

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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Sharing in the Dignity of the Image of God

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 364)

Letter of His Excellency, Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre, concerning

Norms for Posture and the Communion Rite

To all the faithful of the particular church of Louisville

Greetings in the Lord!

In the Holy Eucharist, we find the entirety of the Church's spiritual blessings, for it contains Christ himself, the living Bread that imparts life to humanity. As the precious gift of the Eucharist holds a significant place within the Sacred Liturgy, I write to you, the people of God in the particular church of Louisville, to promote unity and reverence for the Eucharist and to establish clear norms concerning (1) the posture of the Assembly during the distribution of Holy Communion, (2) the posture of each individual communicant at the time of his or her reception of the Sacrament, and (3) the communicant's choice of the manner of receiving Holy Communion.

1. **Posture of the Assembly during the distribution of Holy Communion.** In this local church, the previously recommended practice was to stand throughout the entire distribution of Holy Communion. While commendable, this is not the norm in most places throughout the United States and has led to some confusion and disunity. **Therefore, the practice will be for the faithful to kneel after the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) and remain kneeling until joining the Communion procession. After receiving Holy Communion, the faithful return to their places and kneel, or sit if unable, for a period of thanksgiving and personal prayer** (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 43; Prot. N. 855/03/L).

2. **Posture of Individuals while receiving Holy Communion.** Standing is the norm for the reception of Holy Communion. While standing, the communicant bows his or her head before receiving the Body of the Lord or the Precious Blood. While communicants may not be denied Holy Communion because they may kneel, catechesis of the faithful (such as sacramental preparation) should instruct that standing is the normative posture for reception of Holy Communion. Deacons, servers, and other liturgical ministers are to observe the normative posture of standing to receive Holy Communion to appropriately

model this norm for the faithful (*cf. General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 160; Prot. N. 1322/02/L).

3. Manners of Receiving Holy Communion. Communicants may choose whether to receive the consecrated Host in the hand or on the tongue. Since the Church presents these as equally appropriate options, catechesis on this point may not indicate that either method is better, preferred, or more reverent than the other. As the choice is reserved to the communicant, no minister may require that the faithful receive the consecrated Host in a certain way. The faithful receive the Precious Blood by drinking directly from the Chalice after it is handed to them by the minister. Intinction, while possible in some circumstances, is not a normative practice for distribution to the faithful at Masses within the Archdiocese of Louisville. Deacons and the lay faithful may never intinct the Host themselves (*cf. General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 160, 249, 287; Norms nos. 48, 50).

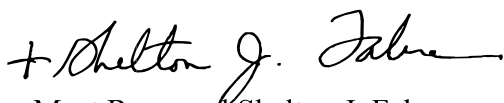
As always, pastoral adaptations should be made for those who cannot take the normative postures due to physical limitations.

These norms and clarifications may be implemented at any time, but no later than June 22, 2025 – the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Pastors are encouraged to ensure that catechesis and preparation are provided for the faithful in our parishes. To that end, a more detailed explanation of all these points is included separately. Please share it with catechetical and liturgical leaders in your parishes. The Archdiocesan Office of Worship and Office of Faith Formation remain available to you to answer any questions and provide further catechetical support.

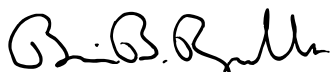
May the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, from whom the Lord took flesh, intercede for us as we continue to cultivate the awareness that the work of our redemption is happening most of all during our celebration of the Eucharist.

Given in Louisville, from the chancery, this fourteenth day of May,
on the Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle,
in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-five.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville



Dr. Brian B. Reynolds
Chancellor