

# Implementation in the Diocese of Calgary of *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

"On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist"

Pope John Paul II in his recent encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, writes of the profound spiritual meaning of the Eucharist. He also mandated the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to prepare an Instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, treating of certain matters pertaining to the discipline of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The latter document details many matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the celebration of the Eucharist. (cf. the enclosed document, *OBSERVATIONS ON REDEMPTIONIS SACRAMENTUM*, prepared by the CCCB.)

Fortunately, many of the problems identified in the Instruction are not found in our area and so no action is needed. However, there are a few points that require implementation as soon as possible wherever our present practice is not in conformity with the norms laid out in the Instruction. I have cited a few of the relevant sections and have added a brief commentary in italics when deemed appropriate and/or necessary.

## **1. Communion Under Both Species**

[105]. If one chalice is not sufficient for Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, there is no reason why the Priest celebrant should not use several chalices

[106.] However, the pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms.

*Commentary:*

This is perhaps the most important area where modification of our current liturgical practice is called for. In this instance we have a conflict between the sign value of "the one cup" and the danger of spillage of the precious blood. I would suggest that one flagon or container for the wine continue to be utilized during the offertory procession. However, once the wine is brought to the altar, as part of the preparation of the gifts the priest (or deacon) should proceed immediately to pour the wine into separate chalices prior to beginning the Eucharistic prayer.

A point not mentioned in the document, but which I wish to emphasize is that after the consecration, do not speak of "bread" and "wine" but rather to "the Host, " the Body of Christ," "the Precious Blood," etc. The language we use both reflects and affects our perception of reality, and the reality of the Eucharist is that we not receive bread and wine, but the Body and Blood of Christ. All Eucharist ministers need to be reminded of this truth as there is considerable carelessness in this regard.

## **2. Concelebration**

[98.] The Communion of Priest concelebrants should proceed according to the norms prescribed in the liturgical books, always using hosts consecrated at the same Mass and always with Communion under both kinds being received by all of the concelebrants. It is to be noted that if the Priest or Deacon hands the sacred host or chalice to the concelebrants, he says nothing; that is to say, he does not pronounce the words "The Body of Christ" or "The Blood of Christ".

## **3. Sacred Vessels**

[117.] Sacred vessels for containing the Body and Blood of the Lord must be made in strict conformity with the norms of tradition and of the liturgical books. The Bishops' Conferences have the faculty to decide whether it is appropriate, once their decisions have been given the recognition by the Apostolic See, for sacred vessels to be made of other solid materials as well. It is strictly required, however, that such materials be truly noble in the common

estimation within a given region, so that honour will be given to the Lord by their use, and all risk of diminishing the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species in the eyes of the faithful will be avoided. Reprobated, therefore, is any practice of using for the celebration of mass are common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers, as also other vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that break easily. This norm is to be applied even as regards metals and other materials that easily rust or deteriorate.

*Commentary:*

Some of our parishes have sacred vessels which will need to be replaced. I would ask that where this is so, the parish in due time obtain vessels that follow the above cited norms.

**4. Communion Services**

[166.] Likewise, especially if Holy Communion is distributed during such celebrations (celebrations carried out in the absence of a priest), the diocesan Bishop, to whose exclusive competence this matter pertains, must not easily grant permission for such celebrations to be held on weekdays, especially in places where it was possible or would be possible to have the celebration of Mass on the preceding or the following Sunday. Priests are therefore earnestly requested to celebrate Mass daily for the people in one of the churches entrusted to their care.

*Commentary:*

Notable exceptions are communion services held in nursing homes and other health care facilities in the diocese.

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*Vocabulary*

Notes:

- **Corporal:** (from the Latin *corpus*, meaning Body of Christ) is a large cloth spread at the center of the table for Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- **Credence Table:** Table which is next to the Server where the sacred vessels are kept during Mass until the dressing of the Altar.
- **Paten:** derived from the Latin *patina*, which simply means Paten [This is the plate/bowl we use to distribute the Body of Christ.]