



Policy of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois regarding the Reception of Holy Communion for those who have Celiac Disease

According to Canon 912, "Any baptized person not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion."

It is imperative for pastors to make every effort to accommodate and normalize the experience of Communion for the faithful, including those suffering from celiac disease.

In 2003, the teaching on the use of low-gluten hosts at Mass was addressed by the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. He reminded pastors and the faithful that for bread to be valid matter for the Eucharist, it must be made solely of wheat, contain enough gluten to effect the confection of bread, be free of foreign materials, and unaffected by any preparation or baking methods which would alter its nature. The amount of gluten necessary for validity in such bread is not determined by minimum percentage or weight, though hosts which have no gluten are considered invalid matter for Mass. (Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter, October 2012 and updated April 2016)

In 2017 Pope Francis reaffirmed that hosts with no gluten were invalid matter for Mass.

Being a hospitable and compassionate community, parishes that have parishioners who cannot receive hosts with regular amounts of gluten for Holy Communion can consider the following procedures for them, always keeping in mind that each parish can develop their own procedures reflective of these:

The parish can provide low gluten hosts for these parishioners. These parishioners will need to consult with their doctors about the amount of gluten in the host and whether it will cause a reaction to the gluten.

The parish would provide a personal pyx for each of these parishioners.

When the parishioner comes to Mass, they would bring with them their own personal pyx with a low gluten host in it. The pyx can be put on the Altar or on a tray on the credence table –each parish will need to develop their own procedure for how the tray of pyxes will be placed on the Altar with the other gifts to be consecrated at that Mass.

At Communion the parishioner whose pyx is on the Altar could come to the Sanctuary when the Extraordinary Ministers come forward and receive his/her pyx and self-communicate by taking the Eucharist out of the pyx (they are the only ones who touch the host – this is to eliminate any cross contamination from anyone who may have touched anything with gluten in it).

Should a parishioner be unable to receive a low gluten host due to a total intolerance of any trace of gluten, a second option is for the reception of the Eucharist under the species of the Precious Blood. Similar procedures can be developed for those receiving only the Precious Blood.

The parishioner in this case who is totally intolerant of any trace of gluten, will be required to obtain after a consultation with their doctor a statement to that affect, and stating that they can receive the wine without a reaction. That Doctor's statement will be submitted to the Pastor.

The parish would provide a small communion cup and sacramental wine for those parishioners. Like with the pyx, they would bring their cup with wine, and personally place it on the tray on the credence table, and it would be brought to the Altar during the Preparation of the gifts (again this is to avoid any cross-contamination of the wine by anyone who has touched anything with gluten in it).

At Communion time, the parishioner would come into the Sanctuary when the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion come forward and would take their personal communion cup from the tray when the Ministers are receiving Holy Communion. The parishioner would self - communicate from their communion cup.

Each parish would have to decide on a proper time and place for the Communion Cups to be purified, then returned to that parishioner to take home.

Should a parishioner be unable to receive Holy Communion using the low gluten host or wine, then they should be encouraged to pray the Spiritual Communion Prayer.

In the Diocese of the United States there are four approved distributors of low gluten hosts: Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration 800-223-2772 (10 PPM gluten) | Parish Crossroads 800-510-8842 (10 PPM gluten) | GlutenFreeHosts.com 800-668-7324 ext. 1 (Less than 20 PPM gluten) | Cavanagh Company 800-635-0568 (less than 20 PPM)