

Communion bread uninterrupted by prayer

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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My sister teased me when I [posted](#) a while back about using local wine for communion. It's "kind of like a parody of a post you would write," she noted on Facebook. Fair enough; the topic could easily have been auto-generated by an algorithm tracking my preoccupation with both worship planning and ethical foodie-ism.

So I've hesitated for a couple weeks to post about [this story](#), lest my loved ones pile on the ridicule: American communion wafers, mass produced by Rhode Island company Cavanagh's, are taking over the Australian market (Protestant as well as Catholic) that once supported Catholic sisters in that country. One selling point for Cavanagh's is the fact that the wafer is produced, packaged and shipped without ever being touched by human hands. Another is customer service:

"It's a product where if someone wants it they've got to have it," [Cavanagh's distributor Mike Grieger] said, "whereas sometimes I think that the other [producers] are a little bit inconsistent. You might ring up a monastery [to order], for instance, and they are at prayer."

If you need some wafers pronto, I guess that's a real concern. But the story offers a colorful snapshot of the distance between different strains of eucharistic thinking and practice: for those of us who connect the sacrament to day-to-day physical sustenance, it's hard to see the downside of bread produced nearby by human hands that routinely turn their attention to prayer.