

Policies of the Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Policy # 120.20

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass

Approved By: Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr., D.D.

Effective: November 25, 2024

I. Candidates

- Pastors may nominate lay persons, preferably according to the same criteria as godparents and sponsors in canons 874 and 893, receiving Holy Communion to become Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, not before such persons begin sophomore year of high school, and after their confirmation.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are “deputed by the diocesan bishop, using the appropriate form of blessing” (On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful, art. 8, §1).
 - Candidates for the ministry are to participate in the diocesan training for their spiritual, theological and practical preparation.
 - The Office of Divine Worship provides training in parishes upon request.
 - The Office of Divine Worship provides certificates for those who have completed the training.
 - Pastors are to see that their candidates are commissioned according to the *Book of Blessings* chapter 63, #1875-1877.
 - All Ministers are commissioned for three purposes: to assist in distributing communion at Mass, to bring communion to the sick, and to bring viaticum to the dying (BB 1875).
- Pastors may determine the length of service of parish communion Ministers.
- Such Ministers serve “only when there are no ordained Ministers present or when those ordained Ministers present at a liturgical celebration are truly unable to distribute Holy Communion,” or at celebrations “where there are particularly large numbers of the faithful and which would be excessively prolonged because of an insufficient number of ordained Ministers to distribute Holy Communion” (On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful, art. 8, §2).
- The service of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion demonstrates the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ (see Rom 12:6-8) and the service of diverse Ministers foreseen in the celebration of Mass (see GIRM, 116). (See also the USCCB’s *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, 2005.)
- Those approved as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in other dioceses may also serve the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph at the discretion of the pastor.

II. At Mass

Before Distributing Communion

- Ministers should dress in accordance with their duty. “In the Dioceses of the United States of America, acolytes, altar servers, readers, and other lay Ministers may wear the alb or other appropriate and dignified clothing” (GIRM, 339).

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- The distribution of previously consecrated hosts during Mass is to be avoided insofar as possible. (GIRM, 85).
- If previously consecrated hosts are needed for the distribution of communion, an ordinary or Extraordinary minister may carry them from the tabernacle to the altar during the “Lamb of God.”
- Extraordinary Ministers may enter the sanctuary as needed, but they “should not approach the altar before the Priest has received Communion” (GIRM, 162).
- “The Priest breaks the Eucharistic Bread, with the assistance, if the case requires, of the Deacon or a concelebrant” (GIRM, 83). Communion Ministers neither break the Eucharistic bread nor distribute consecrated hosts from one large vessel into smaller vessels.
- Communion Ministers and all communicants are asked to receive communion standing in accord with the norm in the United States, though an individual may receive kneeling (GIRM, 160).
- Communion Ministers and all communicants are to bow the head before receiving communion (GIRM, 160).
- Communion Ministers and all communicants choose whether to receive communion on the tongue or in the hand (GIRM, 160 - 161).
- If the Blood of Christ is offered to the faithful, communion Ministers are encouraged to drink from the chalice as a sign of the Eucharistic banquet, the covenant ratified in the Blood of the Lord, and the eschatological banquet (GIRM, 281).
- Communion Ministers may receive communion from another minister who has already received communion from a priest or a deacon.
- Communion Ministers receive their vessels only from a priest or a deacon (GIRM, 162; NDRHC, 38) and are not to take them from the altar.

Distributing Communion

- Communion Ministers distribute communion in accord with the instructions given the priest, raising the host slightly and showing it to each communicant while saying, “The Body of Christ” (GIRM, 161).
- Ministers of the Blood of Christ hand the vessel to the communicant, saying “The Blood of Christ” (GIRM, 286). The minister completely unfolds the purificator. When receiving the chalice back, the minister wipes the exterior and rim with an unused portion of the purificator and turns the chalice.
- Only a priest may administer communion by intinction (GIRM, 287; NDRHC, 50).
- A communion minister is to ensure that all who receive a host puts it in their mouth.
- Communion Ministers should know the Guidelines for the Reception of Communion from the USSCB: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion>.
- “If a host or any particle should fall, it is to be picked up reverently” (GIRM, 280). The host may then be consumed or brought to the sacristy where it may be mixed with water until it is completely dissolved, and then poured down the sacrarium.
- “If any of the Precious Blood is spilled, the area where the spill occurred should be washed with water, and this water should then be poured into the sacrarium in the sacristy” (GIRM, 280) after the Precious Blood has been absorbed by a purificator.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- If the minister notices that something has dangerously contaminated the Precious Blood, the chalice is to be brought to the sacristy, its contents diluted with water, and poured down the sacrarium.
- When non-communicants present themselves in the line, the minister may say, “May God bless you” or “May Christ be in your heart” or “Peace be with you.” Ministers do not make the Sign of the Cross over non-communicants.

After Distributing Communion

- At the end of communion, the Ministers bring ciboria back to the altar where the deacon and priest may collect them (see GIRM 163 and 183). An ordinary or Extraordinary minister may repose the hosts in the tabernacle, making a genuflection before closing the door.
- At the end of communion, a minister who believes that some particles of the hosts have adhered to his or her fingers may wipe them over the paten or ciborium (see GIRM 278). Alternatively, Ministers may dip their fingers in water in an ablution bowl at the credence table, to be poured into the sacrarium after Mass.
- At the end of communion, Ministers of the chalice may consume what remains of the Precious Blood at the altar (see GIRM 279; NDRHC, 52) or at the credence table, but not at their station, and not while walking.
- Ministers are not to place the used purificator inside the empty chalice until after the vessel has been purified.

III. Communion to the Sick

- Pastors may determine how to arrange communion to the sick and homebound, but these are among the options during Mass:
 - Communion Ministers known to the pastor enter the communion line and, prior to their own reception of Holy Communion, present a pyx, explain how many hosts are needed, secure the filled pyx and then reverently receive.
 - After the distribution of communion, a priest or deacon places prepared pyxes into the hands of the Ministers.
 - After Mass, the Ministers open the tabernacle to prepare their pyxes.
- The sick unable to receive communion under the form of bread may receive it under the form of wine alone (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 74).
 - During Mass, some of the wine may be consecrated in a separate vessel that can be secured (PCS, 74)
 - A priest may store consecrated wine temporarily in the tabernacle after communion before taking it the sick immediately after Mass (PCS, 74).
- Communion Ministers departing from church may not carry the Body of Christ home or to any other place (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 132) except to the site of the sick person who is to receive.

IV. Bibliography

Ritual Books

Book of Blessings. (Liturgical Press or Catholic Book Publishing, 1989).

Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum (Catholic Book Publishing or Liturgical Press, 1983).

Church Documents

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry (USCCB, 2005). <https://www.usccb.org/upload/co-workers-vineyard-lay-ecclesial-ministry-2005.pdf>.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (third edition, 2003).

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html.

“Instruction: On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest” (Congregation for the Clergy and others, 1997).

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_con_interdic_doc_15081997_en.html.

“Instruction: *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist.” (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 2004).

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20040423_redemptionis-sacramentum_en.html.

Pastoral Books

Michael Kwatera, OSB. *The Ministry of Communion*. Liturgical Press, 2020.

Corinna Laughlin, Kenneth A. Riley, Paul Turner. *Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*, Third Edition. Liturgy Training Publications, 2020.