

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



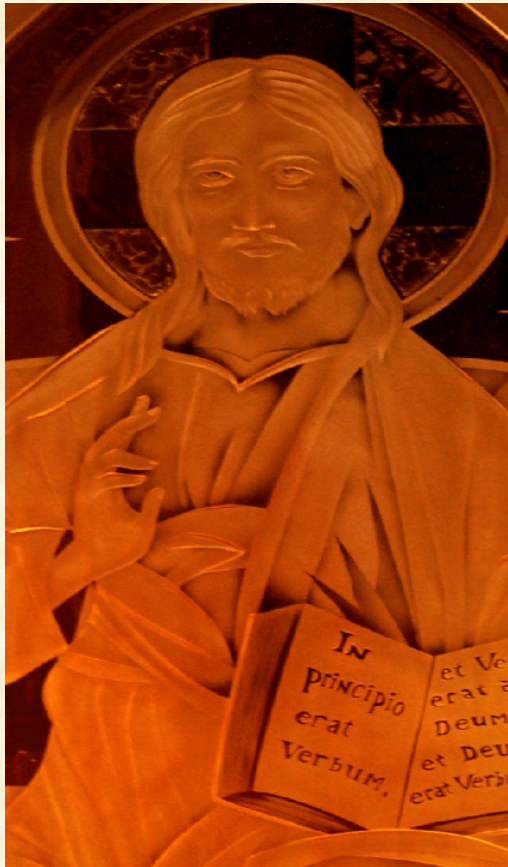
Training

The Missale Romanum

- 1970 *editio typica latina*
- 1975 *editio typica altera*
- 2000 *editio typica tertia*



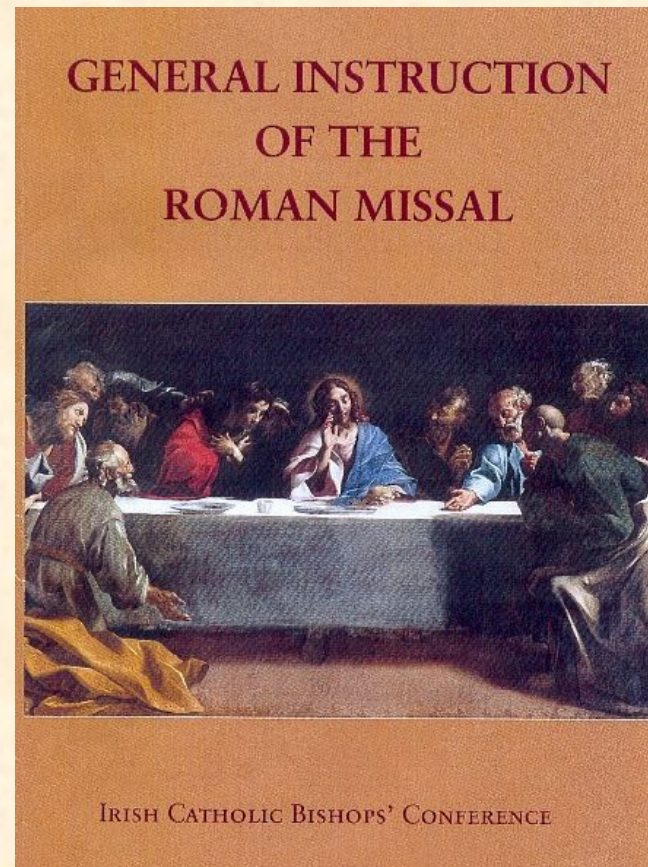
Selected Church Documents



- ❧ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) - 2003*
- ❧ *Redemptionis Sacramentum - 2004*
- ❧ *Instruction: On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest (Ecclesia de mysterio) – 1997*
- ❧ *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds (NDRHC) - 2002*

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)

- ✚ Published by the Vatican in 2003
- ✚ National Adaptations Approved by Rome
- ✚ Recommended reading



GIRM - General principles

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. (Cf. GIRM 108)

GIRM - General principles

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)

Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

✚ By reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the bishop, the priest and the deacon.

(Sacramentum Redemptionis 154)

What Is an Extraordinary Minister?

From the Training Manual of the Archdiocese of Atlanta (TMA)

[A]n extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is a lay person or religious who has been deputed ... for a period of time to assist the priest and deacon in distributing Holy Communion to the faithful on those occasions where a shortage of ordained clergy makes it impossible for them to distribute Holy Communion to all the faithful in a reasonable way ... (TMA , p. 6)

...Serving as an EMHC is thus a privilege to which the Church invites certain individuals under given circumstances, and not a right. The distribution of Holy Communion should not be seen as a more complete exercise of the priesthood that belongs to all believers in virtue of their baptism ... Rather, it is to be looked at as the exercise of a function that is proper to the ordained priesthood, but which, of necessity, must be carried out by others. This highlights the extraordinary nature of this service, which, rather than being part of the structure of the Church, is instead tied to particular needs arising from the limited number of clergy ... (Ibid.)

...Pope John Paul II points this out in his instruction *Domenicae Cena* (2001): “To touch the sacred species and to distribute them with their own hands is a privilege of the ordained, one which indicates an active participation in the ministry of the Eucharist. It is obvious that the Church can grant this faculty to those who are neither priests nor deacons, as is the case with acolytes in the exercise of their ministry, especially if they are destined for future ordination, or with other lay people who are chosen for this to meet a just need, but always after an adequate preparation” (#11). (Ibid.)

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds

General Principles

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should receive sufficient spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to fulfil their role with knowledge and reverence. (*NDRHC*, 28)

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds

General Principles

All ministers of Holy Communion should show the greatest reverence for the Most Holy Eucharist by their demeanour, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread or wine. *(NDRHC, 29)*

Preparing for Holy Communion

If extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they approach the altar at the *Agnus Dei*. After the priest has concluded his own Communion, they enter the sanctuary and the priest distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the deacon. He then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.

Notes on the Reception of Holy Communion

- ✚ Neither deacons nor lay ministers may receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating priest. (GIRM 160; *Eccl. de myst.*, 8, 2)
- ✚ 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. (GIRM, 160)

Preparing for Holy Communion

After all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion have received the Eucharist, the priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the deacon 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.

Distributing Holy Communion

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. (GIRM, 161; 284-287)

Notes on the Distribution of Holy Communion

- ☞ Those who receive Holy Communion may receive either in the hand or on the tongue, and the decision is always that of the individual receiving, not of the person distributing Communion.
- ☞ The Bishops of the United States recommend that persons receiving Communion receive standing.

Notes on the Distribution of Holy Communion, cont.

- ☞ It should also be noted that it is never permissible for a person to “intinct” (dip) the host he or she has received into the chalice. If, for some reason, the communicant is not able or willing to drink from the cup then that person should receive only under the form of bread.
- ☞ If a communicant presents you with a pyx during the communion procession, simply advise them to see the priest after Mass.

Redemptionis Sacramentum and Liturgical Abuse

It is the right of all Christ's faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes. (12)

Regulation of the Sacred Liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church ... no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.

Sacrosanctam Concilium 22

Redemptionis Sacramentum



On certain matters
to be observed or to be avoided
regarding the Most Holy Eucharist

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
AND DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

What is “liturgical abuse”?

☞ Something that would “contribute to the obscuring of the Catholic faith and doctrine concerning this wonderful sacrament.”

Redemptionis Sacramentum 6

Examples:

- Knowingly distributing Communion to those not of the Catholic faith
- Refusing to distribute Communion on the tongue or in the hand

The Apostolate to the Sick

- ☞ It is important that extraordinary ministers to the homebound become acquainted with the approved rites for Communion in such circumstances, and that they have a copy of that ritual that they may use when distributing Holy Communion.
- ☞ A special training will be arranged for those who bring Communion to the sick. Here are some initial recommendations.

Traveling to the Sick or Homebound

☞ Once the extraordinary ministers have received the Blessed Sacrament, it is important that they go directly to the place where they are to distribute Holy Communion (*Redemp. Sacr.*, 133). It is never appropriate to take the Blessed Sacrament home for later distribution (*Ibid.*, 132). These are considered grave matters by the Church (*Ibid.* 173).

Traveling with the Blessed Sacrament

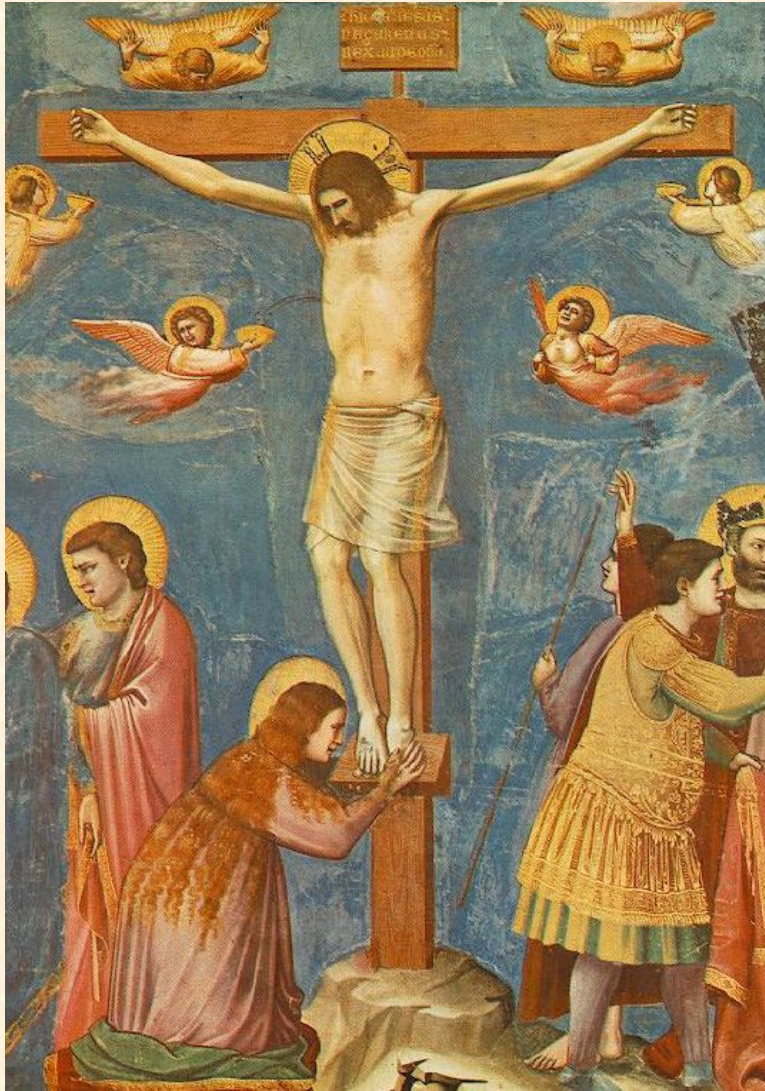
- ☞ While on the way to distribute Holy Communion, it is important that the extraordinary minister avoid anything that might diminish his or her focus on the Blessed Sacrament; for example, engaging in unnecessary conversations or listening to the radio in the car.

Ministering to the Sick

- ☞ When the extraordinary minister has reached the location where they are to distribute Holy Communion, it is good that they move directly into the rite, as they are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Socializing is best postponed until afterwards.

Ministering to the Sick, cont.

- ☞ Care must be taken while exercising the apostolate to the sick that the lay faithful do not perform an action such as an imposition of hands or blessing with the Sign of the Cross that could leave the infirm thinking that a Sacramental action is taking place.



Heavenly Father,
I thank you for calling me to serve
You and Your people in this
community as an extraordinary
minister of the Eucharist.

You know that I could never be
worthy of such an exalted honor.

Help me to be less unworthy
by remaining free of sin.

Let me nourish Your people
with the witness of my life
as I feed them with the
Body and Blood of Christ.

Grant Your strength and
holiness to all Your
extraordinary ministers
and make them worthy
to bring Christ to others.

Amen

