

**Celebration of the Eucharist  
and Pastoral Care  
of those with Coeliac or Gluten Intolerance**



**Guidelines for Schools and Parishes**

**The National Liturgy Advisory Group on behalf of the  
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference November 2015.**

## ***Te Whakarite i ngā Ōhitia Pumua Wītikore mō te Whakanui i te Hākari Ūkaritia***

### **The Use of Low Gluten Hosts in the Celebration of the Eucharist**

In the celebration of the Eucharist we worship God through, with, and in Christ and give praise and thanks for all God's goodness – for creating us and all that is, for loving us and for saving us. We gather to celebrate and enter into the mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, following his command to "Do this in memory of me". The community that gathers is drawn into union with God and with one another. It is a transformative ritual, where the community is formed and reformed into the Body of Christ through Word and Sacrament and sent forth to pour out their lives in his memory for the sake of the world.

In the community of faith there are people with differing needs which may impact on their participation in the Eucharistic celebration. Those with coeliac or gluten intolerance suffer severe allergic reactions to wheat products such as altar breads. Particular forms of pastoral care are needed so they may safely receive Holy Communion. This document provides suggestions for this pastoral care that will avoid imposing further stress on an already stressful health situation and offer a way forward for the whole community.

In response to the difficulties faced by some of the faithful, the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith has approved low gluten hosts for use for those who are coeliac.<sup>1</sup> "In fact, so called "gluten free" wafers have been found by scientists to contain trace amounts of gliadin and would therefore be valid matter. Bread without any gluten is invalid matter."<sup>2</sup>

### ***He aha te Haepapa tā te Hapori ?***

#### **What is the Responsibility of the Local Community?**

It is important that the Parish Priest/Lay Pastoral Leader and those involved in preparing liturgical celebrations are ready to accommodate those who are affected by gluten intolerance and coeliac, and communicate the options available. For many faithful this is a difficult time and it is important to help alleviate any problems that may arise. Knowing that the pastoral leadership and parish are helping to support them in this way means the reception of Holy Communion may continue to be experienced as joyful and graced.

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<sup>1</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Letter to all Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences concerning the use of low-gluten altar breads and mustum as matter for the celebration of the Eucharist" Vatican City, 19 June 1995, updated by another document "Circular Letter to all Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences concerning the use of low-gluten altar breads and mustum as matter for the celebration of the Eucharist" Vatican City, 24 July 2003.

<sup>2</sup> *Matter of the Eucharist Canon 924. New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law. Paulist Press 2000*

## ***He aha ngā haepapa mō te hunga e whakarite ana i te hākari o te Ūkaritia?***

### **What is the responsibility of those preparing for the celebration of the Eucharist?**

Low gluten hosts must be kept separate from other hosts at all times. During the liturgy of the Eucharist, keep these particular hosts in their own pyx and place them on the corporal alongside the ciboria and chalices. It would be prudent to communicate with the receiver/s of these hosts the most convenient way to distribute Communion to them.

The parish may like to offer to purchase the hosts and the pyx for each person.

Depending on the number of parishioners receiving low gluten hosts it may be appropriate to have a ciborium set aside for them and use a particular Communion station. This strategy needs to be made clear to parishioners and visitors alike, so all those who receive the low-gluten hosts may be included. It may be especially useful on feast days such as Christmas and Easter.

## ***Ka aha tātou mō ngā tino hui whakanui?***

### **What can we do for significant celebrations?**

Consideration is also needed for major celebrations, to avoid people being isolated by their particular situation. One significant example is that of children celebrating their first Holy Communion. It may be appropriate, especially on that special occasion, to have low gluten hosts for all, so that the child, at least for the first time, may receive the Eucharist alongside everyone else without any difference.

## ***Ka ahatia mēnā he tangata pumuawīti kore?***

### **What if a person is totally gluten free?**

First of all, it is utterly appropriate for the faithful who are unable to receive Communion under the species of bread in any form, to receive only from the chalice. This understanding must be fostered among Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who might encounter someone coming directly to them so as to not embarrass or draw attention to the actions of that person.

For those who are only able to receive Communion from the chalice, there is an issue of contamination. They are not able to receive from the chalice that contains the fragment of consecrated bread. Therefore it is necessary to have a separate chalice which is initially set aside for them. After they have received Communion, this chalice may be provided to others.

While those who are most severely affected will usually seek help from their priest and parish, this discussion shows how vital it is that priests and leaders need to identify and help those who may be affected in this way. If the parish does not usually offer Communion under both kinds, a separate chalice should at least be offered to those unable to share in communion under the species of bread.

### ***Ka tikina atu ngā ōhitia i hea?***

#### **Where do we purchase suitable altar breads?**

A list of providers is offered at the end of this document, and listed on the Useful Information page of the National Liturgy Office website, [www.nlo.org.nz](http://www.nlo.org.nz)

### ***Ka whai wāhi i roto i te Ūkaritia?***

#### **Participation in the Eucharist**

It is the desire of the Church that as many of the faithful as possible are able to participate in the life giving celebration of the Eucharist. This document seeks to enable this desire to be a reality for those with Coeliac or Gluten Intolerance. It is our hope that these guidelines will encourage parish and school communities to extend a welcoming and understanding hand towards those who live with these challenges.

## ***He Kōrero mō te kaupapa nei***

### **Background Notes to the subject**

The use of bread and wine in the celebration of the Eucharist is taken from the example of Christ at the Last Supper. (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 319(GIRM)). The further details are explained in GIRM 320-322.

The bread for celebrating the Eucharist must be made only from wheat, must be recently made, and, according to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, must be unleavened (GIRM 320).

The wine for the celebration of the Eucharist must be from the fruit of the vine (cf. Lk 22: 18), natural, and unadulterated, that is, without admixture of extraneous substances (GIRM 322).

These paragraphs reflect what is contained in The Code of Canon Law 1983, Can. 924 § 1-3.

Can. 924 §1. The most holy Eucharistic sacrifice must be offered with bread and with wine in which a little water must be mixed.

§2. The bread must be only wheat and recently made so that there is no danger of spoiling.

§3. The wine must be natural from the fruit of the vine and not spoiled.

### **Provision of Low Gluten Altar Breads approved for use in the Catholic Church**

The Catholic Shop, 79 Forfar St, St Albans, Christchurch 8014.

Ph 03 366 2853. Email: [catholicshop@chch.catholic.org.nz](mailto:catholicshop@chch.catholic.org.nz)

Pleroma Christian Supplies, 38 Higginson St, Otane, Central Hawkes Bay

Freephone 0508 988 988 Email: [order@pleroma.org.nz](mailto:order@pleroma.org.nz)

Website: [www.christiansupplies.co.nz](http://www.christiansupplies.co.nz)

Rosa Mystica Catholic Shop, 494 Grey St, Hamilton East, Hamilton 3247

Ph 07 856 6486. Email: [catholicshop@rosamystica.co.nz](mailto:catholicshop@rosamystica.co.nz)

Website: [www.rosamystica.co.nz](http://www.rosamystica.co.nz)

The Square Gift Store, Liston House, St Patrick's Square, 43 Wyndham St,

Auckland. Ph 09 365 1693. Fax 09 365 2624. Email: [info@thesquaregiftstore.co.nz](mailto:info@thesquaregiftstore.co.nz)

[www.thesquaregiftstore.co.nz](http://www.thesquaregiftstore.co.nz)

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