



## DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE – SOUTH BEND

915 South Clinton Street · Post Office Box 390  
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January 28, 2013  
Memorial of Saint Thomas Aquinas

Dear Priests and Deacons,

Greetings in the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus! I hope and pray that this Year of Faith is a special time of grace for you and the communities you serve. During this year, we are especially mindful of the centrality of the Holy Eucharist in our journey of faith and of the graces we receive in the Eucharist that strengthen us in our witness to the faith.

I am enclosing with this letter the new and revised Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in our diocese. Due to many questions that our Office of Worship has received, I hope that these revised norms provide helpful clarity. I am grateful to our Office of Worship and the Diocesan Liturgical Commission for their work on these norms as well as to the Presbyteral Council and Bishop's Cabinet for their input.

I hereby promulgate these norms as particular law for this diocese, and decree that these norms become effective on January 28, 2013. Also, as of this same date, any previous particular law concerning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is hereby abrogated.

May the Lord bless you and all you do to promote the greatest respect for the sacred gift of the Eucharist, the center and summit of the Church's life and of priestly ministry!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Kevin C. Rhoades*

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades  
Bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend

KCR / dl  
Enclosure

# Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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## **ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

1. By virtue of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the bishop, the priest, and the deacon, to whom it belongs to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ's faithful during the celebration of the Mass.<sup>1</sup>

2. However, when the size of the congregation is such that the liturgy would otherwise be unduly prolonged, or if available ordinary ministers are somehow incapacitated, then lay members of the faithful may be designated to assist in the orderly distribution of Holy Communion as necessary. These laypersons must be properly commissioned, and they are referred to as "**extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.**" In this context, "extraordinary" implies an exception, or an extraordinary measure in unusual circumstances.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may only be employed in cases of necessity, as noted above. "Such recourse is not intended for the sake of a fuller participation of the laity but rather, by its very nature, is supplementary and provisional."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004), 154.

3. Moreover, they should not be referred to as “special ministers of Holy Communion,” “extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist,” or even simply “Eucharistic ministers.” Such titles improperly broaden or elevate the meaning of this function,<sup>3</sup> which must be kept clearly distinct from the role of ordained ministers. Due to his role in confecting the Holy Eucharist, any version of the title “minister of the Eucharist” properly belongs to the priest alone.<sup>4</sup>

4. And when the use of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is necessary during Mass, a parish should increase prayers for vocations, in the hope that the Lord may send sufficient ordinary ministers to serve the community.<sup>5</sup>

5. **Instituted Acolytes:** If instituted acolytes are present, they should function as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion before any other members of the laity. However, such acolytes must be officially instituted by a bishop, and the role of acolyte is typically reserved to men in seminary formation.

### QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

6. Parish pastors alone may appoint extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion for their parishes. The following qualifications must be met in order to be appointed:

- Men or women of high school age or older who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Holy Mass, sacred vessels, proper procedures, etc.
- Demonstrate a mature spirituality, and be “of sound doctrine and exemplary moral life. Catholics who do not live worthy lives or who do not enjoy good reputations or whose family situations do not conform to the teaching of the Church may not be admitted” to the exercise of functions such as the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.<sup>6</sup>
- Undergo formal training to become an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion

It is for the parish pastor to ensure that these qualifications are met and maintained.

7. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should receive “sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, without exception, anyone who is to be newly commissioned as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion must undergo formal training that includes the following elements:

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 151

<sup>6</sup> *On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest* (Instruction of the Holy See, 1997), Article 13.

<sup>7</sup> USCCB, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (2001), 28.

1. A study of the Church's teachings on the Holy Eucharist, as found in Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and other sources approved by the pastor.
2. An overview of the spiritual life, devotions, and reverence that foster the fruitful discharging of a function so closely tied to the Holy Eucharist.
3. Detailed liturgical practicum sessions for the proper distribution of the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of Christ at Mass.
4. Reception and review of these diocesan norms.

### **COMMISSIONING AT PARISHES AND FUNCTIONING IN THE DIOCESE**

8. All extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion within the diocese ultimately receive their mandate from the diocesan Bishop,<sup>8</sup> who in Fort Wayne-South Bend delegates to pastors the commissioning and oversight of extraordinary ministers. The mandate lasts one year, and so must be renewed annually.

9. Each parish must record and maintain a list of names of all those who have been duly commissioned and are active as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at that parish. After review by the pastor, the complete list must be submitted annually to the diocesan Office of Worship on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). The parish will then receive a decree, by which the diocesan Bishop confirms the mandate for the coming year.

10. Each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is encouraged to attend a retreat or a day of recollection at least once a year. This may occur at the parish, at the diocesan level, or at another event offered within or even outside the diocese.

11. All active extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must possess a copy of these "Diocesan Norms for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion," and must also be informed immediately of any official changes to universal or diocesan liturgical policies governing extraordinary ministers.

12. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are formally commissioned either within or outside of Mass, according to the rites found in Chapter 63 of the *Book of Blessings*. This commissioning may be done annually for those who have renewed their mandate.

13. Anyone officially commissioned as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at his or her parish may legitimately perform that liturgical function at Mass elsewhere in the diocese, provided that the local pastor or the celebrant approves, and that the individual is made familiar with any procedures particular to that place.

14. In urgent cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given by the priest celebrant for someone to receive a one-time deputation to serve as an extraordinary minister at that Mass.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Immensae Caritatis* (1973), 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 155; *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), 162.

The short “Rite of Deputing a Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion,” found in Appendix III of the *Roman Missal*, should be used.

### **NON-PARISH SITUATIONS**

15. Lay religious superiors may appoint members of their communities to undergo training and commissioning as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Such appointments are coordinated with a priest chaplain assigned to the community.
16. At high school and college campuses, the priest chaplain appoints extraordinary ministers.
17. At hospitals and nursing homes:
  - If there is a Catholic chaplain, the chaplain may appoint extraordinary ministers, preferably drawing from individuals already commissioned at area parishes.
  - If there is no Catholic chaplain, the pastor of the local parish should assign extraordinary ministers.
  - The hospital or nursing home administrators must be made aware that, in addition to priests and deacons, lay extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may serve the sick and aged.
18. In all these situations, the same requirements, training, and record-keeping found at the parish level must be maintained.

### **PROPER PREPARATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Reverence & Decorum**

19. “All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine.”<sup>10</sup>

This requirement for reverent conduct and decorum must be closely observed, and should inform every action of the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. The clothes one wears and the manner in which one moves within the sanctuary or while holding the sacred species should make evident the immensity of this responsibility. Being entrusted to help distribute the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the sacred liturgy is no everyday task.

20. For the same reasons, the terminology employed by extraordinary ministers should always reflect the sacred reality. The consecrated Body and Blood of Christ should never be referred to as mere “bread” or “wine.” Even when speaking in a logistical sense while planning, one should never refer to “bread stations” and “wine stations,” or “bread ministers” and “wine ministers.” The ciboria containing hosts should also not be called “bowls,” and it would be best to speak of “chalices” rather than “cups,” in order to denote the dignified and holy purpose of these vessels.

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<sup>10</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 28.

## Sacred Vessels

21. The sacred vessels and linens, as well as the requisite amount of bread and wine, should be prepared before Mass.

22. Sacred vessels should be held in special honor<sup>11</sup> because of their distinct purpose in divine worship. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* stipulates the following:

- “Sacred vessels should be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or from a metal less precious than gold, they should generally be gilded on the inside.”<sup>12</sup>
- “In the Dioceses of the United States of America, sacred vessels may also be made from other solid materials which in the common estimation in each region are considered precious or noble, for example, ebony or other harder woods, provided that such materials are suitable for sacred use. In this case, preference is always to be given to materials that do not easily break or deteriorate.”<sup>13</sup>
- “As regards chalices and other vessels that are intended to serve as receptacles for the Blood of the Lord, they are to have a bowl of material that does not absorb liquids. The base, on the other hand, may be made of other solid and worthy materials.”<sup>14</sup>

23. In addition, for the celebration of Mass, it is never permissible to use “common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers, as also other vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that break easily. This norm is to be applied even as regards metals and other materials that easily rust or deteriorate.”<sup>15</sup>

24. If the Precious Blood is to be offered to the people, it should either be pre-poured into multiple chalices before Mass begins, or else poured from a flagon into the chalices during the preparation of the gifts. The wine must never be consecrated in flagons: “The pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms.”<sup>16</sup>

25. Another vessel is the communion plate (or “chin paten”), which *Redemptionis Sacramentum* urges be retained, “so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> GIRM, 327.

<sup>12</sup> GIRM, 328.

<sup>13</sup> GIRM, 329.

<sup>14</sup> GIRM, 330.

<sup>15</sup> *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 117.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 93 (Cf. GIRM, 118).

26. With respect to altar linens and the appropriate care for linens and vessels used in the liturgy, please refer to the diocesan policy on “The Proper Care and Cleansing of Altar Linens and Sacred Vessels.”

### **Assigning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

27. The number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion that a parish anticipates needing for a particular Mass should be assigned beforehand and carefully coordinated. As the U.S. Bishops have instructed, “when recourse is had to Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, especially in the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, their number should not be increased beyond what is required for the orderly and reverent distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord.”<sup>18</sup>

28. Assigned extraordinary ministers should check in before Mass, to ensure their help is still needed. All extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should always be prepared to give up their role at a particular Mass, even if they are not informed until the Communion Rite (for example, if an additional priest or deacon arrives to help with Communion, or if Mass attendance is lower than expected). It is important to bear in mind that being an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is not a right or a position of privilege, but a service discharged according to necessity.

29. Whenever possible, someone assigned as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at a Mass should not also occupy another liturgical role (e.g., lector, cantor, server) at that same Mass.

### **Approaching the Altar to Receive Communion and the Sacred Vessels**

30. “If extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion.”<sup>19</sup> Extraordinary ministers should therefore not enter into the sanctuary until the celebrant has received both the Body and Blood of Christ. Extraordinary ministers may, however, come forward during the singing of the *Agnus Dei* and discreetly wait outside the sanctuary steps (and if feasible, remain kneeling with the rest of the congregation) until the celebrant has received Holy Communion.

It is also a commendable recent practice for extraordinary ministers discreetly to apply hand-sanitizer prior to entering the sanctuary, for the sake of hygiene.

31. After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers. If there are a large number of extraordinary ministers and the Precious Blood is to be distributed, the priest may give the Precious Blood to one or two extraordinary ministers, who in turn may offer the Precious Blood to the other extraordinary ministers.

Extraordinary ministers must receive Holy Communion after the priest, and before they distribute Communion to the faithful.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

32. Extraordinary ministers are normally “always to receive from the hands of the priest celebrant the vessel containing the species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful.”<sup>21</sup> However, when a deacon is present, he “may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.”<sup>22</sup> Extraordinary ministers should never take the sacred vessels from the altar themselves, nor may extraordinary ministers hand sacred vessels to one another for purposes of distribution.

### **Distribution of the Sacred Host**

33. The sacred host may be received by the faithful either on the tongue or in the hand.<sup>23</sup> The one distributing Communion says, “The Body of Christ,” to which the communicant responds, “Amen.”

All extraordinary ministers should practice a technique for effectively placing the host on communicants’ tongues, so that the extraordinary minister’s hand does not touch the person’s mouth (for the sake of hygiene) and so that the host also does not fall from a recipient’s mouth.

When placing a host in a communicant’s hands, there is no need for the extraordinary minister to touch the communicant’s hand with his or her own hand. Moreover, when offering a host to the recipient, there is no need to elevate the host to eye level.

34. All would do well to reflect on the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who wrote in the fourth century on the supreme reverence required for receiving (and distributing) the Holy Eucharist: “For tell me, if any one gave you grains of gold, would you not hold them with all carefulness, being on your guard against losing any of them, and suffering loss? Will you not then much more carefully keep watch, that not a crumb fall from you of what is more precious than gold and precious stones?”<sup>24</sup>

### **Distribution of the Precious Blood**

35. If the Precious Blood is to be offered, the one distributing Communion says, “The Blood of Christ,” to which the communicant responds, “Amen.”

“After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the minister turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> GIRM, 162.

<sup>22</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> GIRM, 160.

<sup>24</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses V*, 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 45.

36. Distribution of Holy Communion by intinction (dipping the host into the chalice to receive both species) is not encouraged in this diocese, because of the potential to spill some of the Precious Blood.

### **Signs of Reverence**

37. Prior to receiving either the Body or the Blood of the Lord, communicants should bow their heads before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence.<sup>26</sup>

38. With respect to posture while receiving Holy Communion, the norm for the Dioceses of the United States of America is that “Communion is to be received standing, unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion while kneeling.”<sup>27</sup> Any individual therefore has the right to receive Holy Communion in either manner.

### **Self-Communication**

39. Aside from the priest, no communicants are permitted to self-communicate at Mass: “It is not permitted for the faithful to take the consecrated Bread or the sacred chalice by themselves and, still less, to hand them on from one to another among themselves.”<sup>28</sup> Communion under either form must be received from an ordinary or extraordinary minister. Attempts at self-intinction are also strictly forbidden, and should be prevented insofar as possible.

### **Regarding Blessings during the Distribution of Holy Communion**

40. The question of imparting blessings during the distribution of Holy Communion is an important matter of significant confusion. It must be made clear that while clerics have the faculty to impart blessings upon individuals on behalf of the Church, it is not appropriate for a member of the laity to attempt to bless someone in the same manner.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should therefore not make the sign of the cross nor employ clerical blessing language over individuals who come forward with crossed arms, nor should they attempt to bless small children who have not yet received First Holy Communion. (Deacons are bound by this restriction as well, because Canon Law stipulates that “a deacon can impart only those blessings expressly permitted by law.”<sup>29</sup>)

41. So as not to ignore those who come forward without intending to receive Communion, an extraordinary minister should simply say, “May God bless you,” “May the peace of Christ be with you,” or “Receive Jesus in your heart” (none of which are prayers reserved to clergy). This should be said without any accompanying gesture or action with the hand or with the sacred host.

42. Physically touching someone who is not receiving Holy Communion (e.g., by touching someone’s head or forehead) should not be done, both because of hygiene concerns and also

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<sup>26</sup> GIRM, 160.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, c. 1169 §3.

because of the real possibility that small particles of the Eucharist may be transferred from one's hand.

43. Ultimately, there is no official provision in the Communion Rite for a blessing or recognition of any kind to those who come forward but are not receiving Holy Communion. This is not envisioned as the most appropriate time for blessings, particularly since everyone will already be receiving the final blessing at the conclusion of Mass. As such, those who do not plan to receive Holy Communion should not publicly be encouraged to come forward for a blessing. Individuals should also not feel pressured or obligated to come forward if they will not be receiving the Eucharist.

Of course, parents will often come forward with their little children, who have not yet received their First Holy Communion. These children may be blessed by the priest or recognized with a simple, prayerful greeting by a deacon or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, as mentioned above (no. 41).

Exceptions are also allowed for certain special occasions (e.g., weddings and funerals) in which the assembly may include a large number of non-Catholics or even Catholics who are unable to receive Holy Communion. In these situations, it is permitted to extend an invitation for those not receiving Communion to join in prayer during that time, and even to come forward if they so desire. An announcement for such circumstances is appropriate<sup>30</sup>, and might be worded in this manner:

“During this time, as Catholics who are properly disposed come forward to receive Holy Communion, we invite others who are here present to join us in silent prayer. If you would like to come forward in the Communion line to receive words of blessing, please come forward with your arms crossed over your chest. Though we are not yet united in Eucharistic communion, we continue to pray for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.”

44. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion* provides a more detailed account of who may receive Holy Communion, and also states, “All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.”<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, making a good spiritual communion is the most important thing that should be done by those who cannot receive the Sacrament at this time. Any public announcements regarding those who won't be receiving the Eucharist should focus on encouraging a spiritual communion.

45. Along similar lines, at school Masses, it is not appropriate to have entire classes of children who have not yet received First Holy Communion (e.g., kindergarteners or first graders) come forward in lines for a blessing during the distribution of Holy Communion. While it is laudable to desire strong liturgical participation among these children, having such large groups come forward without the intent to receive Holy Communion is contrary to the purpose of the

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<sup>30</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007), 50.

<sup>31</sup> USCCB, *Guidelines for the Reception of Holy Communion* (1996)

Communion procession, and also places undue emphasis on the fact that they cannot yet receive the Sacrament. These children may instead be taught how to make a spiritual communion, and so interiorly prepare themselves for the day when they shall receive Jesus Christ sacramentally in the Holy Eucharist.

### **Unplanned Problems or Mishaps**

46. Extraordinary ministers will sometimes encounter situations requiring special attentiveness and reverence for the Holy Eucharist.

If an individual comes forward to receive the sacred host, but then walks off without consuming it, the extraordinary minister should either alert a priest or follow and directly ask the person to consume the host or return it. For the Holy Eucharist to be taken outside the church without authorization is a very serious matter. Parishes should discuss a procedure in case something like this should happen. Extraordinary ministers and parish ushers should be vigilant, to ensure communicants do indeed consume the host.

47. Another potential situation is the accidental dropping of the Sacred Body or spilling of the Precious Blood. If an entire consecrated host or a visible piece of it falls on the floor, it should be picked up immediately. Depending on its condition, the host should then be consumed or else set aside to be completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium. Intact consecrated hosts should never be buried in the ground.

Any visible particles of the fallen host should be collected from the floor. If necessary, nobody should step in the area until it is wiped with a wet purificator. Likewise, if any of the Precious Blood is spilled, “the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy.”<sup>32</sup>

### **After the Distribution of Holy Communion**

48. Immediately after the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest consumes any Precious Blood remaining at the altar, and either consumes the remaining sacred hosts (if it is a small amount) or reserves them in the tabernacle himself.<sup>33</sup> Extraordinary ministers may not consume remaining hosts during or after Mass.

49. When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for Communion, “the reverence due to the Precious Blood of the Lord demands that it be fully consumed after Communion is completed and never be poured into the ground or the sacrarium.”<sup>34</sup>

With permission of the diocesan bishop, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their individual chalices of distribution.<sup>35</sup> Such permission is granted in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Extraordinary ministers

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<sup>32</sup> GIRM, 280.

<sup>33</sup> GIRM, 163.

<sup>34</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 55.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

should consume the remaining Precious Blood in the sanctuary near the altar or the credence table, depending upon where the vessels will be purified by an authorized minister.

50. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states that if “a fragment of the host adheres to his fingers, especially after the fraction or after the Communion of the faithful, the Priest should wipe his fingers over the paten or, if necessary, wash them.”<sup>36</sup> This is also a praiseworthy practice for extraordinary ministers: that they should rinse their hands in a basin after the distribution of Holy Communion. The water should then be poured into the sacrarium after Mass.

### **Purification of Vessels**

51. The purification of sacred vessels is a prescribed ritual action of the Mass. It is a cleansing to ensure that all Eucharistic particles are appropriately gathered and reverently consumed. Purification is to be done by the priest, the deacon, or an instituted acolyte either after Communion or immediately after Mass.<sup>37</sup> When done after Mass, the vessels requiring purification are left on a corporal on the credence table, and should also be covered by another corporal or appropriately sized linen until purified.<sup>38</sup>

Purification is separate from the subsequent washing of sacred vessels, which may be done at the sacrarium after Mass by any qualified individual (see the diocesan policy on “The Proper Care and Cleansing of Altar Linens and Sacred Vessels”).

52. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not assist in the purification of vessels at Mass. A previous indult that allowed extraordinary ministers to help purify was officially withdrawn from the United States in 2006.

53. In addition, a previous diocesan allowance—whereby if a large number of vessels had been used at Mass, a sacristan or another individual could pour water from one vessel to another for the priest, deacon, or acolyte to consume—is hereby officially rescinded. Such an arrangement inappropriately divides the act of purification. As the *General Instruction* stipulates, the water must be “consumed by whoever does the purification.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the ritual ablution and consuming together constitute the act of purification, and these may only be conducted by an authorized minister.

54. If the number of vessels requiring purification at each Mass presents a burden to the clergy of the parish, there may need to be a reconsideration of whether to offer the chalice to the people. It is true that the “sign value” of sharing in both Eucharistic species reflects “more fully the sacred realities that the Liturgy signifies.”<sup>40</sup> However, there is no obligation to offer the Precious Blood, and we also know that a communicant is able to “receive all the fruit of Eucharistic grace” from one species alone.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> GIRM, 278.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>40</sup> *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1390.

The decision whether or not to distribute the Precious Blood belongs to the individual pastor. If necessary, catechesis should be done on the doctrine of concomitance, by which the Real Presence of Christ—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—is entirely present under either the Eucharistic species of bread or wine.

### **EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS TO THE SICK**

55. Besides the standard training, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion who wish to bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound must undergo additional training (including a review of this section of the diocesan norms). This training must be approved by the pastor and may be provided by a priest, deacon, or someone else who is well-versed in Catholic pastoral work at a hospital or nursing home. The provisions for assigning extraordinary ministers at hospitals and nursing homes, listed in no. 17 above, also apply.

56. In the case of a person who is temporarily sick, a family member may be specially appointed by the pastor to bring the Eucharist to the sick relative on a temporary basis, provided that all necessary instruction and training has been given for this task.

#### **Procedure**

57. When extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to the sick and homebound are sent from a parish after Mass, arrangements should be made for consecrated hosts to be placed in pyxes and set aside during the Communion Rite. Once the distribution of Communion is complete, the priest may invite the extraordinary ministers to come forward and receive the pyxes, using some brief words to note that the absent members of the parish community thereby share in the parish's Holy Communion.

58. The extraordinary ministers should then remain through the end of Mass to receive the final blessing and be liturgically sent forth with the rest of the assembly. But they then must leave straightaway to the sick or homebound without stopping to socialize with fellow parishioners. Canon Law specifies that “no one is permitted to keep the Eucharist on one's person or to carry it around” unless required by pastoral necessity in accord with the rules established by the diocesan bishop.<sup>42</sup>

The extraordinary minister should maintain a reverent silence while transporting the sacred host—not listening to the radio in the car, and avoiding talking on the phone unless truly necessary. No unnecessary stops should be made along the way, and any extended conversations with the sick or homebound individual should be conducted after Holy Communion has been given.

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<sup>42</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, c. 935.

59. The proper rite to be used by extraordinary ministers in administering Holy Communion to the sick and homebound is Chapter 3 of the ritual book, *Pastoral Care of the Sick*.

60. In the case of someone in danger of death, it is always desirable that a priest be present to administer Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum. However, on the rare occasions that this is not possible, an extraordinary minister to the sick may use Chapter 5 of *Pastoral Care of the Sick* to offer Viaticum (final administration of Holy Communion before death).

61. Since they have just come from Mass, extraordinary ministers should not plan to receive Communion along with any sick individuals whom they are visiting. However, if leftover sacred hosts remain at the conclusion of a visit, and returning them to a nearby tabernacle is not feasible, the extraordinary minister should immediately consume the remaining hosts. It is not permitted to store the Blessed Sacrament in a pyx overnight or for an extended period of time.

Extraordinary ministers to the sick should also ensure that empty pyxes are purified after use. They should be trained to accomplish this by filling the pyx with water, which the extraordinary minister then consumes. Once all Eucharistic particles are consumed, the pyx may then be washed and dried in regular fashion.

62. On rare occasions, and at the discretion of a priest, sick individuals who are unable to receive Communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine. “If not consecrated at a Mass in the presence of the sick person, the Blood of the Lord is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after Communion. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel that is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains after the sick person has received Communion, it should be consumed by the minister, who should also see to it that the vessel is properly purified.”<sup>43</sup> Under no other circumstances may the Precious Blood be reserved.

### **SIMPLE EXPOSITION AND REPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

63. Whenever exposition of the Holy Eucharist is scheduled to occur, a priest or deacon (as ordinary ministers of exposition) should normally expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament.

However, in the absence of a priest or deacon, an instituted acolyte or an officially commissioned extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may publicly expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration by the faithful.<sup>44</sup>

64. The pastor or the priest entrusted with overseeing exposition should select and train individual extraordinary ministers to be prepared for such potential situations. The extraordinary minister would only be able to perform simple (as opposed to solemn) exposition and reposition. While displaying the proper reverence before the Holy Eucharist, he or she would open the tabernacle and place the luna with the host into the monstrance. At the end of the period of

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<sup>43</sup> USCCB, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds* (1992), 54.

<sup>44</sup> *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, 26.

adoration, the luna would be removed and the Blessed Sacrament placed back into the tabernacle.

65. An extraordinary minister may not give Benediction, nor may he or she incense the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>45</sup>

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66. Please contact the diocesan Office of Worship if clarifications are required for any particular circumstances regarding extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. (Cf. *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, 91.)