

WHAT WE BELIEVE: THE EUCHARIST



The Real Presence

The Church doctrine stating that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist, not merely symbolically or metaphorically, but in a true and substantial way.



Concomitance

The Church doctrine stating that Christ is fully and indivisibly present – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – in each species of the Eucharist, bread and wine. Therefore, reception of Holy Communion under only one form is still the complete reception of the sacrament.

Transubstantiation

The changing of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ at the consecration, with only the appearance of bread and wine remaining.



Epiclesis

The part of the Eucharistic Prayer when the priest calls down the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine – with a palms-down gesture – to transform them into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Consecration

The words the priest prays in the Eucharistic Prayer comprise the Institution Narrative, echoing the words of Jesus himself at the Last Supper: “Take this, all of you, and eat ...”; “Take this, all of you, and drink...”. These words are necessary to affect the sacrament of the Eucharist.

HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Posture

The normative posture for receiving Holy Communion in the United States is standing. However, individuals who wish to kneel are permitted to do so.



Gesture

When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. This gesture is repeated before receiving from the Chalice. No other gestures are required.

Sacred Host and Precious Blood

The Sacred Host may be received in the hand or on the tongue at the discretion of the one receiving. The Church does not indicate that either method is to be preferred. The Precious Blood is received by drinking from the Chalice. The minister hands the Chalice to the communicant. The communicant may not intinct (dip the Host) in the Chalice.



Dialogue

The minister says, “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ.” To each, the communicant responds, “Amen.” These words may not be adapted.

Singing

The purpose of the Communion Song is to express the unity of the Body of Christ, that is, of all those receiving the sacrament in this celebration. Participating in the singing is one of the ways that we affirm our oneness in belief.

Silence

After all have received Holy Communion, the Church calls for a brief period of silence, when all may sit or kneel and offer their thanksgiving to God.



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