

# Orate Fratres



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Monday, July 16, 2012

## Receiving Communion in the Hand

When considering the possibility of Communion received in the hand rather than on the tongue, the Holy See pointed out “certain dangers” of such a change. These included: “the danger of a loss of reverence for the august sacrament of the altar, of profanation, of adulterating the true doctrine.” But given that several bishops in Europe had already begun implementing this change illicitly, Pope Paul VI decided to take a vote on the matter rather than stomping it out altogether. Two-thousand bishops across the globe were polled and the results were as follows:

- 59% of bishops said the laity of their diocese would not accept the new practice.
- 62% of bishops did not want to see the practice begin in their diocese.
- 66% of the bishops didn’t think the practice was worth addressing.

Despite the vote, in 1969 Pope Paul VI decided to strike a **compromise** with his disobedient bishops on the continent. Given “the gravity of the matter,” the pope would not authorize Communion in the hand. He was, however, open to bestowing an indult – an exception to the law – under certain conditions: first, an indult could not be given to a country in which Communion in the hand was not an already established practice; second, the bishops in countries where it was established must approve of the practice “by a secret vote and with a two-thirds majority.” Beyond this, the Holy See set down seven regulations concerning communion in the hand; failure to maintain these regulations could result in the loss of the indult. The first three regulations concerned: respecting the laity who continue the traditional practice, maintaining the laity’s proper respect of the Eucharist, and



Pope Paul VI (pictured above) and his successors *never* accepted Communion in the hand. The pope’s compromise was to tolerate the illicitly established practice via *indult* in the places where it was already in use while barring its practice elsewhere.

## The Essays of Orate Fratres



Click on the image above to check out the Essay’s of Orate Fratres for more detail on the history, theology, and anthropology that shapes the Orate Fratres blog.

## The Battlefield



We cannot win the war if we cannot make it to the battlefield.

## Obedience

Receiving  
Communion in  
the Hand

The Language of  
Christianity's  
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RePosted: Has  
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Remembering the  
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strengthening the laity's faith in the real presence.

So how did Communion in the hand come to America?

In 1975 and again in 1976, Joseph Bernadin, the Archbishop of Chicago and president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) attempted in vain to garner two-thirds of the bishops to vote in favor of receiving Communion in the hand. The following year – which coincided with the end of Bernadin's term as president – brought one final attempt. Bernadin appointed Archbishop Quinn, who became Bernadin immediate successor as NCCB president, to be the chief lobbyist for Communion in the hand. During the proceedings a brave bishop requested a survey of the bishops be taken – this survey would ask each bishop whether or not Communion in the hand was widely practiced in his diocese, for without the practice's current wide-use the first condition of the indult would not be satisfied.

Of course, everyone knew that Communion in the hand was not a previously established practice in the United States.

Though his request was seconded and supported in writing by five other bishops, Bernadin had the motion dismissed as “out of order”. The bishops then voted... only to once more fall short of the two-thirds majority. This, however, did not end the matter. Bernadin decided to begin gathering “absentee votes” from any bishop he could find – including retired bishops who no longer administered any dioceses. Consequently, the number was adjusted to meet the two-thirds majority so that one of Bernadin's final acts as NCCB president was to disregard the will of the Holy Father and introduce Communion in the hand to U.S. Catholics.

Through the heavy-handed political maneuvering of Cardinal Bernadin, Pope Paul VI's attempt to create a firewall preventing the spread of Communion in the hand had failed.

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Posted by Andrew Lynch at 12:31 AM

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## 66 comments:



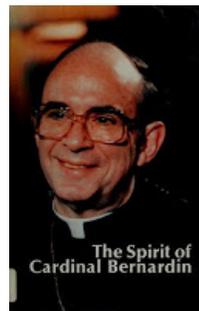
**Iowa Mike** August 7, 2012 at 9:49 AM

The impact of receiving Communion in the hand has been devastating in terms of reverence for and belief in the Real Presence. It is disgusting to see how the Eucharist is being mishandled. Not long ago I attended a mass celebrating the 50th anniversary of a priest's ordination. There were a couple of dozen priests in attendance. When the time came to distribute Communion I was surprised to see that all of the priests in attendance remained seated while 10 or more Extraordinary Ministers distributed. As I approached the EM to receive I overheard the person ahead of me ask the EM for an extra host for his wife.....I was shocked when he was given one! As distribution progressed one EM ran out of Precious Blood and so she went to another EM who poured some of their consecrated wine into her chalice.

My understanding is that none of the things I witnessed are licit; EM's are to be used only when there aren't enough priests available to distribute and pouring consecrated wine from one vessel to another while distributing is also illicit. Finally I could not believe that a person could be given an extra host upon request. Is not the host to be consumed immediately after receiving and in the



Life will only be protected when men gather together in obedience under the Father.



Communion in the hand was certainly in the 'spirit' of Cardinal Bernadin.