

Low-Gluten Hosts and Mustum

A newsletter from the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship from May-June 2012 discusses two potential health issues that can affect pastoral concern for the matter of the Sacrament of the Eucharist – those with a gluten allergy/intolerance and those who struggle with an addiction to alcohol. Gluten is the protein found in several grains, and is present in hosts for consecration. Low-gluten hosts exist to allow those with such an allergy/intolerance to receive the body of Christ. Similarly, there is a type of fermented grape-juice that contains very little alcohol that can allow those with an alcohol-addiction to receive the Blood of Christ. “Any baptized person not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion’ (can. 912). It is important for pastors to make every effort to accommodate and normalize the experience of Communion for the faithful, including those suffering from celiac disease.” The document gives some guidelines regarding these issues. The information from the statement is very useful for pastors, so I include here several key points. All sections in quotations are taken from the USCCB newsletter.

Permissions

1. “Permission for priests, deacons, or the lay faithful without distinction to use mustum or low-gluten hosts is within the competence of the diocesan bishop.”
2. “The authority to permit the lay faithful to use mustum and low-gluten hosts in the reception of Holy Communion may be delegated to pastors under canon 137 ¶1 of the Code of Canon Law. Medical certification of a condition justifying the use of mustum or low-gluten hosts for Holy Communion is not required. Such permission, once granted, stands for as long as the condition persists which occasioned the request for the original permission.”
3. In the Diocese of Bismarck, the authority to permit the lay faithful to use mustum and low-gluten hosts has been delegated to Fr. Nick Schneider in the Office of Worship. Requests to use low-gluten hosts or mustum should be made in writing to the Office of Worship (address at end of article) and demonstrate a genuine need. All credible and reasonable requests will be granted quickly.

Low-Gluten Hosts

1. “Given the serious health risk for those suffering gluten intolerance, it is important for pastors and other church leaders not only to be aware of the reality, but prepared to address the situation of Catholics with celiac disease (gluten intolerance) who come to parishes and seek to receive Holy Communion.”
2. (Then) Cardinal Ratzinger offers the most recent clarification on the proper matter for the Eucharist. The whole document can be found at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_c_on_cfaith_doc_20030724_pane-senza-glutine_en.html. The key points

- concerning altar bread are that, for validity, it must be made solely of wheat, contain enough gluten to make bread, be free of foreign materials, and unaffected by any preparation or baking methods that would alter its nature. The amount of gluten for validity is not specified, but hosts that contain absolutely no gluten are considered invalid matter.
3. In light of this, the church does allow a low-gluten host to be used so that people who suffer in this way may still receive the Body of Christ.
 4. For those with extreme cases of celiac disease, trace amounts of gluten can be damaging. For this reason, cross-contamination should be avoided. A separate pyx for low-gluten hosts should be prepared that has not held regular hosts, or has been well-purified before containing low-gluten hosts.
 5. For extreme cases, the statement proposes a solution. "It might be best, for example, for the communicant to prepare a pyx with the low-gluten host before Mass, in order to avoid the situation of a sacristan who has handled the other hosts to also handle the low-gluten ones. At Communion time, then, they could approach the sanctuary together with the Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and receive the pyx from the celebrant with the words "The Body of Christ" (or, if possible, they could be given the pyx within the normal Communion line, provided "contamination" from handling the pyx is avoided).
 6. Lay faithful who are unable to receive under the form of bread at all owing to a most extreme intolerance are able to receive under the species of wine, regardless of whether the Precious Blood is distributed to the other lay faithful at Mass.
 7. Low-gluten hosts are available from three approved producers:
 - a. Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (Gluten content: .01%): 31970 State Hwy P Clyde, MO 64432-8100. To contact the altar bread department altarbreads@benedictinesisters.org or call toll free (800) 223-2772
 - b. Parish Crossroads (Gluten content: .016%): P.O. Box 84 Zionsville, IN 47077; 1-800-510-8842; admin@parishcrossroads.com
 - c. GlutenFreeHosts.com Inc. (Gluten content: .002%) 100 Buckley Rd. Liverpool, NY 13088; 1-800-668-73-24, ext. 1; info@glutenfreehosts.com

Mustum

1. For those who suffer from an alcohol addiction, the church allows the use of mustum. "Mustum is defined as grape juice in which fermentation has begun, but has been suspended with the result that its alcohol content does not reach the levels found in most table wines. It should not contain additives and may be stored by freezing or other means. The process for the suspension of fermentation must not alter the nature of the juice in any way. The amount of alcohol needed for validity is not determined by a minimum percentage or weight. Pasteurized grape juice in which all alcohol has been evaporated through high temperature preparations is invalid matter for

- Mass. In the United States, it is forbidden to sell wine without the addition of sulfates as preservatives. The church has determined that the very small amount of sulfates is acceptable and does not make the matter invalid.”
2. There are two approved sources for mustum in the United States:
 - a. Mont La Salle Altar Wines; 605 Trancas Street, Suite D Napa CA, 94558; 1-800-447-8466; info@montlasallealtarwines.com
 - b. Monks Wine and Candles; P.O. Box 681248 Schaumburg, IL 60168; 1-800-540-MONK; info@monkswineandcandles.com
 3. “As a best practice, it is recommended that individuals with gluten and/or alcohol intolerance arrange through their parish the purchase any [sic] low-gluten hosts or mustum. This facilitates the oversight and good stewardship of the pastor... It also ‘normalizes’ the practice for the communicant as well as keeping the purchase of liturgical supplies together in the parish budget.”

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