



EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Guidelines for the Distribution of Holy Communion during Mass

THE EUCHARIST

In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer and work are united with those of Christ. (CCC #1368)

THE MYSTERY

If you are the body of Christ and His members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord's table, you receive your mystery. You reply "Amen" to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear "The Body of Christ", and you reply "Amen". Be a member of the Body of Christ so that your Amen may be true.

(St Augustine, Sermon 272)

THE INSTRUCTION

The Priest may be assisted in the distribution of Communion by other Priests who happen to be present. If such Priests are not present and there is a large number of communicants, the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been duly deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the Priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion. (GIRM #162)

- Understand the ministry is one of service and hospitality. Ministers display respect for people, modelling care above efficiency.
- Ministers should be suitably prepared and dress appropriately, as befits the dignity of the ministry about to be engaged in.
- Take your place with the worshipping community and participate fully, actively and consciously in the celebration.
- Ministers come forward as the Priest receives Holy Communion. Receive Holy Communion with faith and reverence and move reverently to your stations when all ministers are ready.
- When ministering the Bread of Life, hold up the host as the communicant comes before you, address them with the words "The Body of Christ" and allow them to reply ".Amen". This is a dialogue of faith.
- Place the host in the person's hand or on their tongue, remembering that the mode of reception is the choice of the communicant. If on the tongue, place the host without allowing your fingers to touch the tongue.
- If the host is dropped, pick it up and consume it yourself or place it in your hand under the vessel containing hosts and consume later. Give the communicant a fresh host.

- When ministering the Precious Blood, hold the chalice up as the communicant comes before you and address them with the words "The Blood of Christ" and allow them to reply "Amen". Carefully hand the chalice over to them.
"Communicants raise the chalice to their mouths themselves ... the minister wipes the rim of the chalice with the purifier" GIRM #286
- Holy Communion is always received from a minister, never taken for themselves by communicants. Therefore a communicant is not permitted to dip the host into the chalice and to serve themselves by *Intinction*. All should be encouraged to consume the host and receive from the chalice. GIRM #286-287
- Open out the purifier and wipe both sides of the chalice rim, then turn the chalice to present the next communicant with a fresh surface.
- Be ready to render additional assistance to children, the elderly and the disabled if required.
- Remaining Precious Blood is consumed in a reverent manner, not in middle of the church, but discreetly at the altar. GIRM #163/284
- If Precious Blood is spilt, immediately wipe up as much as possible with the purifier (or if necessary a towel) and ensure that the affected area is avoided. Leave the full cleaning to be done after Mass has concluded.
- A person may come forward in the Communion procession with arms folded to indicate their desire for spiritual rather than sacramental Communion. While not recognised as part of the Communion Rite this has become common practice. Simply extend your hand towards the person and say something like ...*May God Bless You and Keep you.*
- The correct title for the role of lay ministers who help distribute Communion is *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*. The word extraordinary (meaning "outside the ordinary") is used because the ordinary ministers of Communion are bishops, priests and deacons. Lay people are not ministers of the Eucharist or Eucharistic ministers. If there are sufficient ordinary ministers they should be used.
- Ensure that your hands are clean before Mass begins. The finger bowl used by the priest during the preparation of the gifts is part of a *ritual* washing of hands symbolising an internal cleansing. Extraordinary ministers do not need to replicate this ritual. ...*"the Priest washes his hands at the side of the altar, a rite in which the desire for interior purification finds expression"* GIRM #76

(for guidelines on *Bringing Communion to the Sick* see Liturgical Resources at www.twb.catholic.org.au)

GIRM- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*
 CCC – *Catechism of the Catholic Church*