



Pope John Paul II



Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect; later elected Pope Benedict XVI

In his commentary on canon law,

Fr. Thomas Doyle, a Roman Catholic Dominican priest, writes,

"Catholics may receive the Eucharist, penance, or anointing from sacred ministers of non-Catholic denominations whose Holy Orders are considered valid by the Catholic Church. This includes all Eastern Orthodox priests, as well as priests of the Old Catholic or Polish National Church."

Are the sacraments of the American Catholic Church valid?

Of course, they are. They are administered by validly consecrated bishops and validly ordained priests.

"In each of these churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature and, although separated from us, these churches possess true sacraments, above all (by apostolic succession) the priesthood and Eucharist. This offers ecclesiological and sacramental grounds for allowing and even encouraging some sharing in liturgical worship (even Eucharistic) with these churches".

More globally, Pope John Paul II mentioned such churches as the Old Catholic Church in his 2000 encyclical letter Dominus Jesus, saying,

The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the [Roman] Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by Apostolic Succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches.

Therefore, these separated Churches and communities as such... have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church. *Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the [Roman] Catholic Church.*"

If the Roman Catholic Church is your source of truth in these matters, see what the Roman Catholic Church teaches in its official documents. The "Dominus Iesus," was issued during the reign of Pope John Paul II, June 16, 2000, and signed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, August 6, 2000. Refer to Section IV: Article 17: Go to the Vatican website: www.vatican.va