



OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP  
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

**SEVEN QUESTIONS  
ON WHAT TO DO  
IF A CONSECRATED HOST IS DROPPED  
OR THE PRECIOUS BLOOD IS SPILLED**

**1. What is of the first importance in the distribution of Holy Communion?**

Of first importance is that “the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist”<sup>1</sup> is to be shown by both the ministers and communicants of Holy Communion.

While ministers of Holy Communion should always be encouraged to show the greatest reverence for the Most Blessed Sacrament, accidents will still happen from time to time.

In every instance, it is important for the minister of Holy Communion to remain calm. Kindness should be shown to everyone involved in an accident at Holy Communion and the matter should be resolved with the utmost care and compassion for all involved.

**2. What should a minister of Holy Communion do if they drop a consecrated host?<sup>2</sup>**

Sometimes accidents happen. The minister should stop distributing Holy Communion and pick up the host.

If the host has not become contaminated, the minister should immediately consume it. If the host has become too soiled to consume, the minister places it in another vessel. After Mass, the priest or deacon then puts the soiled host in a cup

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<sup>1</sup> *Roman Missal*, “Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America,” no. 29.

<sup>2</sup> “If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently; and if any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy.” *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 280.

of water in the tabernacle. Once the host has dissolved sufficiently to no longer be recognizable as bread, it may be washed in the sacrarium.

If there are small particles on the ground where the host has fallen, the area should be lightly washed with a purificator and water until there are no more visible particles. The purificator is then rinsed in the sacrarium and placed with the soiled linens.

In no case should a consecrated host which has fallen on the floor be administered to a communicant.

### **3. What if a ciborium is knocked over and multiple hosts fall to the ground?**

The same procedure is followed for the dropping of one host. It should be noted, however, that the distribution of Holy Communion should stop until all consecrated hosts have been retrieved and the areas where they fell have been appropriately treated.

### **4. What if a sick person vomits or spits up the consecrated host after receiving Holy Communion?**

If the host is still recognizable as bread, it should be carefully removed from the vomitus and put in a covered cup of water. The covered cup is then reserved in the tabernacle until the host is dissolved. At this point, it may be washed down the sacrarium.

### **5. What if the Precious Blood is spilled?**

If the Precious Blood is spilled on a surface, the area where the spill has occurred should be immediately washed with a purificator and water. The purificator is then rinsed in the sacrarium and placed with the soiled linens.

### **6. What if the Precious Blood spills on the altar?**

If the Precious Blood spills on one of the sacred linens (corporal, altar cloth, purificator, pall) the excess liquid should be blotted into a purificator. All sacred linens are then washed in the sacrarium immediately after Mass.

### **7. What if the Precious Blood spills on an article of clothing?**

If the Precious Blood spills on an article of clothing, a purificator is given to the person wearing the clothing and they are asked to blot as much of the liquid into the purificator as possible. They should also be asked to bring the soiled article(s) of clothing to the priest or deacon later in the day to be rinsed in the sacrarium before they launder it.

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