

SPECIAL AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

1. In every celebration of the Eucharist there should always be a sufficient number of ministers for the distribution of Communion. If ordained ministers are present they are to assist as Ministers of Communion.
2. When ordinary ministers are not sufficient the special or extraordinary ministers properly appointed beforehand should assist in giving Communion.
3. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion are to be present for and participate in the entire celebration of the Mass and not only for the Rite of Holy Communion.
4. Ministers shall always show the greatest reverence for the Eucharistic species of bread and wine.

Requirements for Special or Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

1. Catholic men and women who are 18 years or older and fully initiated in the Church are eligible for this ministry. They should participate regularly in the Sunday Eucharist and live the Gospel message in their communal and individual lives.
2. Each parish is to submit the names of the candidates to the bishop of the Diocese for his approval.
3. Ministers of Communion are to be commissioned for two years. The commissioning is renewable as needed for the ministry. The Rite of Commissioning is preferably celebrated during a Sunday Mass. A copy of the commissioning is available from the Office of Liturgical Education.
4. All newly-approved Extraordinary Ministers must be properly trained for the ministry.
5. At least once a year, each community should arrange a program of faith renewal, prayer and commitment for already-commissioned ministers. These meetings are to include discussions of problems that have arisen in the course of their ministry. In the case of smaller parishes a joint program might be planned.
6. All ministers of communion should be encouraged to participate in ongoing renewal and religious education programs such as New Horizons and the Diocesan Ministry Conference.
7. No special robes are necessary; however, modest, dignified clothing is to be worn.

Preparations of the Bread and Wine

1. The amounts of bread and wine sufficient for each Eucharistic liturgy are to be made ready before the celebration of each Mass. It is desirable that the faithful receive the Eucharistic bread consecrated at the same Mass. (The reservation of the Eucharist is not maintained for

the purpose of storing large quantities of consecrated hosts for use at subsequent Masses; rather, it is reserved for the administration of viaticum to the dying; for giving Communion, especially to the sick, outside of Mass; and for Eucharistic adoration. (BCL Newsletter, May, 1989)

- a. The wine should be placed in flagons or pitchers of careful design and quality. The vessels should be sturdy, made of materials which are solid and non absorbent. Preference is always given to materials that do not break easily or become unusable.
 - b. The bread should be placed on one large paten or plate, or in a ciborium in the style of a bowl appropriate as a container of bread. Simple baskets or other receptacles meant for ordinary use outside the sacred celebration are not to be used.
 - c. The sacred vessels are to be of good quality and have artistic merit. Before being used, vessels for the celebration must be blessed by the bishop or priest according to the Rite of Blessing of a Chalice and Paten. (Book of Blessing, Chapter 40, pg. 507)
2. At the Presentation of Gifts, the appropriate minister prepares the bread and wine on the altar. If the number of communicants is small, the chalice should contain an adequate amount of wine for the Communion of all. If the number is large, one or more flagons of wine for the Communion are placed on the altar in addition to the chalice.

Procedures During the Mass

1. The Special Ministers of Communion are normally seated with the assembly during the Mass.
2. At the Sign of Peace they come to the altar and stand around it. If necessary, they assist in the breaking of the bread and preparing the cups. Either, the acolytes, or special ministers bring as many chalices and purificators to the altar as are needed. If necessary, a minister pours the consecrated wine from the pitcher or flagon into the chalices. The priest and deacon receive Communion first. The Communion under both forms is given to the ministers. A ciborium or communion cup with a purificator is handed to each minister who then goes to a designated station for the administration of Communion to the assembly.
 - a. Generally there are two ministers of the cup for each minister of the Eucharistic bread.
3. The host is administered with the words "The Body of Christ" to which the communicant responds "Amen." The host is placed on the tongue or in the hand as indicated by the communicant.

- a. The communicant who has received the Eucharist in the hand is to consume it before returning to his/her place, moving aside yet remaining facing the altar in order to allow the person following to approach the minister. (cf. "Newsletter" Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, June, 1985)
4. The cup is administered with the words "The Blood of Christ" to which the communicant responds "Amen." It shall always be clear that it is the option of the communicant and not of the minister whether the communicant shall receive the consecrated wine. The communicant should hold the chalice firmly in both hands and drink from it. However, when and where it is necessary, the minister should be ready to assist.
5. After each person has received the Blood of Christ, the minister wipes both sides of the rim with the purificator and turns the cup slightly before the next communicant receives.
6. The communicants are not permitted to take their own host from the plate nor is the chalice to be kept on the altar or other place to be picked up by the communicant. Both the host and the cup are always ministered to the recipient.
7. Should there be any mishap; for example, if consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice, the area should be covered with a cloth and later washed and the water poured into the sacrarium or another designated place where the people do not walk. If the host falls, the minister should pick it up and consume it immediately or after the distribution is over.
8. Normally the ministers consume the remainder of the consecrated wine at the side table after communion. If needed, they may seek the help of others. The vessels may be purified after the Mass. Consecrated wine may never be poured on the ground or into the sacrarium.
9. Because of its ancient sign value, Communion from the cup or chalice is always to be preferred to any other form of ministering the precious blood. (Directory, #44)
10. Special care is to be given when children receive from the cup. Parents should be instructed that Communion under both kinds is an ancient tradition for children old enough to drink from a cup. However, children should have some familiarity with drinking (tasting) wine at home before they are offered the chalice. (Directory, #49)
11. Normally after distribution of Communion the ministers of Communion place the empty vessels on the side table. Vessels are to be purified after Mass. This allows for a smoother and quicker transition to the Prayer after Communion as well as allows for a more sanitary cleansing of the cups.
12. Washing of hands immediately prior to the administration of Communion is not required. However, good hygiene and cleanliness of the hands is to be carefully attended. The ministers may, after distributing Communion, wash their fingers in a bowl of water provided for this purpose.
13. Though legally allowed, Communion by intinction is not encouraged. It eliminates the communicants' legitimate option to receive Communion in the hand. It also denies the right of the faithful to receive Communion under the form of bread only.

14. If for some reason a community chooses to receive Communion by intinction, the following should be remembered. Care is to be taken that the Eucharistic bread is not too thin or small. The communicant may never dip the Eucharistic bread into the chalice. The formula to be used by the minister is "The Body and Blood of Christ," to which the person responds "Amen." The dipped host is placed on the tongue.
15. Some people are concerned about contagious or communicable diseases. Every effort for hygiene and cleanliness is to be attended to avoid transmission of any illness. Persons with communicable illnesses should be advised to refrain from drinking from the chalice. (cf. Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, "Newsletter", December, 1985)

Special Minister of Communion to the Sick

When

Special ministers to the sick may take the Eucharist to the homebound or hospitalized at any suitable time. However, there is special significance for carrying the Eucharist directly from Mass to the communicant.

How Often

Pastors should see that the sick or aged even though not seriously ill or in danger of death, are given every opportunity to receive the Eucharist frequently, even daily, especially during the Easter season. They may receive communion at any hour. This ministry may be delegated to a special or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist.

Who May Receive

Those who care for the sick may receive communion with them, in accord with the usual norms. The minister may consume any hosts that remain.

How

1. The Eucharistic bread, when brought to the sick, should be carried in a pyx or small closed container
2. Those who care for the sick in a home setting should prepare a table covered with a cloth upon which the Blessed Sacrament will be placed. Lighted candles and, where customary, a vessel of holy water should be prepared. A glass of drinking water is recommended if the infirmed person needs help to swallow.
3. Simple instructions about what to prepare in the home for the sick to receive Communion are to be given to families with sick or home bound persons. These instructions can greatly help set an appropriate environment for reverence and hospitality.

4. The Communion Ministers to the Sick are not to see themselves as counselors or social workers, trying to solve family problems or to become errand persons. Their ministry is to "represent Christ and manifest faith and charity on behalf of the whole community." The minister serves as an intimate and manifold link between the community at the Eucharistic celebration and the person who is sick. Corporal works of mercy and charity to meet physical and the needs of the sick ought to be cared for at another visit so that the significance of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in union with the Christian community can be fully celebrated.
5. The minister should wear ordinary dignified street clothing.

Ritual Action

1. The minister is to be sensitive to the circumstances of the communicant in determining the length and selections of the readings, reflections and prayers.
2. Both the Rite of Communion in Ordinary Circumstances and Communion in a Hospital or Institute are given in the "Pastoral Care of the Sick," (1983).
3. Bringing a parish bulletin and sharing some reflections from the Sunday parish celebration help build and maintain a loving sense of care and community.

APPENDIX

Communion under both kinds is not usually permitted in the following cases:

1. At Masses celebrated in the open with a great number of communicants; e.g., in a stadium, on top of Mt. Cristo Rey, large pilgrimages.
2. At other Masses where the number of communicants is so great as to make it difficult for communion under both kinds to be given in an orderly and reverent way; e.g., Masses celebrated in a civic square or building that would involve the carrying of the sacred species up and down a number of steps.
3. When circumstances do not permit the assurance that due reverence can be maintained towards the consecrated wine both during and after the celebration. (cf. Inaestimabile).