

Celiac Sprue Disease and the Use of Low-Gluten Hosts: Important note about invalid matter.

The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship, at the direction of Pope Francis, recently issued a directive regarding the proper matter of the Eucharist. The full directive can be found on the Vatican website and other sources. One of the chief concerns was the use of low-gluten hosts and mustum for the celebration of Mass. Per a statement of the USCCB, the concerns addressed in the Vatican document had been addressed in our country some time ago.

There can be a confusion in our country due to a discrepancy in definition and labeling. Per the FDA, some foods may be labeled "gluten free" even if they contain an ultra-low amount of gluten. This ultra-low amount of gluten could be considered safe for those with celiac disease, and would, in the case of altar breads, be considered valid matter for the Eucharist. Those who suffer from celiac disease can generally receive hosts that are labeled low or even ultra-low gluten - and would be considered "gluten-free" by the FDA.

However, about two years ago, it came to the attention of the Office of the Vicar General that a rather prominent supplier of altar breads was offering truly gluten-free hosts that contained absolutely no gluten and were made of various non-wheat flours. These are not valid sacramental matter. Pastors are advised to use only those suppliers that have been approved by the USCCB.

Ultra-low gluten hosts are available from several suppliers, including the Congregation of Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Altar Breads Department, 31970 State Highway p, Clyde, MO 64432. Visit usccb.org/liturgy for other suppliers and for more information about the use of low-gluten hosts.

Within the Diocese of Peoria, in 2010 Bishop Jenky granted the habitual faculty to pastors, according to the Code of Canon Law, c. 137.1, to permit the lay faithful with Celiac Sprue disease to use mustum and low-gluten hosts in the reception of Holy Communion.