine; not therefore do that institution and delivery tend thereto, that all the faithful of Church be bound, by the institution of the Lord, to receive both species. But neither is it rightly gathered, from that discourse which is in the sixth of John - however according to the various interpretations of holy Fathers and Doctors it be understood - that the communion of both species was enjoined by the Lord: for He who said; Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you (v. 54), also said; He that eateth this bread shall live for ever (v. 59); and He who said; He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life (v. 55), also said; The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world (v. 52); and, in fine, - He who said; He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him (v. 57), said nevertheless; He that eateth this bread shall live for ever (v. 59)... it furthermore declares, that this power has ever been in the Church, that, in the dispensation of the sacraments, their substance being untouched, it may ordain, or change, what things soever it may judge most expedient, for the profit of those who receive, or for the veneration of the said sacraments, according to the difference of circumstances, times, and places. And this the Apostle seems not obscurely to have intimated, when he says; Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. And indeed it is sufficiently manifest that he himself exercised this power - as in many other things, so in regard of this very sacrament; when, after having ordained certain things touching the use thereof, he says; The rest I will set in order when I come. Wherefore, holy Mother Church, knowing this her authority in the administration of the sacraments, although the use of both species has, from the beginning of the Christian religion, not been infrequent, yet, in progress of time, that custom having been already

very widely changed, she, induced by weighty and just reasons, has approved of this custom of communicating under one species, and decreed that it was to be held as a law; which it is not lawful to reprobate, or to change at pleasure, without the authority of the Church itself... It moreover declares, that although, as hath been already said, our Redeemer, in that last supper, instituted, and delivered to the apostles, this sacrament in two species, yet is to be acknowledged, that 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." (Council of Trent, 1562 A.D.)

Note: In response to those who cite a 5th century papal decree requiring the faithful to receive Holy Communion under both species, it should be noted that this decree was not because it was believed that both species were required to receive the "full Christ", but it served rather to highlight those who were heretics (certain heretics at that time considered wine to be impure). It also serves to prove that the practice of Communion under one species already existed even in the fifth century.

"Our opposition to the innovation should derive from the fact that it is accompanied by unacceptable criticism of a liturgical practice supported by almost a thousand years of tradition. Protestants still maintain that Communion under one kind is contrary to divine precept, and while they persist in this error, a change to their practice represents a concession to this heresy." (Davies)

Did You Know?

Novelties are specific to the Novus Ordo (New Order) Mass - the Mass celebrated in most Catholic parishes since it was concocted by men after the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's. There are numerous and significant differences between the Traditional Latin Mass and the Novus Ordo Mass.

The Traditional Latin Mass has specific rubrics which prevent abuses and novelties, such as the use of "Lay Ministers"; Communion in the hand, Communion under both species, etc.

Happily, you can still attend the Traditional Latin Mass - the highly reverent "Mass of the Saints" - the Mass in use for most of the life of the Church. This Traditional Latin (Tridentine) Mass is still validly said in Catholic parishes today.

Contact your diocese for the nearest location of this incomparable Mass.

If this Mass is not available in your parish, petition your pastor!

For More Information On the Traditional Latin Mass, Try Visiting the Latin Mass / Catholic Tradition Section of MyCatholicSource.com

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* Notice: Readers should note that the correct term for such lay "ministers" is actually "Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion" and NOT "Eucharistic Ministers" or "Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist"

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