



# The Blood of Christ! Amen!

## The return of the fullness of Holy Communion

Integral to the celebration of Eucharist, the sacred chalice will be distributed for all at both Blessed Trinity and Spirit of Christ beginning again NEXT WEEKEND, November 26/27, 2022, the First Sunday of Advent. As we prepare, each bulletin between October 30 and November 20 included a short article on the Communion Rite.

November 20, 2020—The Feast of Christ the King

Fr. Ed Hislop

### 4. **“TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR [THE] MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.”**

The command of the Lord is clear, “Take this **ALL** of you:” One loaf of real bread, broken and given for all to eat; One cup of real wine poured out for the many, for all to “take and drink.” A command of love, a promise of hope and a mission to endure. The gift we are given, to eat and drink and thus to become what we consume—the Body and Blood of the risen Christ, is integral to our faith because this is who we become and who we are. This we believe, a wondrous miracle, a living truth!

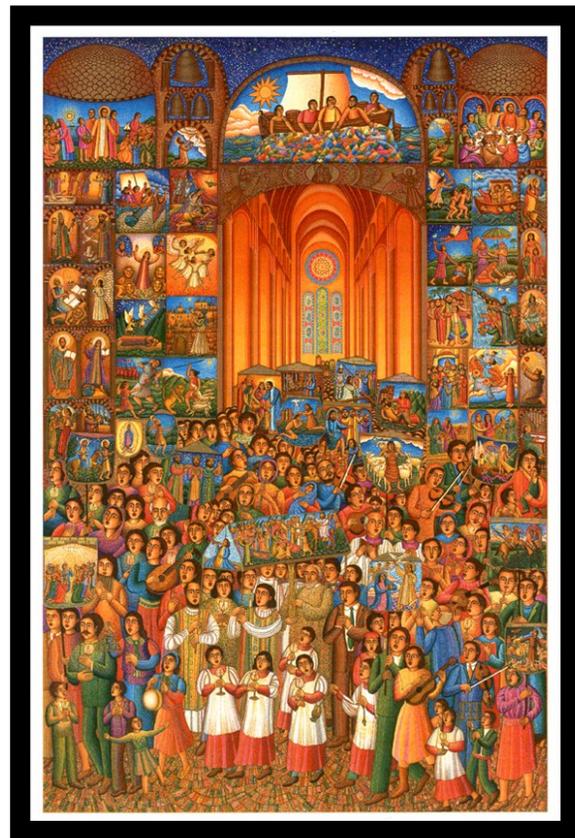
“Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it takes place under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic Banquet is more clearly evident and clearer expression is given to the divine will by which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the connection between the Eucharistic Banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of the Father.

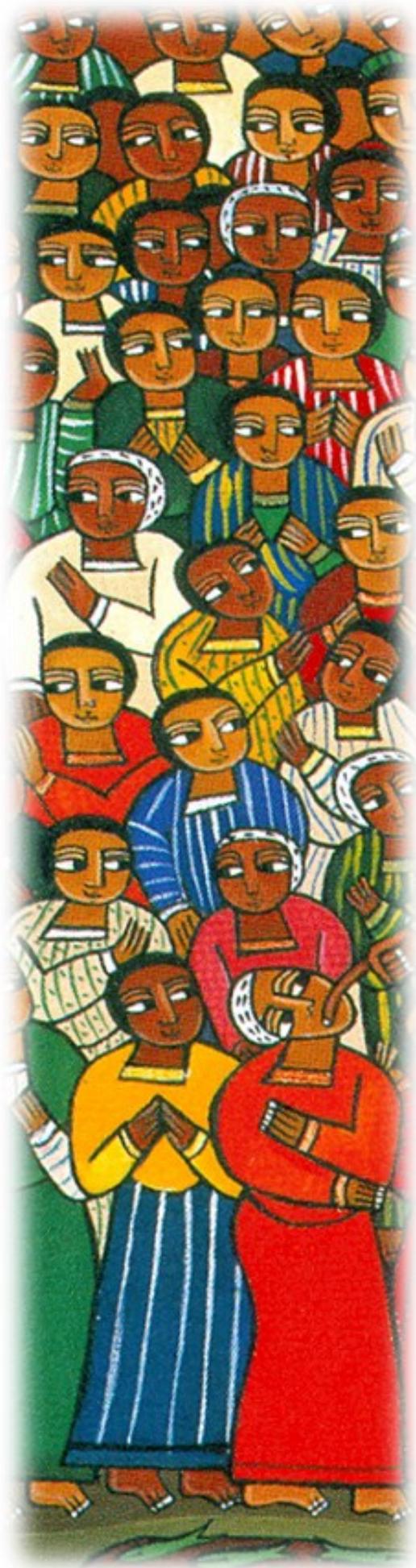
General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #281

Before we process to the Sacred Table we hear these words, which strengthen us to come forward, **“Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”** A supper around the Lord’s Table, a supper at which we eat and drink fulfilling the great command of Christ himself, to do this in his memory! We move forward, not alone but always and only together— together with the whole Church in every place—assured of Christ’s invitation, with a deliberate choice and a sense of humility. We process with a daring spirit even after we have remembered, that though we

may be unworthy, we are healed by the call and love of Christ himself!

We walk and move from one way of being to another; we process, hungry and thirsty for solidarity and holy communion in Christ.





We sing as we move with one voice. We sing as an act of faith in our holy communion; we sing together—everyone, each person—to affirm that we are all in this together. Our shared song is a sound of reverence as we move with a sense of awe at the great mystery we are about to receive. *“As a deer longs for running streams,”* we sing, *“so we long for Christ.”* Together our communion song prayer reminds us of who we are about to become: *“Our blessing cup is a communion with the blood of Christ; and the bread we break, it is a sharing in the body of the Lord.”* Our song is shared prayer, our common hope, our holy faith. Song is integral, and really not optional, to our faith and our choice to be who we are about to become. Our shared hymn makes us ready to be the Holy Communion.

So we come to the Body of Christ, the bread of life, with a sense of awe at the great mystery before us.

Reverent, each of us bow slightly before Christ given up for us. With open hands and open heart we wait to hear the words, telling us who we are about to become: “The Body of Christ.” The bread broken from one loaf of real bread (fruit of the earth and work of human hands) is gently placed in our open palms, made into a throne to receive the King. We are told “the Body of Christ” and we reply “Amen.” With a sense of awe we take and eat with all the others, step aside and simply pause with a simple bow to both altar and cross.

Moving to the sacred cup of the Lord’s blood (fruit of the vine and work of human hands), we bow slightly as we hear the words, “The Blood of Christ,” aware of the mystery we are entering. Our response is “Amen,” spoken from the depth of our hearts. Gently, filled with faith, we take the Lord’s Cup, and sip from it. Oh, how we have longed for the Blood of Christ again. Ready to receive the fullness of the eucharist, ready to eat and drink as the Lord himself commands us to do in his memory! Ready to take and drink again from the cup of joyful mercy.

Amen, Amen, a word which means **“we stake our lives on this!”**

If for some good reason a person chooses not to receive from the Lord’s Sacred Cup, it is not “passed by;” rather there is a pause before it and a slight bow, for this is the blood of the risen Lord.

*“When you approach, do not go stretching out your open hands or having your fingers spread out, but make a left hand into a throne for the right which will receive the King, and then cup your open hand and receive the Body of Christ, saying AMEN.... After partaking of Christ’s body, go to receive the Cup of his blood... Bow your head and say “AMEN” to show your homage and reverence, sanctify yourself by partaking also of Christ’s blood.... Give thanks to God who has counted you worthy of such mysteries.”*

Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogical Catechesis 5.21. The Third Century

Then, as we did with the Body of Christ, we step aside, slightly bow again to the altar and cross, as we reverently continue our procession. Our response to our entrance into this great mystery is to continue our shared song-prayer, for our holy communion with all the others is happening! Returning to our place in the assembly we continue to stand and sing together. This is a time to remember who we are becoming and who we are about to be.

When all have received the Body and Blood of Christ, then we sit together, as the Church teaches, in time of deliberate silence. Silence in the realization of the great mystery we have both entered and become. Silence to remember what has happened to us. Silence to remember the wonder of our faith and the truth of Christ in us. The one loaf is gone, the one cup is empty. We remain, one holy communion in the body and blood of the risen Christ. Christ is now in us. We, with the whole Church, are the Holy Communion of the Lord. St. Augustine reminds us, "It is your own mystery... it is to who you are that you reply "Amen." For you are told, "The body of Christ, the Blood of Christ." "Be then who you say you are. Be the Body and Blood of Christ!"

Then we are sent forth as the Body and Blood of Christ in one great "Eucharistic procession" into our city, homes, neighborhoods, and yes world, to be the bread and wine there; to be broken and poured out in loving service of every neighbor in every place. "Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord!"

We remember what Saint Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth: "**Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.**" We do things in human ways. What could be more so than this eating and this drinking? In bread, real bread, the work of human hands, the "staff of life," we find strength and nourishment. In wine, "fruit of the vine and work of human hands," we find delight and festivity in God's promise of salvation.



## HEALTH CONCERNS

### AND RECEIVING THE BLOOD OF CHRIST FROM A COMMON CUP.

A few diseases infect through direct mouth-saliva contact, but "during the cold season or flu epidemic the faithful Catholic is more likely to get sick merely by breathing the air in church than by receiving from a shared cup." The risk for infectious disease transmission by a common communion cup is very low.

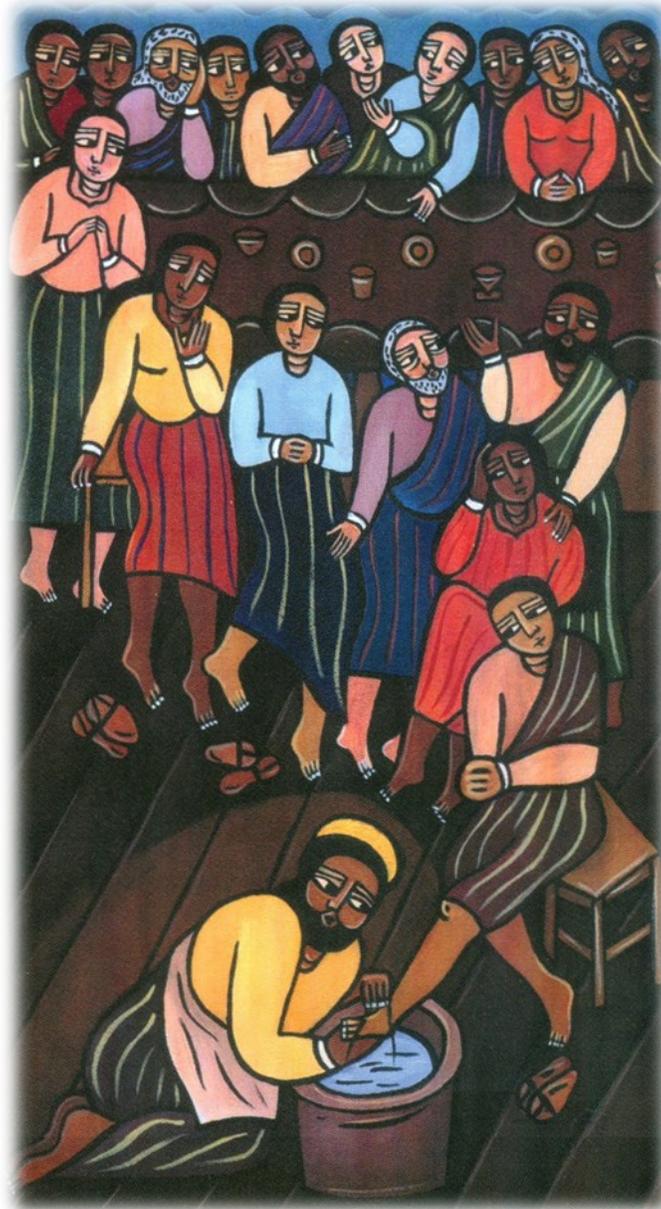
The proper procedure of administering the cup will ensure that an infective dose of any pathogen will not likely be transmitted.

Some Dioceses throughout the country have recently consulted with their local health officials and received the opinion that because the spread of Covid/influenza is primarily air-borne and not touch based, the ordinary precautions in place for sharing the cup before the pandemic suffice (i.e. Minister wipes the cup rim both inside and outside and then turns the cup for the next communicant).

A 1998 prospective study by the CDC, with 681 participants, showed that there was no significant health difference between individuals who received Holy Communion as often as daily and those who did not attend Christian services at all. Based on these findings, in 1998 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that there had never been an outbreak of infection related to the communion cup and that a theoretical risk of transmitting infectious diseases by using a common communion cup exists, but that the risk is so small that it is undetectable.

Of course if persons are feeling ill, they should refrain from receiving the Blood of Christ from the common cup.

Receiving the Precious Blood always remains an option, but this choice should be made only after serious and prayerful consideration, for the fullness of Holy Communion is to eat and drink of the Lord.



**“Grant us, almighty God,  
that we may be refreshed and nourished  
by the Sacrament which we have received,  
so as to be transformed into what we consume.  
Through Christ our Lord..”**

Prayer after Communion, The Roman Missal 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary time



Text written by Fr. Ed Hislop

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