



NORMS FOR THE USE OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION IN THE DIOCESE OF MADISON

Diocese of Madison

June 10, 2007

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

The priest may be assisted in the distribution of Communion by other priests [and deacons] who happen to be present. If such priests are not present and there is a very large number of communicants, the priest may call upon extraordinary ministers to assist him, e.g., duly instituted acolytes or even other faithful who have been deputed for this purpose. In case of necessity, the priest may depute suitable faithful for this single occasion (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 162).

The faculty to appoint Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion belongs to the local Ordinary (see *Immensae Caritatis*, I and II).

Qualifications and Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

1. When Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (bishops, priests, deacons) are present, they are to distribute Holy Communion unless they are unable to do so based upon health, age, or some other good reason. In their absence, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may distribute Holy Communion.
2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMs) should be:
 - a. Fully initiated (have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
 - b. Catholics in good standing
 - c. Respected for their faith and integrity by both the pastor and the community
 - d. At least 16 years old
 - e. Fully able to comprehend the ministry that they are undertaking
 - f. Properly trained through a diocesan workshop or another manner approved by the Bishop in the appropriate and reverent manner of fulfilling this ministry
3. Prior to their commissioning, the names of EMs should be submitted, along with a letter from the pastor attesting to their fulfillment of the qualifications above, to the Office of the Bishop (or to the Bishop's delegate) for his approval.
4. Once approval has been received from the diocesan Bishop (or his delegate), EMs should be commissioned for two years by the pastor according to the "Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion," chapter 63 of *The Book of Blessings*.

5. In case of necessity, the priest may commission suitable members of the faithful for the occasion. These people should still fulfill the qualification described in no. 1 (above). This should be done sparingly and only when there is a real necessity. (Appendix V of the *Sacramentary* contains a rite for this.)
6. Special attention should be given to the distribution of Holy Communion at weddings and funerals. Family members are often chosen to provide this extraordinary ministry without adequate background. This practice should not normally take place unless the pastor is sure that the family member already is an extraordinary minister and can undertake the distribution in a reverent manner according to local and universal norms.
7. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be commissioned to serve for two years. They may be commissioned again after that time. However, in this (as in all lay ministry) there should be a time of discernment on the part of the parishioner and pastor to consider prayerfully whether or not to continue.
8. Pastors should review regularly the patterns of Communion distribution and make sure that no more Extraordinary Ministers normally are used than are actually needed. Reverence is more important than speed or efficiency in this part of the Mass.
9. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may not wear buttons, badges or other emblems endorsing any specific political candidate or electoral issue, or that would in a general way reject the teachings of the Church.
10. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wear appropriate attire, such as collared shirts or blouses. Tank tops, shorts and very short skirts are never appropriate. We usually dress well when we go to things that are important to us, and as Catholics, this is the most important thing that we will do each week. The manner in which the Extraordinary Minister dresses is part of the reverence that is shown to the Lord present in the Eucharistic Species as well as respect shown for God's holy people.

Training and Spiritual Formation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

1. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be trained prior to the pastor submitting their names to the Ordinary.
 - a. It is best if names be submitted annually or semi-annually to the Office of the Bishop. This will provide for more timely responses.
2. There will be two components to training
 - a. All Extraordinary Ministers will participate in **Diocesan level training**. This training will cover the spirituality and issues common to all Extraordinary Ministers regardless of what the logistics are at a specific parish.

- b. All Extraordinary Ministers will also participate in **Parish level training**. This training will cover the issues and procedures unique to a specific parish.
- c. The Diocesan level training will use diocesan personnel approved by the Bishop. The Parish level training will use personnel approved by the local pastor.

Note: The Office of Worship is willing to coordinate sessions so that the Diocesan and Parish training can take place at the same time to the extent possible, if that is desired.

- 3. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be encouraged to participate fully in the Mass and to pray regularly before the Blessed Sacrament.
- 4. Special care should be made to properly train Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the proper manner of consuming the Sacred Species. In particular, special emphasis on the strict prohibition of pouring consecrated wine in the sacrarium is required. Extraordinary Ministers may not purify the Sacred Vessels (see Norms for the Purification of Sacred Vessels after Holy Communion in the Diocese of Madison).
- 5. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should neither remove the Blessed Sacrament nor repose it in the tabernacle at Mass or at other liturgies (e.g. Solemn Exposition) when a priest or deacon is present, unless they are prevented because of infirmity.
- 6. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may expose and repose the Blessed Sacrament in a ciborium or a monstrance for Adoration when a priest or deacon is not present. They may not impart a Eucharistic blessing (Benediction) (see *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, 91).