

Catholic bishop backtracks on limiting Communion wine

by [Daniel Burke](#)

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(RNS) The Roman Catholic bishop of Phoenix has backtracked on plans to restrict Communion wine at Mass after a local outcry and consultation with other bishops.

Bishop Thomas Olmsted had said that Vatican guidelines attached to a new Mass translation curtail the distribution of Communion wine to special occasions such as feast days.

Olmsted reversed himself, however, in new norms made public on Friday (Nov. 11). Diocesan spokesman Rob DeFrancesco said the rules Olmsted had issued in September "were not complete."

"Between that time and the present, there have been discussions, consultation and feedback taken in; and new norms reflect all that," DeFrancesco said.

Olmsted wrote a private letter to local priests saying he had misunderstood church documents, and apologized for provoking anxiety among lay Catholics, according to The Arizona Republic.

Olmsted has drawn controversy before. Last year he informed a nun that she had excommunicated herself after permitting an emergency abortion at a Catholic hospital where she was an administrator.

Since the sweeping liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) most U.S. bishops allow priests to offer both the consecrated bread and wine to the laity during Mass.

Starting on Nov. 27, U.S. Catholics will follow a new text for the Mass.

New Orleans Archbishop Gregory Aymond, chairman of the bishops' liturgy committee, wrote to fellow bishops on Oct. 26, saying that the Vatican's new guidelines do not place additional restrictions on Communion wine.

DeFrancesco said that Olmsted and his liturgical experts had consulted with Aymond's committee before issuing the new norms.