

OFFICE OF WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE
ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI
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EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION
TRAINING GUIDE

Introduction

Liturgy and Mass:

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy = CSL

CSL 7. To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross" [20], but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes [21]. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20) .

Christ indeed always associates the Church with Himself in this great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified. The Church is His beloved Bride who calls to her Lord, and through Him offers worship to the Eternal Father.

Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.

The Eucharistic Celebrations

Catechism of the Catholic Church = CCC

CCC 1323. At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood

CCC 1324. The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’ The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.”

Importance of active participation:

CSL 47. At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity [36], a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us [37].

CSL. 48. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator [38], they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

Structure of the Mass: Word and Table

CCC 1345. As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.

When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers* for ourselves . . .and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.

When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.

Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy

Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'

When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.¹⁶⁹

CCC 1346. The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a fundamental structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity:

- the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions;
- the liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

The liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist together form "one single act of worship";¹⁷⁰ The Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.¹⁷¹

CCC 1347. Is this not the same movement as the Paschal meal of the risen Jesus with his disciples? Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them; sitting with them at table "he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them."¹⁷²

The movement of the celebration

CCC 1348. All gather together. Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis) presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his

own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose "Amen" manifests their participation.

CCC 1349. The Liturgy of the Word includes "the writings of the prophets," that is, the Old Testament, and "the memoirs of the apostles" (their letters and the Gospels). After the homily, which is an exhortation to accept this Word as what it truly is, the Word of God,¹⁷³ and to put it into practice, come the intercessions for all men, according to the Apostle's words: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in high positions."¹⁷⁴

CCC 1350. The presentation of the offerings (the Offertory). Then, sometimes in procession, the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper - "taking the bread and a cup." "The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving."¹⁷⁵ The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices.

CCC 1351. From the very beginning Christians have brought, along with the bread and wine for the Eucharist, gifts to share with those in need. This custom of the collection, ever appropriate, is inspired by the example of Christ who became poor to make us rich:¹⁷⁶

Those who are well off, and who are also willing, give as each chooses. What is gathered is given to him who presides to assist orphans and widows, those whom illness or any other cause has deprived of resources, prisoners, immigrants and, in a word, all who are in need.¹⁷⁷

CCC 1352. The anaphora: with the Eucharistic Prayer - the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration - we come to the heart and summit of the celebration:

In the preface, the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, and sanctification. the whole community thus joins in the

unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and all the saints, sing to the thrice-holy God.

CCC 1353. In the epiclesis, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing¹⁷⁸) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the epiclesis after the anamnesis).

In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.

CCC 1354. In the anamnesis that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him.

In the intercessions, the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.

CCC 1355. In the communion, preceded by the Lord's prayer and the breaking of the bread, the faithful receive "the bread of heaven" and "the cup of salvation," the body and blood of Christ who offered himself "for the life of the world":¹⁷⁹

Because this bread and wine have been made Eucharist ("eucharisted," according to an ancient expression), "we call this food Eucharist, and no one may take part in it unless he believes that what we teach is true, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth, and lives in keeping with what Christ taught."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ St. Justin, *Apol.* 1, 65-67: PG 6, 428-429; the text before the asterisk (*) is from chap. 67.

Organization of the Liturgical Calendar (cycle of readings and prayers)

CSL 102. Holy Mother Church is conscious that she must celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse by devoutly recalling it on certain days throughout the course of the year. Every week, on the day which she has called the Lord's day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection, which she also celebrates once in the year, together with His blessed passion, in the most solemn festival of Easter.

Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord.

Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present for all time, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold upon them and become filled with saving grace.

CSL 103. In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, holy Church honors with especial love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption, and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, that which she herself desires and hopes wholly to be.

CSL 104. The Church has also included in the annual cycle days devoted to the memory of the martyrs and the other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold grace of God, and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God's perfect praise in heaven and offer prayers for us. By celebrating the passage of these saints from earth to heaven the Church proclaims the paschal mystery achieved in the saints who have suffered and been glorified with Christ; she proposes them to the faithful as examples drawing all to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she pleads for God's favors.

CSL 105. Finally, in the various seasons of the year and according to her traditional discipline, the Church completes the formation of the faithful by means of pious practices for soul and body, by instruction, prayer, and works of penance and of mercy

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops = USCCB

General Instruction of the Roman Missal = GIRM

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America = NDRHC

General Principles (from USCCB)

In every celebration of the Eucharist, there should be a sufficient number of ministers of Holy Communion so that it may be distributed in a reverent and orderly manner. Bishops, priests and deacons distribute Holy Communion in virtue of their office as ordinary ministers of the Body and Blood of the Lord. (1) When the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the bishop, priest, or deacon requires it, the celebrant may be assisted by other bishops, priests, or deacons. If such ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not present, "the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, i.e., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may also depute suitable faithful for this single occasion (GIRM 162)."

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfill their role with knowledge and reverence. In all matters they should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop (Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America, NDRHC, no. 28). 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. In all matters such Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop (GIRM).

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. Should there be any mishap--as when, for example, the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice--then the affected "area . . . should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium [GIRM, 280]." (NDRHC, 29).

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- As the Agnus Dei or Lamb of God is begun, the Bishop or priest alone, or with the assistance of the deacon, and if necessary of concelebrating priests, breaks the eucharistic bread. Other empty ciboria or patens are then brought to the altar if this is necessary. The deacon or priest places the consecrated bread in several ciboria or patens, if necessary, as required for the distribution of Holy Communion. If it is not possible to accomplish this distribution in a reasonable time, the celebrant may call upon the assistance of other deacons or concelebrating priests.

- If extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion. After the priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.

- All receive Holy Communion in the manner described by the General Instruction to the Roman Missal, whether priest concelebrants (cf. GIRM, nos. 159, 242, 243, 246), deacons (cf. GIRM, nos. 182, 244, 246), or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (cf. GIRM, no. 284). Neither deacons nor lay ministers may ever receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest. The practice of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion waiting to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution of Holy Communion is not in accord with liturgical law. (NDRHC, 39; GIRM, 160).
- After all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have received the Eucharist, the bishop or priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The deacon may assist the priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. (NDRHC, 40).
- The **proper and only permissible form** for distributing Holy Communion is to offer the consecrated bread by saying, "**The Body of Christ**" and to offer the consecrated wine by saying, "**The Blood of Christ.**" No other words or names should be added; and the formula should not be edited in any way. (Cf. GIRM, 161; 284-287).
- If the Eucharistic bread or some particle of it falls, it should be picked up reverently by the minister. The consecrated bread may be consumed or completely dissolved in water before being poured down the sacrarium.
- Should there be any mishap, for example, if the consecrated wine is spilled from the chalice, the area should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.
- In those instances when there remains more consecrated wine than was necessary, if needs dictate, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their cup of distribution with the permission of the diocesan bishop. **The sacred vessels are to be purified by the priest, the deacon or an instituted acolyte.** The amount of wine to be consecrated should be carefully measured before the celebration so that none remains afterward. It is strictly forbidden to pour the Precious Blood into the ground or into the sacrarium. (NDRHC, 51-55).
- Similarly, "consecrated hosts are to be reserved in a ciborium or vessel in sufficient quantity for the needs of the faithful; they are to be frequently renewed and the old hosts properly consumed" (Code of Canon Law, no. 939). Burying hosts or consecrated Eucharistic bread is strictly forbidden.

Notes: 1. Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America [NDRHC] (August, 2002), no. 26 and cf. GIRM no. 162 and NRHC, no. 28

Specific Guidelines

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed by the Archbishop on the recommendation of the pastor for a period of three years to serve only within that particular parish or within a specific institution, hospital, school, etc. To bring communion to someone outside of that parish or institution, the permission of the pastor or chaplain of the place must be received. At the end of three years the pastor may obtain a renewal; however, even within that period the pastor may choose to withdraw his permission for the particular Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to distribute the Eucharist, if changing circumstances should warrant it.

Candidates may be either men or women and must be mature Christian persons of excellent character, who take their faith seriously and live a genuine Christian life. A letter of recommendation by the pastor should be submitted to the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life listing the names of the nominees. Before they are commissioned, all candidates will be required to participate in training sessions conducted by the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life.

To preserve the distinction of roles within the liturgy, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not perform any other role in the same liturgy, e.g. lector, cantor, or usher.

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion should not wear the stole of a priest or deacon, but rather the Archdiocesan medallion. The wearing of an alb or other distinctive garb is at the discretion of the local pastor. Their manner of clothes should evidence respect for the Eucharist and for the dignity of their role. The pastor in each parish will make specific decisions regarding clothing, e.g. coat and tie, some kind of robe, etc. At all times the sensibilities of the congregation should be respected.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion do not assist the priest at the altar during Mass. It is the pastor's decision whether the minister will take part in the entrance procession or recession and whether the minister will sit in the sanctuary or in the pews, etc.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, when distributing Communion to the sick outside of the Mass, should use the rite prescribed by the Church for the Pastoral care of the Sick. A record of their visits to the sick should be kept in the parish or institution. They must also have completed the Safe Environment/Virtus Program.

The custody of the tabernacle key remains the responsibility of the parish priest. The minister must obtain the key from him and see that it is returned after the Blessed Sacrament has been obtained. When caring for the sick, clothing appropriate to the occasion is to be worn with the proper identification (Archdiocesan medallion and/or name badge) as required. After all hosts have been distributed, the minister should purify the vessel (pix). Any hosts left over should be consumed by the minister or the sick person. The minister cannot keep or reserve the Holy Eucharist at home or in any other place.

Communion brought to the sick after Sunday Mass can provide the needed spiritual nourishment and strength for those unable to participate. As they leave the Sunday Mass, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion would take with them the Eucharist which was consecrated at that Mass and bring it directly to the sick or aged who so request it. This would form a spiritual link between the community of Sunday worshippers and those unable to participate fully in the Sunday liturgy.

PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS:

During the week read through the Sunday Mass readings (www.usccb.org)

Be in the sacristy of your church fifteen minutes before Mass.

Be an active participant in the Mass – pray the prayers, sing the songs, welcome those around you.

Take advantage of ongoing opportunities to feed your faith: scriptures, lectures, retreats, service, daily Mass.

Appropriate dress. Be aware that you are in a ministry that is very public and your clothing can be a distraction. In the Archdiocese of Miami the Archdiocesan medallion is worn over the appropriate clothes. The wearing of an alb or other distinctive garb is at the discretion of the local pastor.

REMEMBER:

Wash your hands before Mass

Come forward after the Sign of Peace

You are not just distributors but ministers

Your role is never to judge. If you have concerns share them with the priest after Mass.

The only words to be used are: “the Body of Christ’ and “the Blood of Christ.”

If someone approaches you with their arms crossed, trace the sign of the cross on their forehead without saying anything.