



Pastor's Column

St. Peter Catholic Church

November 25, 2018, Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

On Intinction

What is intinction? Intinction is a practice of receiving Holy Communion at Mass where the communicant will receive a Host, and then rather than consume the Host immediately as is our normal Communion practice, the communicant will take the Host to the cup of the Precious Blood and dip the Host into the Precious Blood and *then* consume the Host.

Intinction is permitted in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church; it is even the norm in some of the Eastern Rites of the Church. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with intinction.

In the United States, intinction is permissible, but only under very specific circumstances, which are laid out in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document: "Norms For the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America." In this document, the norm is mandated regarding intinction: "Holy Communion may be distributed by intinction in the following manner: 'Each communicant, while holding a Communion-plate under the mouth, approaches the priest who holds a vessel with the Sacred Particles, with a minister standing at his side and holding the chalice. The Priest takes a Host, intincts it partly in the chalice and, showing it, says: "The Body and Blood of Christ." The communicant replies, "Amen," receives the Sacrament in the mouth from the Priest, and then withdraws.'" This mandate is communicated also in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, which is the primary governance of the liturgy in the United States.

Is intinction practiced at St. Peter? It is not. Given the very specific mandates in the USCCB instruction as referenced above, and given how Holy Communion unfolds here at St. Peter and, for that matter, in any parish in the Diocese of Spokane, intinction is simply not a practical pastoral option. Furthermore, in addition to how Holy Communion unfolds at Mass here at St. Peter, the nature of the Host itself prohibits intinction. Intinction presumes that the Precious Blood can soak into the Host so that both Body and Blood are consumed. However, the hosts that we use for Mass are prepared in such a way that they have a very slick surface that makes saturation of the Precious Blood into the Host very difficult. The risk is just far too great that some of the Precious Blood slickly coated on the surface of the Host will drip off and fall to the carpet, where people are stepping and stomping all over the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ that has fallen to the floor. And there is also the concern for those parishioners of ours who suffer gluten intolerance and have celiac disease; the gluten-loaded Host dipped into the Precious Blood may contaminate the Precious Blood such that folks with gluten intolerance cannot receive the Host or receive from the cup.

We raise this issue of intinction because some of our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have observed that a very small number of communicants at Mass have tried to receive Holy Communion by intinction. I have instructed our EMs to prevent this, given all of the concerns presented above. I myself have tried to speak with folks individually after Mass who have attempted intinction, but as after-Mass crowds often have it, I am very often gathered in the midst of many folks who want to chat a bit after Mass. And so, unable to speak individually with folks, I use this occasion for catechesis to explain the issue and to address everyone.

For anyone who reads this Pastor Column and is challenged by our parish's prohibition of intinction, I invite them to speak with me at their convenience so that I may discuss the matter with them further.

Thank you all for your kind attention in this matter. May the Lord continue to bless us all as He nourishes us with the sublime gift of His very Self in His Sacred Body and Precious Blood given to us at Mass.

- Fr. Lewis