

Correspondence of the Ecumenical Patriarch with Primates of other local Orthodox Churches regarding the way of distribution of the Eucharist



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, following the wish of the Mother Church of Constantinople to have coordination and, as far as possible, uniformity between the local Orthodox Churches on the extremely important question of the Divine Eucharist and of the way of distributing it to the faithful, sent the following letter on 17 May 2020 to all his brothers their Beatitudes the Primates of the local Orthodox Churches:

"Your Beatitude, Christ is risen!"

We have painfully experienced the circumstances that have arisen in the life of the Church due to the serious pandemic of the new coronavirus, and from everywhere we have received new local data and various developments, in letters or in the form of questions and concerns. We, animated by a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, in order to protect the health of the faithful and the common good, have accepted the celebration of the liturgical services for a certain time without the presence of the faithful in the churches, but with the primary concern,

however, of preserving the faith of our Fathers, which always illuminates the universe.

Since, nevertheless, after the praiseworthy interest of the authorities and the priceless prevention of the leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain unseemly points of view have been heard on how to approach the immaculate mysteries, it is impossible for us to remain silent and foreign to such an ambiguous situation, and inactive in the face of development and related government regulations and prohibitions.

We have obeyed the exhortations of the health and political authorities, and as is natural, we obey, to the point, however, where the essence and the center of our faith is not touched. The condescension of the Church goes to the cross, but nevertheless it refuses to descend from it by obeying the magistrates and authorities of this world when the mystery of the mysteries of her life, the divine Eucharist, is being questioned.

In the life of the Church, it is known to all that the interpreter of the evangelical and apostolic exhortations and concepts, but nevertheless also of the spirit and the letter of the divine and holy canons, is the holy tradition, woven indissolubly with daily ecclesial practice and kenotic experience. Using this consecrated practice of the Church, we see and we discern in truth that it lives in the world by Divine Eucharist and in Divine Eucharist, or, in another way, that Divine Eucharist is the revelation and the experience of the divine-human mystery of the Church. The Lord himself, who “dwells invisibly with us”, who “offers, is offered and is distributed”, gives us in the Eucharist His immaculate body and His precious blood, making us the “fullness of the kingdom of heaven”.

In this spirit and in this feeling, we communicate with Your Beatitude, much loved by us, declaring in all conscience that we have no intention of renouncing what was bequeathed to all of us by our blessed Fathers. In the light of the circumstances that have arisen, we wish to listen to Your fraternal opinion and Your thoughts so that we may commonly walk in the pastoral approach to controversies over the established mode of the distribution of divine communion. That have been said, we embrace with love in Christ and with a holy kiss Your beloved Beatitude, remaining his dear brother, his concelebrant and partaking in the one and common chalice, to which, by drinking it, we will never thirst in the ages. Amen.”

[Source](#)