



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

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Statement Regarding the Blessing of Non-Communicants in the Communion Procession

From time to time the question arises of whether non-communicants in the communion procession may be blessed and, if so, in what manner and by whom? There are neither instructions for nor proscriptions against the practice within the norms and rubrics for Mass.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) has indicated within the past few years that they are studying the issue. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Divine Worship has not made any statements on the matter. The Archbishop of San Francisco has not made any particular law on the matter.

The Worship Commission of the Archdiocese of San Francisco has reviewed the matter and decided it would be most prudent to wait for an authoritative and definitive judgment on the questions. Continuing in prudence, the Commission recommends that any parishes or communities that do not currently give blessings to non-communicants in the communion procession also not begin the practice. Ultimately, in this archdiocese, the authority to continue or discontinue the practice resides with the pastor or chaplain.

The Office of Worship provides a few guidelines for parishes or other communities where the blessing of non-communicants in the communion procession is practiced, namely:

- In the interest of hygiene, both ordained and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are asked to avoid touching people when giving a blessing during the communion procession.
- Ordained ministers may hold their hands above the head of the person to be blessed and offer a Trinitarian blessing, with or without the Sign of the Cross, if they choose.
- Within the Mass, extraordinary ministers are to avoid asking a blessing in the same manner as an ordained minister, that is, by extending one's hand over the head of the other and/or by using the Trinitarian formula. Extraordinary ministers may wish to offer a simple prayer, such as, "May Christ be in your heart this day," or "May Christ be in your heart through this spiritual communion."

