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Texas Roman Catholic Bishops' Guidelines for the use of Sacramental Wine in Correctional Institutions in Texas

Valid celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) requires the use of a small amount of wine. It need only be consumed by the priest.

Inmates have no religious obligation to consume any of the wine which Catholics believe is the Precious Blood of Christ during Communion.

The priest offering the Mass must be allowed to consume a small amount of the wine as part of the religious ritual. The consumption of wine under these circumstances will not be considered consumption of alcohol or ingestion of an illegal substance.

In some cases, chaplaincy staff will purchase sacramental wine using normal procurement procedures. In other cases, a visiting minister or religious volunteer will bring the required amount of wine for the priest's consumption during Mass with prior authorization.

In cases where chaplaincy staff is responsible for providing wine to visiting priests, 2 ounces of sacramental wine will be provided in closed containers for each scheduled Mass.

Wine is to be stored behind two locked doors (e.g., in a locked safe or cabinet/refrigerator within a locked office) in a secure area inaccessible to inmates.

All wine brought into the institution by a visiting priest must be consumed prior to his leaving.

Training on the procedures for storing, using, and disposing of sacramental wine will be provided to Chaplaincy Services staff, custody staff, religious contractors, trainees, and volunteers. This will avoid the unnecessary confiscation of essential sacred elements.

Catholics believe that Christ is truly present in the Consecrated Bread and Wine used at Mass. All Consecrated Wine must be consumed by the priest at each Mass. Consecrated Wine cannot be stored after Mass.

The Consecrated Bread (communion hosts) should be consumed at Mass, but it may be reserved in an appropriate Tabernacle with a vigil light burning nearby. Under no circumstance should consecrated hosts be mixed with hosts that have not been consecrated.

Any sacred altar vessels used to celebrate Catholic Mass should not be used for other purposes or by other religious groups.