

Question:

What is your view on receiving the Eucharist in the hand versus on the tongue? Is one more appropriate or fitting?



Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion for Catholics

c. 1996 US Conference of Catholic Bishops

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of a grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of a grave sin is not to receive The Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (*Code of Canon Law, canon 916*). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

Where can find references
to the Eucharist
in the bible?

Mathew 26:26

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body....”

Acts 2:46

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. **They broke bread in their homes and ate together** with glad and sincere hearts...”

The oldest references to the Eucharist in the New Testament after Acts of the Apostles is **1st Corinthians chapters 11 and 12.**

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None of these passages have a reference to receiving Holy Communion on the tongue or in the hand.

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In the first centuries of Christianity, receiving the body of Jesus in the hand was the norm.



St. Cyril of Jerusalem, 41st Bishop of Jerusalem, 317 years after Pentecost, described the practice of his time... about when coming to receive Holy Communion :

“Coming up to receive.. make your left hand a throne for the right (for it is about to receive a King) and cupping your palm, so receive the body of Christ, and answer, “Amen.” Carefully hallow your eyes by the touch of the sacred body, and then partake, taking care to lose no part of it.....”



With time, Christians felt receiving on the tongue showed greater reverence.

Out of reverence therefore, the receiving on tongue became the norm.

By 900AD (867 years after Pentecost)

It became the exclusive practice of the church to receive Communion only on the tongue.





From
900 AD – 1965 AD
For about 1,065
years, this was the
norm.

After 1965....

In the years following Vatican II, Holy Communion began to be distributed to people in the hands **AGAIN**.

This started in the **Netherlands**, then in **France, Belgium, and Germany**.

In the late '60s, Pope St. Paul VI wrote the bishops of the world, asking their opinion and if it should be allowed.

For;

- 1) fear the faithful would not be in favor of the change,
- 2) fear of a lessening of reverence toward the Sacrament
- 3) fear of the profanation, or the adulteration of correct doctrine

The Bishops held that receiving **on the tongue** remained the norm.

In 1969, the Pope reaffirmed the 1000 years' practice of receiving directly on the tongue.

The Pope however gave room for reception in the hand under some conditions and with permission from Rome.

The Conditions to going back to Communion in the Hand

- 1) Communion in the hand had to be already **present** in that country;
- 2) The bishops of that country must have **have two-thirds** majority vote in favor of Communion in the hand;
- 3) Communion in the hand should not be imposed in a way that would exclude the traditional manner.
- 4) The way of introducing this must be done tactfully.
- 5) Communion in the hand should not cause the person to think it is just ordinary bread
- 6) One must be careful to not allow profanation or any fragment to fall.

The Permission Today...

“ The consecrated host may be received either on the **tongue** or in the **hand** at the **discretion of each communicant**. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, **the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Previous Blood....** That sign is usually a simple bow....”

In the United States:

The **ancient custom** of receiving in the hand was revived in the **Western Church** in the early 1970s

In May 1977, the Bishops of the United States authorized Communion in the hand **as an option** and the Holy See confirmed it.

Hand or Tongue?

Our recommendation;

It is the reception of the God of the Universe

We treat the moment with severe caution

Received in the mode that evoke a deep reverence

Sense of appreciation of the sacrament

Increased sense of humility before God

No one should be harassed on how that want to receive

The most little part of the Sacred Host is the whole

Christ present, do not allow any to fall

Be conscious not to allow any fragment remain on the palm

