

May 13, 2020

## Reception of Communion in the Hand

Archbishop ListECKI has determined that, out of concern for the community entrusted to his care, Holy Communion during this time of pandemic will be distributed only in the hand. He knows that this will constitute a sacrifice on the part of those whose preference is to receive on the tongue.

In the course of deliberation over this decision, the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) and *Redemptionis sacramentum* (RS) were taken into consideration. Both of these documents affirm the right of the communicant to determine whether to receive Communion on the tongue or in the hand (GIRM 161; RS 92).

So what is the Archbishop doing when he directs that Communion be received only in the hand during this time of pandemic? The Archbishop is fulfilling his role as shepherd of the flock entrusted to his care. The GIRM and RS recognize a right. But, in the Church, our rights are not unfettered. The law in this situation is not the GIRM, clarified by RS but rather canon 223:

Canon 223 §1 In exercising their rights, Christ's faithful, both individually and in associations, must take account of the common good of the Church, as well as the rights of others and their own duties to others.

§2 Ecclesiastical authority is entitled to regulate, in view of the common good, the exercise of rights which are proper to Christ's faithful.

The Archbishop is not taking away an individual's right; he is regulating the right for the common good.