

Holy Communion for Parishioners with Celiac Sprue

St. Pius X Catholic Church, Cedar Rapids, IA

September 2009

Low-gluten communion hosts are available at all weekend liturgies to those suffering from Celiac Sprue disease. The hosts made by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, MO, contain 0.01% wheat gluten, are accepted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/celiasprue.shtml>), and are recommended by the journal *Gluten-Free Living* as “perfectly safe” for sufferers of Celiac Sprue disease (Vol. 9, no. 1). The Archdiocese of Dubuque has approved these low-gluten altar breads for use in the Archdiocese. Therefore we have developed the following procedure to provide as much protection for Celiac sufferers as possible.

1. Signing up

Any parishioner who has been diagnosed with Celiac Sprue disease and wishes to receive the low-gluten hosts must contact the St. Pius Director of Liturgy at 393-4445 or liturgy@crpiusx.org. Your name will be added to our database.

2. Arriving at Mass

St. Pius has purchased several pyxes (a pyx is a small round container that holds one unconsecrated host). These, along with the low-gluten hosts, are kept in the Vesting Sacristy (see map).

When you arrive for Mass, stop in the Vesting Sacristy and sign in on the clipboard on the counter. We keep records of who is using these hosts and at which Mass time. Next, take one of the pyxes and place a low-gluten host in it. Snap the pyx shut and place it on the small plate on the Gift Table (see map). All the pyxes will be kept on a plate separate from the large bread plate.

3. Preparation of the Gifts

During Mass, the small plate with the pyxes is brought forward with the bread and wine. One gift bearer carries the large plate of bread, and one carries the pitcher of wine and the small plate of pyxes. (If available, a third person can carry the plate of pyxes.) If there are no pyxes at that Mass, the empty plate is left on the Gift Table. The bread, wine, and plate of pyxes are handed to the Presider as usual.

4. Consecration

When it is time for the consecration, the Presider opens the pyxes just long enough to consecrate the bread. After the consecration he closes them again.

5. Communion

The pyxes remain on their own plate while the regular hosts are divided among the communion plates. As each Eucharistic Minister walks to his/her communion station, the Presider hands the plate of pyxes to the crossbearer (one of the altar servers). The crossbearer then stands behind the Presider at his station and waits until one of the Celiac sufferers comes forward for communion.

RECEIVING COMMUNION: There are no pre-assigned stations for any of our Eucharistic Ministers, including the Presider. No matter where you are sitting in church, you will need to join the line of communicants that leads up to the Presider. This may mean walking down a side aisle and going to communion on the opposite side of the church from your pew. We apologize for this inconvenience; but hope that with all the movement of people this will be rather inconspicuous.

When you reach the Presider, whisper to him that you need to receive a host from one of the pyxes. They are all the same and each contains one host. The Presider turns to the crossbearer, snaps open one of the pyxes, raises it before you and says, “The Body of Christ.” You bow your head and reply, “Amen,” as the Presider turns the pyx over and – *without touching it* (to avoid contamination) – lets the host drop into your hand. You consume the host and return to your pew.

The pyx is left open and returned to the plate. When all the pyxes are empty the crossbearer places the plate on the Credence Table (see map).

6. After Mass

After Mass the Eucharistic Ministers take the plate of pyxes to the Working Sacristy to be cleaned (see map). They perform the ritual rinsing and washing of vessels as usual, making sure that the pyxes are cleansed and washed first, separately from the regular bread plates. After being washed, the pyxes are dried thoroughly and left open to air-dry for a few minutes. Once the communion vessels are washed, one of the Eucharistic Ministers snaps the pyxes shut and returns them to the Vesting Sacristy. The empty plate is returned to the Gift Table or, after 12:00 Mass, to the Vesting Sacristy.

If you have any questions, please contact the St. Pius X Director of Liturgy at 393-4445 or liturgy@crpiusx.org.

Vesting Sacristy – 1

Gift Table – 2

Credence Table – 3

Working Sacristy - 4

