



CHRIST COMMUNION

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An Invitation to All: The Inclusive and Affirming Stance of Christ Communion with Regards to the Sacraments of the Church

Christ Communion steadfastly upholds a message of inclusivity, affirmation, and love, reflecting the teachings of Christ and the rich heritage of the Church. The foundational pillars of our stance, deeply rooted in Scriptural references, Church Tradition, insights from theologians, and our community's lived experience, allow us to share the Gospel's transformative grace with all who seek it.

The ministry of Jesus Christ, as detailed in Scripture, presents an inviting and inclusive narrative. Christ frequently engaged with those marginalized in society, showcasing a love that transcends social barriers. His encounters with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), the tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), and the accused woman in John 8:1-11 are striking illustrations of this inclusive disposition. The most potent instruction that Christ offers on inclusivity, however, is His assertion of the two greatest commandments: to love God wholeheartedly and to love one's neighbor as oneself (Matthew 22:37-40). The second of these commandments forms the bedrock of our commitment to an all-inclusive fellowship.

Our stance on ordination echoes this encompassing approach. Scripture reveals that gifts for ministry are diverse and not confined to any gender (Romans 12:4-8). Phoebe's role as a deacon (Romans 16:1-2) and Junia's commendation as "outstanding among the apostles" (Romans 16:7) are strong New Testament affirmations of female leadership. Furthermore, we recognize the Eastern Orthodox tradition reinstating female deacons and archaeological discoveries suggesting women's priestly roles in the early Church.

Regarding marital status, we affirm the validity of both single and married clergy. We recall Paul's advocacy of singleness (1 Corinthians 7:7), Jesus's recognition of those who choose celibacy for the kingdom's sake (Matthew 19:12), and also acknowledge that Peter, among other apostles, was married (1 Corinthians 9:5).

Our doctrine of the open altar emphasizes that sacraments should be accessible to all baptized Christians. This philosophy is rooted in the Gospel narrative, where Jesus shared meals with various individuals (Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 14:15-24), symbolizing the Eucharistic feast. Further, Paul's assertion of unity in Christ surpassing social, cultural, and gender divisions (Galatians 3:28) strengthens this standpoint.



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The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is integral to our belief system. Jesus's words during the Last Supper, "This is my body... this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28), and Paul's confirmation of this practice (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) underline this mystery. We honor this tradition, understanding it as an experiential mystery that transcends precise definition.

The Tradition of the Church and various theologians also affirm our inclusive vision. The universal salvific will of God as articulated by Origen, the concept of 'Anonymous Christians' by Karl Rahner, Gregory of Nyssa's 'apokatastasis', and James Alison's theology of inclusive grace all highlight God's inclusive reach.

Our valid apostolic succession, derived from the Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church and the Old Catholic Churches of the Netherlands, further underpins our inclusive ethos. This lineage connects us to the apostolic tradition while permitting its interpretation in light of contemporary insights. Theologians like Francis A. Sullivan and Nicolas Afanasiev endorse this interpretation, situating apostolic succession within a continuum of apostolic faith and practice.

The RCC's implied recognition of our orders, evident in canon law and ecumenical principles, reaffirms the legitimacy of our sacraments and apostolic succession. It also attests to our openness to ecumenical dialogue, reflecting our inclusive nature.

In summary, Christ Communion stands as an inclusive and affirming beacon within the Christian landscape. Our commitment to the breadth of God's love, manifested in our open altar, inclusive ordination, understanding of Christ's real presence, and our apostolic succession, reflects Christ's all-encompassing love. Our invitation extends to all, affirming every individual's sacred worth and unique place in the Body of Christ. We strive to live out the radical inclusivity of the Gospel, continually echoing Christ's call to love God and love one another, the greatest commandments of all.

This position paper reflects the official stance of Christ Communion on the discussed subject matter. Nevertheless, it is understood and accepted that members of our faith community may hold differing viewpoints. We believe that these differences of opinion are not only inevitable but crucial. They serve to deepen our understanding, strengthen our shared beliefs, and contribute to the rich tapestry of our collective faith journey. We welcome and value this ongoing dialogue as it reflects the diverse perspectives within our church. Our faith is a living, evolving conversation, where every voice, including those in dissent, plays a critical role in shaping the contours of our shared spiritual experience.

Christ Communion is not a monolith, but a vibrant communion of unique individuals, united in our faith yet diverse in our thoughts. As we continue to engage in these complex and often challenging conversations, we grow together, enriching our Church and enhancing our faith. Each viewpoint is a vital piece of the puzzle that helps us to better understand the divine mystery we are all part of. May we keep discussing, keep questioning, keep disagreeing, in love and respect for each other, as we continue our journey toward the truth.