



GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

The instruction *Immensae Caritatis* states that the “wonderful gift of the Eucharist . . . demands that such an important mystery should be increasingly better known and its saving power more fully shared.” The same instruction goes on to state that “provision be made lest reception (of the Eucharist) become impossible or difficult owing to a lack of a sufficient number of ministers,” and further spells out the various circumstances in which a lack of sufficient ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion can occur, namely:

- during Mass, because of the size of the congregation or a particular difficulty in which a celebrant finds himself;
- outside of Mass, when it is difficult because of distance to take the sacred species, especially the Viaticum, to the sick in danger of death, or when the number of the sick, especially in hospitals and similar institutions, requires many ministers.

Therefore, in order that the faithful, who are in the state of grace and who with an upright and pious disposition, wish to share in the Sacred Banquet, may not be deprived of this sacramental help and consolation, it has seemed appropriate to the Holy Father to establish extraordinary ministers, who may give Holy Communion to themselves and to other faithful under the following determined conditions:

- I. Local Ordinaries have the faculty to permit a suitable person individually chosen as an extraordinary minister for a specific occasion or for a time or, in the case of necessity, in some permanent way, either to give the Eucharist to himself or to other faithful and to take it to the sick who are confined to their homes. This faculty may be used whenever:
 - a) there is no priest, deacon or acolyte;
 - b) these are prevented from administering Holy Communion because of another pastoral ministry or because of ill health or advanced age;
 - c) the number of faithful requesting Holy Communion is such that the celebration of Mass or the distribution of the Eucharist outside of Mass would be unduly prolonged.

- II. Local Ordinaries also have the faculty to permit individual priests exercising their sacred office to appoint a suitable person who in cases of genuine necessity would distribute Holy Communion for a specific occasion. (cf. 13)
- III. The above-mentioned Local Ordinaries can delegate these faculties to auxiliary bishops, episcopal vicars and episcopal delegates.
- IV. The suitable person to whom numbers I and II refer shall be designated according to the following order: lector, student of major seminary, male religious, female-religious, catechist, Catholic man or woman. This order, however, can be changed according to the prudent judgment of the Local Ordinary.
- V. In oratories of religious communities of either sex the office of distributing Holy Communion in the circumstances described in number I can fittingly be given to a male superior not having major orders or to a woman superior or to the respective vicars.
- VI. If time permits, it is fitting that the suitable person individually chosen by the Local Ordinary for administering Holy Communion, as well as the person appointed by a priest having the faculty spoken of in number II, should receive the mandate according to the rite annexed to this Instruction; they are to distribute Holy Communion according to the liturgical norms.

Since these faculties are granted only for the spiritual good of the faithful and for cases of genuine necessity, priests are to remember that they are not thereby excused from the task of distributing the Eucharist to the faithful who legitimately request it, and especially from taking and giving it to the sick.

The person who has been appointed to be an extraordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist is necessarily to be duly instructed and should distinguish himself by his Christian life, faith and morals. Let him strive to be worthy of this great office; let him cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show himself as an example to the other faithful by his piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful.

Consequently, the following are the norms governing the extraordinary ministry of the Holy Eucharist in the Archdiocese of Newark:

ESTABLISHING THE MINISTRY

1. Pastors, administrators and chaplains of hospitals and other institutions are to consult with their associates, constituents and/or parish councils in determining the usefulness of this ministry in their particular pastoral situation.
2. If this ministry is desirable, the pastor, administrator or chaplain is to petition the Ordinary for the use of the faculty in establishing this ministry, stating the reasons why

this ministry would be useful in the given pastoral situation. This letter should be addressed to the Archbishop and mailed c/o Worship Office, 171 Clifton Avenue, PO Box 9500, Newark, NJ 07104-0500.

3. At the same time, the pastor, administrator or chaplain may nominate individuals for the exercise of the ministry by name, affirming that the quality of his/her Christian life makes this person a suitable candidate for this ministry.
4. The pastor, administrator or chaplain should appoint a priest as coordinator of the ministry of extraordinary ministers in the parish or institution. The name of the coordinator should accompany the application.
5. The ministry of extraordinary ministers of the Holy Eucharist is open to both religious and lay men and women, eighteen years of age or older.

NOMINATION AND TRAINING OF MINISTERS

6. It is the responsibility of the parish, under the direction of the coordinator, to provide the necessary training for the prospective ministers. The materials provided by the Worship Office should be used.
7. Pastors, administrators or chaplains desiring to increase the number of ministers where this ministry already exists should write to the Worship Office, listing the names, addresses, and an affirmation of the quality of the Christian life, which makes the person a suitable candidate for this ministry.
 - a) After the nominees are accepted as candidates, a program of doctrinal, liturgical, and pastoral training, under the direction of the coordinator should commence.
 - b) Upon completion of the training program, the pastor should inform the Worship Office in writing that the candidates are now adequately prepared to function in this ministry. The mandate will then be granted by the Ordinary and the pastor informed in writing.
 - c) Along with the mandate, delegation is likewise granted to the pastor, administrator or chaplain to celebrate the Rite of Commissioning Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist according to the ritual provided by the Worship Office.
 - d) The Worship Office is to be notified when the Rite has taken place. (A form will be provided.)

THE MANDATE

8. The mandate is the permission of the Ordinary authorizing an individual to distribute Holy Communion in a parish or institution. The mandate is given:
 - a) to an individual
 - b) for use in a particular parish or institution, and
 - c) is not automatically transferable.
9. The termination of the mandate will be determined:
 - a) by the decision of the extraordinary minister not wishing to continue this ministry,
 - b) the minister moving to another parish or leaving the institution,
 - c) by the decision of the clergy of the parish or institution based on adequate reasons.
10. The pastor, administrator or chaplain is to notify the Worship Office upon the termination of the mandate.
11. Application may be made to the Worship Office for transfer of the mandate to another parish or institution within the Archdiocese.
12. Upon receiving the mandate and commission (i.e. the celebration of the Rite) the extraordinary ministers may distribute the Eucharist to the faithful: a) at Mass, and b) apart from the celebration of Mass.
13. The faculty for the ad hoc designation of extraordinary ministers of the Holy Eucharist is not extended at this time. (cf. II)

DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION AT MASS

14. The frequency with which extraordinary ministers function is to be determined by the pastor, administrator or chaplain in consultation with the staff and in light of particular pastoral needs.
15. The extraordinary minister should see the task as more than the mere moments of distribution. He/She should be present for the entire celebration of Mass, and participate fully, especially by receiving Holy Communion himself/herself.
16. The liturgical role of the extraordinary minister should be kept visibly distinct from other liturgical ministries. The extraordinary minister e.g. should not assist the priest at the altar in the manner of the deacon. When serving at Mass the extraordinary minister should not function in any other liturgical role at that same Mass. The extraordinary minister should have an assigned place (e.g. in the sanctuary near the place of the

lector or in front of the congregation.) He/She may process with the priests and other ministers.

17. The extraordinary minister should not wear the liturgical garb of an ordained deacon or priest (i.e. stole) yet he/she should be dressed neatly in a way consonant with the dignity of this role (e.g. jacket and tie for a man.)
18. The extraordinary minister may participate by receiving communion under both kinds at Masses during which he/she will exercise his/her ministry.
19. After receiving communion from the priest, deacon or acolyte, the extraordinary minister distributes communion in the usual manner.
 - a) Holding the host slightly raised, he/she shows the host to the communicant and says, 'The Body of Christ'; the communicant makes a profession of faith saying, 'Amen' and receives it;
 - b) and/or holding the chalice, he/she shows it to the communicant and says, 'The Blood of Christ'; the communicant makes a profession of faith saying, 'Amen' and drinks from the chalice.
20. If a fragment of the host adheres to his/her fingers, the minister cleans his/her fingers over the plate and, if necessary, washes them. The vessels are cleaned after communion or after Mass at a side table or in the sacristy. The chalice is cleaned with wine and water or with water only, which is then drunk by the priest, deacon, acolyte or extraordinary minister. If a host or particle falls, it should be picked up reverently. If any of the Precious Blood spills, it is to be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.

DISTRIBUTING COMMUNION APART FROM MASS

21. Communion apart from Mass is only by way of exception for those who cannot receive within the celebration of Mass, and applies especially to the ministry to the sick in hospitals and in their homes. The pastor, administrator or chaplain will determine the frequency with which the extraordinary minister distributes communion apart from Mass.
22. To establish the link between the communion of the sick and the Eucharistic celebration of the community, the extraordinary minister will ordinarily take the Eucharist from the altar during the Mass which he/she attends, after the communion of the faithful. The priest will hand him/her the host in a small pyx or container. Immediately upon receiving the pyx, the extraordinary minister will leave for the home of the sick person. (When this procedure is not possible, the extraordinary minister will take the host directly from the tabernacle.
23. The person or persons receiving should be informed in advance that communion will be distributed by a extraordinary minister. A time should then be selected that will allow adequate reflection and attention by the communicant. When possible, relatives and friends should be encouraged to be present and they may also receive communion.
24. The rite to be used is found in The Roman Ritual, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, Chapter II, 1.

25. A shorter rite (Chapter II, 2) may be used when communion is given in different rooms in the same building, such as a hospital. Elements taken from the ordinary rite may be added according to circumstances.
26. The shorter rite may begin in the first room, where the antiphon found in the ritual is said. The invitation to receive is said in each room, and the concluding prayer in the last room.
27. After the distribution of communion, if hosts remain, the extraordinary minister cleans his/her fingers over the pyx and returns the pyx to the tabernacle or he/she consumes any remaining hosts and particles during the ceremony.

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