

Document 11

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECEPTION BY POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLICS OF SACRAMENTS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

(Accepted at the Twentieth General Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church, Chicago, Illinois, October 6, 1998, after prior approval by the PNCC Doctrine Commission, September 2, 1997, and the PNCC Bishops Conference, September 3, 1997)

1. Preamble

A. In principle, all Polish National Catholics are obliged to receive the sacraments, including Holy Eucharist, only from ministers of the Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC). In this way, Polish National Catholics demonstrate their unity both with the Lord and with each other. The PNCC believes that the legitimate reception of this sacrament requires a prior unity of faith in the reality and meaning of the Eucharist. Because this unity does not yet exist among all churches, the PNCC does not ordinarily authorize the reception of the Eucharist by Polish National Catholics from non-PNCC ministers.

B. At the same time, the PNCC recognizes that, due to their conditions of life, not all Polish National Catholics are able to receive the sacraments from Polish National Catholic ministers on a regular basis. Members of the PNCC who live or

travel far from Polish National Catholic parishes fall into this category, as do students living away from home. For this reason and as a result of the progress achieved in ecumenical dialogue between the Polish National Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches, the PNCC requested the Roman Catholic Church to admit such Polish National Catholics to the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Holy Unction. Following a favorable response by the Holy See, the American Roman Catholic bishops adopted and published a document entitled *Pastoral Guidelines Concerning Admission of Polish National Catholics to Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church (Canon 844)*.

C. The present document represents the PNCC's response to this action by the Roman Catholic Church and sets forth guidelines for Polish National Catholics who desire to receive sacraments from Roman Catholic ministers, as well as terms under which Roman Catholics may be admitted to sacraments in the PNCC.

2. Reception of Sacraments by Polish National Catholics from Roman Catholic Ministers

A. Polish National Catholics who are unable to receive the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, or Holy Unction within the PNCC are authorized to receive these sacraments from Roman Catholic ministers. The same prerequisites for the reception of these sacraments within the PNCC also apply to such reception within the Roman Catholic Church — above all, in the case of the Eucharist, the absence of grave (mortal) sin and observance of a two-hour eucharistic fast.

B. Polish National Catholics should be aware that the discipline governing the administration of these sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church differs from that of the PNCC. For example, Roman Catholic clergy variously administer the Eucharist under the species of bread alone in the hand or on the tongue, of bread and wine separately, or by intinction. Polish National Catholics should receive the Eucharist under the species of bread (or bread and wine by intinction) on the tongue. Moreover, in the Roman Catholic Church, auricular (private) confession is the norm for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation), and Polish National Catholics seeking this sacrament from a Roman Catholic minister ordinarily will make their confession in this manner.

C. There may arise special occasions, apart from cases of necessity, when it would be appropriate for Polish National Catholics to receive the Eucharist from Roman Catholic ministers (e.g., weddings, funerals). Such reception is authorized by the PNCC.

D. Under no circumstances are Eucharistic concelebrations by Polish National Catholic and Roman Catholic clergy authorized, for such concelebrations would indicate a oneness of faith and order that does not yet exist between the two Churches.

3. *Reception of the Sacraments by Roman Catholics in the PNCC*

A. The Polish National Catholic Church does not object to the reception by Roman Catholics of the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Holy Anointing from Polish

National Catholic ministers. Polish National Catholic clergy should do nothing to impede such reception. At the same time, they should not issue general invitations for Roman Catholics to receive the Eucharist in the PNCC.

B. In all such cases, however, Roman Catholics are urged to respect the discipline of their own church as set forth in the American Roman Catholic bishops' *Pastoral Guidelines* and applicable canonical legislation.

4. These guidelines come into effect upon publication and remain in force until such time as they are formally revised or abrogated.