



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

GUIDELINES and PROTOCOLS
for
LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
June 22, 2014
Catholic Diocese of Saginaw
Office of Liturgy

The Office of Liturgy for the Diocese of Saginaw has prepared this set of guidelines and protocols to be used in conjunction with those outlined in the **General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition** and the USCCB's **Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord**.

This diocesan document attempts to give clearer direction to those areas that the *GIRM* and *Co-workers in the Vineyard* leaves open to particular diocesan recommendations and directives.

All those involved in lay liturgical ministry in the Diocese of Saginaw should be familiar with these guidelines and protocols and ensure that their intent is incorporated into lay liturgical ministry.

Guidelines and Protocols for Liturgical Ministers

Text 2014, Diocese of Saginaw, Office of Liturgy. Latest Revision Date: March 11, 2014.

These guidelines are adapted and based upon Guidelines for Liturgical Ministers from the Diocese of Lansing, Office of Worship, 300 W. Ottawa St., Lansing, MI 48933-1577, (517) 342-2480. Guidelines originally approved by Bishop Kenneth J. Povish, Bishop of Lansing, July 1994. Used with permission and appreciation of Bishop Earl A. Boyea and Rita Thiron (January 2013).

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Guidelines for EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION at Mass

PROPER MINISTRY NAME: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Although shortened to Ministers of Holy Communion or Eucharistic Ministers, the proper name for this ministry is Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. The word “extraordinary” is used as opposed to the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion who are the ordained priests and deacons.

When describing the different roles for these ministers, it is proper to refer to those ministers either as Ministers of Christ’s Body or Ministers of Christ’s Precious Blood, and not Bread Ministers or Cup Ministers.

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the Middle Ages (ending circa 1500) until the Second Vatican Council (circa 1963), distribution of Holy Communion was limited to priests and bishops. In the early 1900s, Pope Pius X encouraged the faithful to receive Holy Communion more frequently. The Second Vatican Council responded to the resulting increase in reception of Holy Communion by opening up the ministry of distribution of the Eucharist to lay people.

Now, bishops, priests and deacons are known as the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion because they are the primary ministers of Holy Communion. When they are not present or when the size of the congregation or the incapacity of the Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion requires it, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be called upon to help with distribution. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are acolytes (referring to someone in the seminary) or lay persons who have been deputed by the bishop for the purpose of assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion.¹⁵

The local bishop is responsible for assuring that the appointment of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is accomplished in accord with the universal law of the Church.¹⁶

ELIGIBILITY

Those appointed to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be at least 16 years of age and mature enough to consider the importance of this ministry. They must be fully initiated in the Catholic faith (having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion) and a registered member of the parish in which they serve. They must have been practicing Catholics for at least a year. They must be in good standing with the Catholic Church.

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion during the celebration of the Eucharist, or they may also be appointed to take Holy Communion to the sick or homebound members of the parish. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will serve as Ministers of Christ’s Body or Ministers of Christ’s Precious Blood.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to serve only in the parish in which they have been trained and commissioned.

TRAINING and FORMATION

The parish community which presents a person to be commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion has an obligation to enroll that person into a Diocesan program for initial training and to subsequently provide ongoing support and formation.

¹⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, GIRM #162.

¹⁶ Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America, NDRHC #28.

Initial training must include an understanding of the role of distributing Holy Communion as a ministry within the Church. Acceptance of a call to this ministry should reflect a corresponding commitment to performing the ministry with reverence. Initial training should include an understanding of the Eucharist as the summit and source of our faith.

Practical information on how Holy Communion is distributed in the parish and a timely schedule should be provided by the parish. The parish will also provide periodic formation activities that strengthen the person's faith as well as their understanding of their ministry.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be willing to enter initial and ongoing formation and be responsible for their scheduled duties. They may need to provide a substitute in their absence, but they may not ask someone who is already scheduled for another liturgical ministry the same day.

COMMISSIONING

Upon the completion of formation and discernment for this ministry, the person is appointed as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, by the bishop. They are commissioned for a period of three years at a public ceremony in the midst of the Sunday assembly whom they serve. They may be re-appointed after a suitable period of discernment and opportunity for further formation and re-commissioned at another public ceremony in the midst of the Sunday assembly whom they serve.

SPECIFIC NORMS

1. The parish will provide a schedule of assigned times for each minister to serve. It is the Extraordinary Minister's responsibility to let the parish know if there are specific dates when he/she is not available or if he/she can only serve at a specific Mass.
2. Once an Extraordinary Minister is scheduled, he/she is responsible for honoring his/her commitment to the ministry by either serving at the appointed time or by finding a replacement if they are unable to do so.
3. When the Lamb of God begins, all assigned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to come from their places in the congregation, without any undue distractions. They are to take their places near the altar, as prescribed by the GIRM¹⁷ and designated by the practice of the parish.
4. The priest celebrant will ensure that Holy Communion is distributed to the Extraordinary Ministers, first Christ's Body and then Christ's Precious Blood. Then the celebrant will give each minister either a ciborium [for Ministers of Christ's Body] or a cup [for Ministers of Christ's Precious Blood]. Then all ministers proceed to their assigned stations.
5. For Ministers of Christ's Body, the focus of Holy Communion is that you, the Body of Christ, are distributing Holy Communion, the Body of Christ, to the communicant, the Body of Christ. Therefore, the guidelines provided by the USCCB require that when you distribute, you are to say "The Body of Christ". Other words or names must not be added to the formula. Give the person an opportunity to bow and say "Amen" before placing the Body of Christ in their hands [or on their tongue if they prefer to receive that way].
6. If the Body of Christ or a particle of it should fall on the ground, the Minister of Christ's Body should pick it up reverently. It may be consumed, or completely dissolved in water and poured down the sacarium.
7. For Ministers of Christ's Precious Blood, the focus of Holy Communion is that you are distributing the Blood of Christ. Therefore, the guidelines provided by the USCCB require that when you distribute, you are to say "The Blood of Christ." Other words or names must not be added. Give the person an opportunity to bow and say "Amen" before giving the cup to them. When the cup is returned to you, wipe the rim with the purificator and turn the cup at least one quarter turn. Use the entire purificator by unfolding it and changing the portion used for wiping the cup during distribution.

¹⁷ GIRM #162

8. If Christ's Precious Blood is spilled from the cup, place a purificator over the spot, so that no one walks on it. As soon as possible, the area should be washed with water, soaked up with purificators and the water poured into the sacrarium.
9. When all of the faithful have received Holy Communion, Ministers of Christ's Body will take any remaining Consecrated Hosts to the altar. The priest celebrant will place the remaining Body of Christ in the ciborium and take the ciborium to the tabernacle. All sacred vessels used for the distribution of Holy Communion will be taken to a designated place for purification and cleansing.
10. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be asked to assist with consuming any remaining Christ's Precious Blood before the vessels are purified. Christ's Precious Blood is never to be poured out, either down a drain, into the ground, nor even into the sacrarium.

ATTIRE and DECORUM

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should exhibit a love for the Eucharist as evidenced by their demeanor and attire. An Extraordinary Minister is expected to show reverence for the Eucharist at all times. This should be reflected in his/her dress. It should be appropriate for the occasion, not distracting from his/her role or calling attention to him/herself and away from the focus of the Holy Eucharist.

Reverence for the Eucharist also dictates that the Extraordinary Minister should be early for Mass and show respect to the person to whom he/she is giving Holy Communion. The Extraordinary Minister is to handle the sacred vessels with reverence and care both during distribution and afterwards.

RESOURCES

1. Kwatera, Michael. *The Ministry of Communion*. The Liturgical Press, 2004.
2. Riley, Kenneth A. and Paul Turner. *The Liturgical Ministry Series: Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*. Liturgy Training Publications, 2007.
3. Tufano, Victoria M. *Guide for Ministers of Communion*. Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

GIRM REFERENCES

The following paragraphs of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition* provide further information with respect to this ministry ... GIRM #83, 160, 162, 280, 284 and 286-287.