

“Living the Mystery”

by Fr. Augie Gothman

Questions on Communion

This month, I have taken the opportunity to address some questions in a wide audience that have been raised several times in parishes as I have traveled in our diocese. **Celiac Sprue disease:** The digestive system of those with this condition is considerably compromised by the consumption of gluten, a major ingredients in wheat flour. It is estimated that as many as 15% percent of all persons of northern European origin are affected by this disease to some degree. Currently, the only makers of extremely low gluten (only 10 parts per million), though not gluten-free, hosts approved for use at Mass in the dioceses of the United States are available from the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri. Those faithful who are affected ought to contact their physician lest they endanger their health, and then contact their pastor that arrangements can be made for the use of such hosts.

Communion from the tabernacle? Questions are raised about the continuing practice of communicating the assembly at Mass from the sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. *The Constitution on the Liturgy*, article 55, states: "The more complete form of participation in the Mass by which the faithful, after the priest's communion, receive the Lord's body from the same sacrifice, is strongly endorsed" (emphasis added). This is supported in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) number 85, which states that it is most desirable that the faithful, just as the priest himself is bound to do (GIRM 157), receive the Lord's body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they partake of the chalice.(GIRM, 283), so that even by means of the signs Communion will stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated." (emphasis added). The reason the Church reserves the eucharist outside Mass is, primarily, the administration of Viaticum to the dying; and secondarily, communion of the sick, communion outside Mass, and adoration of Christ present in the sacrament. (see *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, number 5) Only under rare circumstances of necessity should the assembly at Mass communicate from the reserved sacrament in the tabernacle.

Sources:

<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/innews/1103.shtml>

http://altarbread@benedictinesisters.org/bread/low_gluten.php

<http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/q&a/mass/tabernacle.shtml>