

September 21, 2020

DIOCESE OF JOLIET
Reception of Communion on the Tongue – During Coronavirus Pandemic

Parish Reopening Co-Leadership Teams,

For well-founded reasons the liturgical guidelines during the pandemic limited distribution of Holy Communion in the hand. Pastors are still urged to encourage the faithful to receive in the hand, as it is the safest way to distribute/receive Holy Communion. However, out of respect for those who insist on receiving on the tongue and with the hope of avoiding conflicts at this most sacred time of the Holy Mass, an exception may be made in a given parish at the full discretion of the pastor, and only in accord with a strict observance of the procedure provided here.

Procedure for Distributing Holy Communion on the Tongue

- a. Parishes are to establish a dedicated station for those receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, separate from those coming to receive communion in the hand;
- b. Communicants move forward to the designated station in single file maintaining six feet between each person assisted by markers on the floor;
- c. The minister distributing Holy Communion wearing a mask/face shield, sanitizes his / her hands, either from a nearby table, or offered by an usher;
- d. The communicant sanitizes his/her hands from a table or from sanitizer offered by usher, removes the strap of the mask or face covering from one ear, letting it hang from the other ear and exercises care not to touch the face, clothing or any other surface after sanitizing the hands;
- e. After having sanitized his/her hands, the communicant approaches the priest or extraordinary minister, and receives the Host on the tongue;
- f. The communicant steps six feet to the side, replaces the mask over the mouth and nose and returns to his/her seat;
- g. The minister puts the ciborium on a near-by table and sanitizes his / her hands, rubbing hands together and until they are dry (at least for 20 seconds each time). This must be done after each communicant receives;
- h. The minister picks up the ciborium and begins the process again;
- i. All other guidelines about masking, face shields and other preparatory actions before distribution remain in force.
- j. Because of the safety precautions exercised for those receiving Communion on the tongue, each parish will have to determine how best this is to be done given the fact that some parishes distribute Communion to recipients remaining in the pews. In any case, it has worked out well for those who receive Communion on the tongue to come last and to a designated station.

It should be observed from the outset that more care and time will be required in implementing this exception, as communion on the tongue poses additional health risks to both the minister and the communicant. Out of regard for specific health protocols, this process may not be rushed, particularly the sanitizing and drying of the minister's hands between communicants. Failure to strictly follow this procedure may result in de-certification of the parish to host congregations for liturgical services.

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