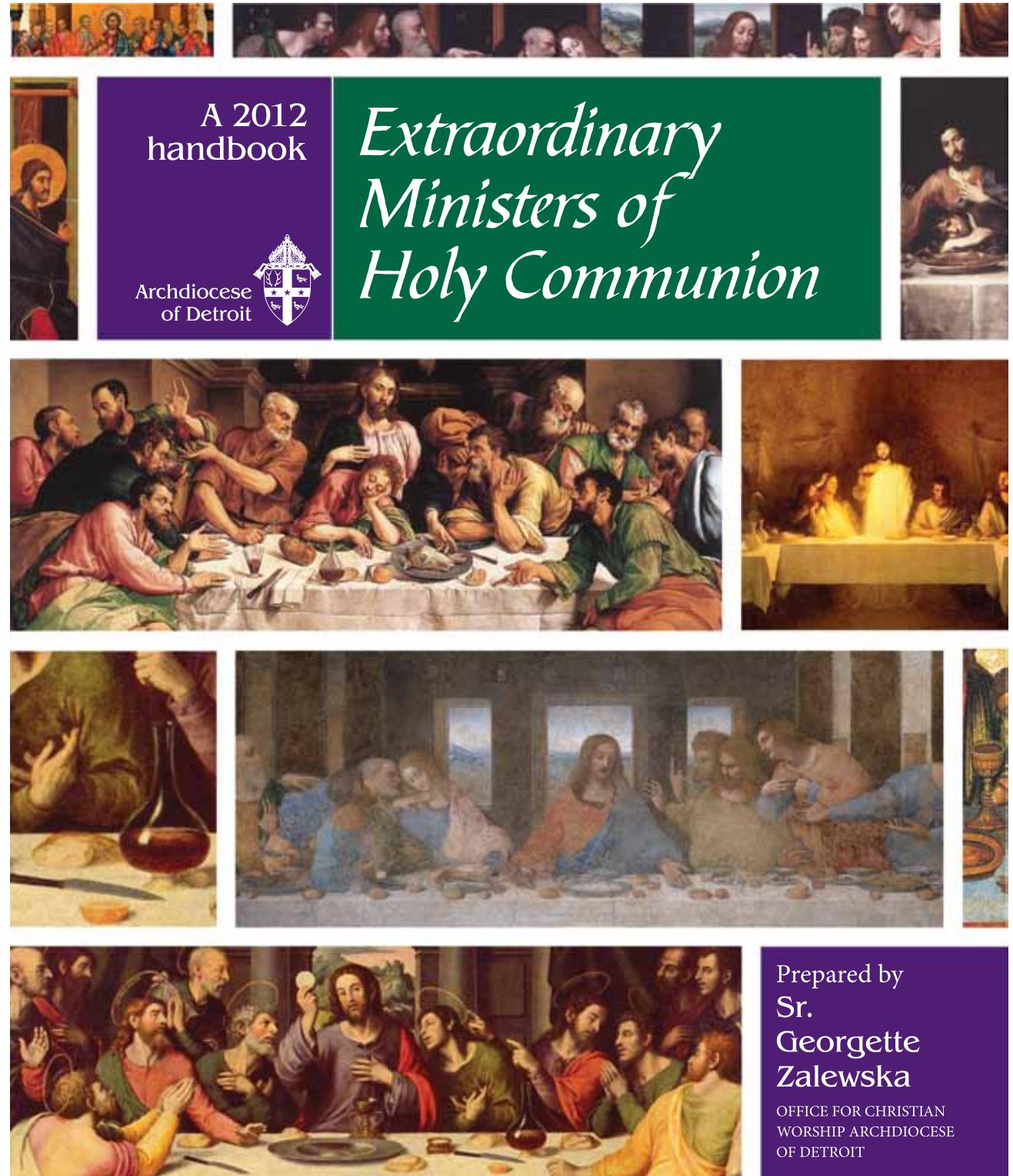




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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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September 2012

Dear Friends,

You have received a great privilege in being called and commissioned to minister the Body and Blood of Christ at Sunday Mass, when needed, and to bring the Holy Eucharist to the sick and homebound of your parish. Thank you for accepting this ministry.

This Handbook is meant to provide you with the necessary directives for performing your ministry properly and to answer the many questions that may arise as you grow into this ministry.

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, please strive to grow daily in your devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Allow the Word of God to direct your actions and thoughts and the Body and Blood of Christ to transform you so that with St. Paul you too can say, "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20)."

Entrusting you to the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, I remain,



Sincerely in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archdiocese of Detroit



A 2012
handbook



Archdiocese
of Detroit

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



Prepared by
Sr.
Georgette
Zalewska

OFFICE FOR CHRISTIAN
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OF DETROIT

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Archdiocese
of Detroit



CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL

Artwork has been used throughout the centuries to record and retell the story of the first Celebration of the Eucharist. The image of Jesus Christ sharing Holy Communion with his disciples is one of the most important icons in the Christian church. Its presence keeps the story of the faith alive.

This handbook contains works by artists who attempted to capture the historic meaning and the emotion of the event for all time.



A detail from the
First Eucharist by
Juan De Juanes (c.1560)

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Welcome to this Ministry

The ministry of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to which you have been commissioned is an awe-filled ministry. You have been called not only to bring the “*Body and Blood of the Lord*” to the sick and homebound and to serve the community as an Extraordinary Minister of the Holy Communion at Mass but, more importantly, also to be a model of the transforming grace of this sacrament. May the words of St. Augustine be a constant source of meditation for you:

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive.

To that which you are you respond “Amen” (yes, it is true!) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words “the Body of Christ” and respond “Amen”. Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your “Amen” may be true.¹

Pray daily. Read and meditate on the Sunday Scripture passages. Listen to and follow the voice of the Holy Spirit. As a member of the Body of Christ, as a commissioned Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion strive to be as holy as that which you touch, the Body of Christ.

Archdiocesan Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

1. A candidate for commissioning as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be fully initiated into the Church, (*i.e., be baptized, confirmed*

¹ St. Augustine, Sermon 272; PL38, 1247.

and have received first Holy Communion) and must be living a life in conformity with the teachings of the Church.

2. **The minimum age for the commissioning** as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is **high school age**.
3. **Eucharistic ministry to the homebound** and those in the hospital is more appropriate for adults.
4. **Each candidate must participate** in a preparation process.
5. **The preparation process and on-going formation** process should include catechesis on the following areas:



-The Church

-Mystery of the Eucharist

-The role of Sacred Scripture in the Mass

-The Liturgy of the Word

-The Liturgy of the Eucharist

-The Role of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

-A practicum for the candidate including discernment of a call to this

ministry, and practice of procedures used at the celebration of the

Eucharist in this particular parish

- A detail from **Communion of the Apostles** by Fra Angelico (1440-41)
6. **No one should exercise** more than one ministry at the same Eucharistic liturgy.
 7. **After the commissioning** of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion has been celebrated, a formal certificate from the Office for Christian Worship ~ Department of Parish Life and Services~ should be issued to the individual. A register should be kept at the parish with the names of commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

1 *Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass*

By virtue of his sacred ordination, the Bishop or Priest offers the sacrifice in the person of Christ, the Head of the Church. He receives gifts of bread and wine from the faithful, offers the sacrifice to God, and returns to them the very Body and Blood of Christ, as from the hands of Christ himself. Thus Bishops and Priests are considered the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

In addition the Deacon who assists the Bishop or Priest in distributing Communion is an ordinary minister of Holy Communion. When the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, “the Deacon himself administers the chalice.”²

In the distribution of Communion the Priest may be assisted by other Priests who happen to be present. If such Priests are not present and there is a truly large number of communicants, the Priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him.³

Directives

1. **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 consecrated wine.⁴
2. **Individual parishes may set** their own attire recommendations, keeping in mind that cleanliness and appropriate attire for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion reflects respect for the Holy Eucharist and the community.
3. **Hand washing is a necessity before the liturgy** and especially before ministering to the sick in their homes, hospitals, or nursing homes. If the pastoral situation deems sanitizing hands during the liturgy necessary, it should be done without ritual, perhaps by the minister in the pew before approaching the altar.
4. **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** are called to service from the community. Therefore, they are encouraged to sit with their families.
5. **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** sit where the altar may be easily approached **after the priest receives Holy Communion.**

² USCCB, Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America #26, Washington, D.C., 2002.

³ USCCB, The General Instruction of the Roman Missal #163, Washington, D.C., 2011, #162.

⁴ USCCB, Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America #26, Washington, D.C., 2002. #29.

6. **After the priest has concluded** his own Communion, he gives Holy 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.⁵
7. **Where there is no deacon present**, the priest **may** give Communion under both species to one or two of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and those ministers will assist the priest in communicating the other ministers.
8. **After all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** have received Holy Communion, the priest **hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.**
9. **When ministering the Body of Christ**, the minister raises the consecrated bread for the communicant to see, looks at the communicant while saying the words, ***“The Body of Christ”***. The communicant bows her/his head and responds ***“Amen”***. The minister then places the Body of Christ in the communicant’s hand or on the tongue.
10. **When ministering the Blood of Christ**, the minister raises the chalice for the communicant to see, looks at the communicant while saying the words, ***“The Blood of Christ”***. The communicant bows her/his head and responds ***“Amen”***. The minister carefully gives the chalice to the communicant and after receiving it back wipes the rim of the chalice, inside and outside, and turns the chalice before offering it to the next person. Please use a clean part of the purificator with each turn of the chalice.
11. **Do not use the communicant’s name when ministering the 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.**⁶
12. **Drinking from the chalice** is the normative practice of receiving the Precious Blood. Self-intinction is never allowed.
[See Appendix 6: *Frequently Asked Questions for an explanation of self- intinction.*]

⁵Ibid., #38.

⁶CF, GIRM, 161; 284-287 as quoted in the document Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass from USCCB website for the Roman Missal.

13. When you have finished distributing the consecrated bread bring your vessel to the altar. The priest and deacon will either consume the remaining hosts or carry them to the place designated for the reservation of the Eucharist.

14. Where there is no deacon and the Chapel of Reservation is a distance from the altar it is permissible for one of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to carry the vessel to the tabernacle after the priest has placed the remaining hosts in it.

15. When you have finished distributing the consecrated wine bring your vessel to the place your parish has designated [credence table, sacristy, Eucharistic chapel, etc.]. **There you should consume what remains of the Precious Blood from your chalice of distribution.**

16. According to its circumstances, each parish should decide whether the vessels will be purified immediately or after the Liturgy. If the vessels are purified at the altar, they are carried to the credence table by a minister. Nevertheless, *“it is permitted to leave the vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, at a side table, to be purified immediately after Mass after the dismissal of the people.”*⁷

2 Dismissal of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick



A detail from *The Supper* by Duccio (1308-1311)

⁷ USCCB, *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* #163, Washington, D.C., 2011.

The links between the community's eucharistic celebration, especially on the Lord's Day, and communion of the sick are intimate and manifold. Besides remembering the sick in the general intercessions at Mass, those present should be reminded occasionally of the significance of communion in the lives of those who are ill: union with Christ in his struggle with evil, his prayer for the world, and his love for the Father, and union with the community from which they are separated.

The obligation to visit and comfort those who cannot take part in the eucharistic assembly may be clearly demonstrated by taking communion to them from the community's eucharistic celebration. This symbol of unity between the community and its sick members has the deepest significance on (Sunday) the Lord's Day, the special day of the eucharistic assembly.⁸

Ideally, the ministers to the sick are sent forth from Sunday Liturgy so that those who cannot be physically present at the community celebration may be united in the Lord with the community. If the parish sends forth Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the sick, local practice determines the procedure for dismissal. The Presider may dismiss the ministers with a special exhortation and a blessing.⁹ [See Appendix 1 for a suggested format for the dismissal of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion from the Mass.]

Directives

Bringing Communion to the sick is a powerful symbol of unity between the local faith community and the homebound members.

- 1. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** should go directly to the homebound. It is not appropriate to go to breakfast or to go shopping on the way.
- 2. The Eucharist** should be carried in a pyx (*a small metal container*).
- 3. The Blessed Sacrament may not be kept in one's private possession, either on one's person or in a fixed place, except when in transit to bring Communion to someone.**¹⁰

⁸ ICEL, Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum #73, 1972.

⁹ The Roman Missal, Mass of the Lord's Supper, #33.

¹⁰ Canon 935

4. **The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** should consume unused hosts.
5. **Should there be a large number** of hosts remaining, they should be returned promptly to the church and placed in the tabernacle. Care should be taken at the next visit to limit the amount of Eucharist being brought.
6. **After the visit** the pyx should be purified. Place some water in the pyx, drink it, then proceed to wash and dry the pyx.
7. **The one-hour fast** before receiving Communion is not required for the sick or homebound nor for those who care for them.¹¹

3 *Communion to the Sick in the Home*

Those from the community, who are homebound, whether by age or sickness or both, are vital to the life of the community. They manifest the suffering Lord and are in need of the Eucharist to sustain their faith and hope in the face of pain. They need the community's ministry as much as the community needs their ministry. So it seems natural that on that day when the community gathers to receive and become the Body of Christ that the sick and homebound have the opportunity to receive the gift of the Eucharist from that gathering and celebration.



The Last Supper by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1480)

¹¹ Canon 919

The face of Christ from
The Last Supper by
Leonardo da Vinci
(1495-98)



Ministry to the sick is a sacramental ministry and a response to Jesus' call to care for one another, especially those in need in body or spirit. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion comes to this service prepared by praying and reading the Sunday Scripture. Essential to this ministry is the ability to communicate, to listen, and to present a friendly and welcoming posture to the sick person and the family. This attitude should enhance a relationship of trust and confidence and an atmosphere suited to prayer.

Directives:

- 1. Prepare beforehand** for the visit. Call the homebound person or the contact person one or two days before the initial visit. Ask if there are any special arrangements for entering the home, or any special health problems that need to be known before arriving at the home.
- 2. The sick person** may be able to consume only a portion of the consecrated host. Water should be available to help the person swallow the Eucharist, or moisten the mouth before receiving.
- 3. If it is convenient** and the space conducive, a lighted candle and a crucifix enhance the devotional context for the Communion service. If oxygen is being used, candles would not ordinarily be lighted; there may also be other circumstances that prohibit the lighting of candles. These concerns can be addressed when arrangements are made before the visit.



The Last Supper
fresco by
Leonardo da Vinci
(1495-98)

4. **A Ritual for Laypersons** or the pamphlet **Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister** are helpful resources for taking Communion to the sick in the home and in other facilities. *See Appendix #4.* These texts supply prayers and Scripture Readings. *[The Archdiocese has produced a simple pamphlet that can be used. Also, a simple card for the sick person is available.]*
5. **A reading from the Mass of the day** or from the Sunday readings may be chosen from the Lectionary or other worship aid. The minister may have a sense of what text to select that may speak more directly to the sick person and family.
6. **The Body of Christ** is brought to the sick in a pyx. After the visit the pyx should be purified. Place some water in the pyx, drink it, then proceed to wash and dry the pyx.
7. **The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion** should consume any Consecrated Bread that remains.

I was sick and you visited me....As often as you did it to the least of my brothers you did it to me....

4 *Communion to the Sick in a Hospital or Institution* *(Nursing Home, Assisted Living, etc.)*

The faithful who are ill are deprived of their rightful and accustomed place in the eucharistic community. In bringing Communion to them the minister of Communion represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of the whole community toward those who cannot be present at the Eucharist. For the sick the reception of Communion is not only a privilege but also a sign of support and concern shown by the Christian community for its members who are ill.¹²

¹² ICEL, Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum #73, 1972.

Bringing Holy Communion to the faithful in the hospital presents a challenge to the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. It is important that this rite not be reduced to the bare minimum. The sick in the hospital need the comfort of the member of the community to listen to their fears and concerns. They need a prayerful and awe-filled experience of the sacrament especially in environs which have robbed them of many familiar experiences.

Directives:

1. **It is always important** to check with the hospital or nursing home staff regarding safety procedures with patients in isolation, infection control and use of oxygen.
2. **A shorter rite**, may be used when Communion is given in different rooms of the same building. These rites are presented in **A Ritual for Laypersons** and the pamphlet **Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister**.
3. The structure of the rite itself is simplified. It consists of:
 - a. Greeting
 - b. Penitential Rite
 - c. Short form of Reading of the Word
 - d. Lord's Prayer
 - e. Communion
 - f. Concluding Prayer
4. **In a hospital or nursing home** the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may begin the rite with patients gathered in a common area, community room, chapel, or the first room visited.
5. **It is appropriate** to visit with the communicant(s) before beginning the rite.
6. **Using a hand sanitizer** before the beginning of the rite would be appropriate. **Hospitals sometimes insist that the hands of the minister be sanitized before giving Holy Communion to each patient.**
7. **The minister may** be accompanied from room to room (*in the hospital*) by someone carrying a lighted candle or ringing a small bell.



A detail of Christ from *The Last Supper* by Jacopo Bassano (c.1546)

8. **Whenever possible**, a Scripture reading and the Lord's Prayer are encouraged for every sick person visited.
9. **Take the Body of Christ** from the pyx and hold it so the patient or residents can see it. Say:

*"Behold the Lamb of God
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb."*

The communicant responds:

*"Lord,
I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."*

10. **After the response**, go directly to the patient or resident and any other Catholics in the room who desire to receive.
11. Say, **"The Body of Christ"** to each communicant. Place the host in the communicant's hand or on the tongue. Some may need assistance with a sip of water.



*The Last
Supper* by
Jacopo
Bassano
(c.1546)

12. A **simple prayer** for the patient, or resident, and for their needs is appropriate before leaving the room. Assurance of prayers and the prayers of the community are meaningful.
13. **The concluding prayer** may be said in the last room visited, the chapel or other gathering area. Following the rite, the sacred vessels are purified in the usual manner.

Prayer Cards for the Sick Person with the prayers needed are available from the Office for Christian Worship.

Appendices

- 1 *Sending Extraordinary Ministers of Communion Forth from Mass*
 - 2 *Recommended Readings and Resources*
 - 3 *Glossary*
 - 4 *Frequently Asked Questions*
 - 5 *Holy Communion and Celiac-Sprue Disease*
 - 6 *A Prayer for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*
-
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1 *Sending Extraordinary Ministers of Communion Forth from Mass*

The following is a suggested simple form for the dismissal of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the celebration of the Eucharist. It serves two purposes:

1. **It allows the Extraordinary Ministers** to go immediately to the sick without being impeded by crowds, cars, etc. thus affording greater reverence and protection for the Eucharist they now bear.
2. **It is a way of catechizing the assembly** on the importance of the sick to the community, the vital service they render to the Body of Christ, and as a way of letting the assembly know of the availability of the Eucharist in times of sickness.

For the Dismissal

1. **The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** receive Holy Communion as they would normally during the celebration...either as a member of the assembly... or as an Extraordinary Minister at the Sunday celebration.
2. **When all in the assembly have received** Holy Communion and the remaining Eucharist is brought to the presider at the altar, those who will be visiting the sick come forward with their pyxes open and stand in line across the sanctuary step. The presider approaches each minister and places the appropriate amount of Eucharist in the pyx.
3. **After all have received the Eucharist** to be brought to the sick, the presider addresses the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in these or similar words:



A detail
from
*The Last
Supper*
by
Juan
de Juanes

*Brothers and sisters,
this assembly dismisses you to bring the Eucharist from
this celebration to our brothers and sisters who are sick,
elderly, and unable to be here with us.*

*Share with them the scripture readings from today's celebration
and assure them that we are praying for them. Ask them
to pray for the concerns of this community as well.
Go in peace.*

4. **The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** leave immediately.
5. **The presider returns** any remaining Eucharist to the tabernacle and joins the assembly for a period of thanksgiving. The concluding rite of the Mass follows as usual.



*The Last
Supper* by
Juan de Juanes
(c.1575)

2

Recommended Readings and Resources

Norms for the Distribution of Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America. Copyright 2002. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th St N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1194. (800-235-8722).

www.usccb.org

Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1194. (800-235-8722).

www.usccb.org

A Ritual for Laypersons: Rite for Holy Communion and the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Dying. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, Copyright 1993, (800-858-5450).

www.litpress.org

The Catholic Handbook for Visiting the Sick and Homebound 2011. Liturgy Training Publications, (800-933-1800).

www.ltp.org

On the Eucharist (Ecclesia De Eucharistia), copyright 2002. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th St N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1194, (800-235-8722).

www.usccb.org
www.usccb.org

3 Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Altar | The table of sacrifice and of the Eucharistic meal; it represents Christ and therefore is revered by a bow. The gifts of bread and wine to be used in the sacrifice of the Mass are placed on this table. |
| Ambo (pulpit) | A raised reading table from which the Scripture readings are proclaimed and, where appropriate, the homily delivered. |
| Ciborium | A covered vessel resembling a large chalice or dish used for ministering Communion or reserving the Body of Christ in the tabernacle. |
| Commissioning | The act of installing Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion done by the authority of the bishop of the diocese. |
| Communicant | The person receiving Holy Communion. |
| Consume | The act of eating or drinking, specifically to eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ. |
| Corporal | A large linen cloth placed on the altar and used during Mass and liturgical celebrations involving the Blessed Sacrament. |
| Credence Table | Part of the sanctuary furnishings. A small side table usually covered with a white cloth. The chalice, paten, extra chalices and plates for Holy Communion and anything else needed for the celebration are placed here until needed. |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Lectionary | A book of Scriptural readings assigned for use at Mass. |
| Liturgy | The Church's official public worship of God which includes the Mass, the celebration of the seven sacraments, Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) and numerous blessings and sacramentals. |
| Ordo | A book prescribing the dates of liturgical seasons and movable feasts, determining the rank, festivity and colors to be used for all liturgical celebrations of the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. |
| Purificator | A linen cloth used to catch any of the Precious Blood that may drip from the chalice during reception of the Precious Blood. It is used to wipe the chalice after each communicant receives Holy Communion. |
| Purify | The act of cleansing the sacred vessels after Holy Communion. |
| Pyx | A covered container used for bringing Holy Communion to the sick, elderly and homebound. |
| Rite | Words and actions prescribed for all liturgical or sacramental acts. |



The Last Supper by Valentin de Boulogne' (c.1625-26)

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Sanctuary | The place where the altar stands, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers exercise their sacred functions. It should be appropriately marked off from the body of the church either by its being somewhat elevated or by a particular structure and ornamentation. It should, moreover, be large enough to allow the Eucharist to be easily celebrated and seen. ¹³ |
| Roman Missal | The book of liturgical prayers to be used by the presider while celebrating the Holy Eucharist. |
| Sacrarium | A sink in the sacristy that drains directly into the earth. |
| Sacred Vessels | The chalice, ciborium, paten used as containers for the consecrated Bread and consecrated Wine. |
| Tabernacle | A sacred and secure container in which the ciborium with the Body of Christ is reserved for Communion to the sick, viaticum, and eucharistic devotion. |
| Viaticum | The administration of the Eucharist to those about to die. |

4 Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Is it permitted for a communicant to approach the minister of the chalice and dip the host in it?*

This practice, known as “self-intinction”, **is strictly forbidden.**

“...The communicant...is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. [...may never dip the Body of Christ into the chalice]. Communion under either form, bread or wine, must always be given by an ordinary or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.”¹⁴

¹³ Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, Inter Oecumenici, September 26, 1964, #91: Acta Apostolicae Sedis 56 (1964), p. 898.

¹⁴ USCCB, Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America #50, Washington, D.C.

Part of the reason that people want to dip the host is a concern for communicable diseases that might be spread by drinking from a common chalice. The USCCB Liturgy Secretariat has been in touch for years with The Center for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC has stated that they “are not aware of any specific episodes or outbreaks of illness that have been associated with the use of a common Communion cup.”¹⁵ With proper precautions (such as wiping both sides of the rim of the chalice after each communicant has received the Precious Blood) such risks are greatly reduced. The CDC has also responded that there is no clinical evidence that life-threatening pathogens such as the HIV virus have been transmitted through the use of a chalice.

2. What should I do if a person comes to me in the Communion procession and attempts to dip the consecrated bread?

As an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion it is important to understand that you have been entrusted with being a steward of the sacred species during the time that you are distributing the consecrated bread and wine. If someone approaches you and attempts to dip the consecrated bread into the chalice, hold the chalice and invite them to consume the Host. Then present the chalice to them.

Be sure to inform the parish staff after Mass so that more education on the proper way to receive Communion can be planned for the parish.

3. What do I do if I drop a host or spill the consecrated wine?

The first thing to remember is that it is necessary not to rush when distributing the consecrated bread and consecrated wine. Take time with each communicant so that it can be a prayerful encounter.

If you should drop a host, pick it up immediately and consume it.

If you should spill some of the consecrated wine, place the purificator over the spot. It may be necessary to get another purificator and continue ministering the remaining consecrated wine. As soon as possible bring some water in a small basin and a purificator and wash the area. The water should then be poured into the sacarium.

¹⁵ USCCB, Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter, July/August 1996.

4. What should I do if a person whom I know to be a non-Catholic comes to me to receive Communion?

If a person whom you know to be non-Catholic comes in the Communion procession to receive Communion, you should say something nice and wave them along. Do not give them Holy Communion; do not bless them or use any other such action. As soon as possible after the celebration inform the pastor/pastoral minister whose responsibility it is to talk with the person.

5. What should I do if it becomes apparent that there is not enough consecrated bread for the assembly coming to Communion?

If you notice that the number of communicants is greater than the total number of consecrated hosts you may begin breaking the host into smaller pieces and giving each communicant a smaller piece.

Remember, as taught by the Council of Trent, we have always believed that...
*“Christ, whole and entire, exists under the species of bread and under any part of that species. Similarly, the whole Christ exists under the species of wine and under its parts.”*¹⁶

6. What should I do if there are hosts remaining from visits to the sick in the hospital, nursing home or homes?

If consecrated hosts remain from a visit to the sick the best thing to do is to consume the consecrated bread and purify the pyx. If there are so many consecrated hosts remaining that it is not possible to consume them then it is necessary to return them promptly to the ciborium in the tabernacle of the church or the hospital chapel if there is one. Care should be taken at the next visit to limit the amount of Eucharist being brought.



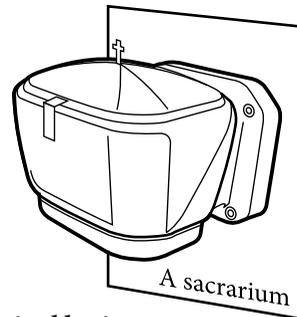
7. What is a sacrarium? When is it necessary to use the sacrarium?

Some parishes have a sacrarium, a special sink in the sacristy. It is usually marked with a cover that has a cross engraved on it.

¹⁶ Council of Trent, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Chapter IV as quoted in *This Holy and Living Sacrifice*, p. 8

The thing that is different about this sink is the fact that the contents poured down the sacrarium go directly into the ground.

As noted above, if it has been necessary to purify an area of the church because the sacred wine has been spilled, the water is poured and the purificator is rinsed in the sacrarium. However, **the precious blood is not poured into the sacrarium.** If any remains after the distribution of Communion it must be consumed.



8. *May an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion give blessings during the Communion procession?*

Within the context of the Mass only the priest may give a blessing.¹⁷

NB. There has been much discussion among liturgists, theologians, and canonists about interrupting the Communion procession to give blessings to children, non-Catholics, and even Catholics not prepared to receive Holy Communion. In private letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship, November 2008 the following observations were given.

- **“this matter is presently under the attentive study of the Congregation” so “for the present, this Dicastery wishes to limit itself to the following observations”**
- The liturgical blessing of the Holy Mass is properly given to each and to all at the conclusion of the Mass
- Lay people, within the context of the Holy Mass, are unable to confer blessings.

These blessings are the competence of the priest.

- Laying on of hands is to be explicitly discouraged since this gesture has its own sacramental significance which is inappropriate during the Communion procession
- The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* # 84 “forbids any pastor, for

¹⁷ Book of Blessings, # 18; Canon 1169, #2.

whatever reason or pretext even of a pastoral nature, to perform ceremonies of any kind for divorced people who remarry". To be feared is that any form of blessing in substitution for communion would give the impression that the divorced and remarried have been returned, in some sense, to the status of Catholics in good standing.

- The Church's discipline has already made clear those non-Catholics and those under the penalty of excommunication or interdict, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin should not approach Holy Communion nor receive a blessing.¹⁸

5 *Holy Communion and Celiac Sprue Disease*

About 15% of all persons of northern European origin suffer from Celiac Sprue disease. This disease which affects the digestive system causes these people to become ill by eating gluten, one of the major ingredients of wheat flour.

For years the Church has been concerned about Catholics suffering from this disease and unable to receive the ordinary hosts used for Holy Communion. In 2003, then Cardinal Ratzinger addressed some questions on this issue.

1. Hosts that are completely gluten-free are invalid matter for the celebration of the Eucharist.



A detail from
The Last Supper by
Simon
Ushakov
(1685)

¹⁸ CDW letter (Protocol No. 930/08/L), November 22, 2008, signed by Fr. Anthony Ward, SM, Under-secretary of the Congregation. the Liturgy, USCCB, November, 2003.

2. Low-gluten hosts (partially gluten-free) are valid, provided they contain a sufficient amount of gluten to obtain the confection of bread without the addition of foreign materials and without the use of procedures that would alter the nature of bread.
3. It is impossible to consecrate a host made of something other than wheat and water.
4. The bishop may give permission for an individual priest or layperson to use low-gluten hosts for the celebration of the Eucharist.¹⁹
5. If a person cannot consume a low-gluten host they may still receive the Precious Blood. Catholics believe that whoever receives Holy Communion only under the form of bread or only under the form of wine still receives the whole Christ, in his Body and Blood, soul and divinity.

There are two suppliers of low-gluten hosts:

Congregation of Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, 1-800-223-2772, altarbreads@benedictinesisters.org, Sr. Rita, Manager

Parish Crossroads, 1-800-510-8842, orders@parishcrossroads.com.

In addition the USCCB has issued the following:

Procedures for Mass at which a Person with Celiac Disease is Present

Storage:

A small supply of low-gluten hosts should be routinely ordered. Since low-gluten hosts have a very short “shelf life” before they become spoiled, one should order them in small quantities.

Low-gluten hosts must be carefully stored in the sacristy, clearly labeled, and not come into contact with any other hosts. The supply should be replenished only as needed.

¹⁹ Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, Prot. 89/78-174 98, as quoted in the Newsletter, Committee on the Liturgy, USCCB, November, 2003.

Before Mass

The person with Celiac Sprue should stop in the sacristy before Mass and identify themselves to the presider and/or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. It might also be helpful to announce where they will be sitting during Mass, preferably near the front, so they are at the beginning of the Communion procession. The pyx with the low-gluten host is brought forward at the Presentation of the Gifts.

During the Eucharistic Prayer

Before or during the Eucharistic Prayer, the pyx is opened on the altar.

During the Fraction Rite

The presider should be careful not to handle this host, after he has handled large quantities of the wheat bread – for example, after he distributes the bread into several ciboria at the Fraction Rite. Perhaps, an extraordinary minister, who by their very liturgical role has not participated in the fraction rite, might be given the pyx and distribute Communion to the person who suffers from gluten intolerance.

What if a person with zero tolerance for gluten is present at Mass?

Persons with zero tolerance for gluten must have a chalice from which only they receive. They disinfect it at home before the liturgy. The chalice is placed in a plastic Zip-Lock bag and is brought to the church. The chalice remains in the bag until



***The Last
Supper*** by
Pascal Adolphe
Dagnan-
Bouveret,
painted in
the 1800s.

it is filled with wine. Some distinction of the chalice is most important so as not to confuse it with other chalices on the altar. The chalice is brought forward at the Presentation of the Gifts.

During the Fraction Rite, care must be taken not to place a particle of the Eucharistic bread in that particular chalice. The presider, deacon or extraordinary minister of the Holy Communion, following his/her own Communion, distributes the Blood of Christ to the person(s) with Celiac Sprue. The person then goes back to his/her seat.²⁰

6 *A Prayer for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*

*Gracious Lord,
You nourish your people
with the body and blood of your Son,
that we might have eternal life.*

*Bless me as I minister by
giving the bread of heaven and the chalice of salvation
to your people.*

*May the saving mysteries I distribute
lead all your people
to the joys of eternal life.*

I ask this through Christ our Lord.

²⁰ USCCB Committee on the Liturgy.