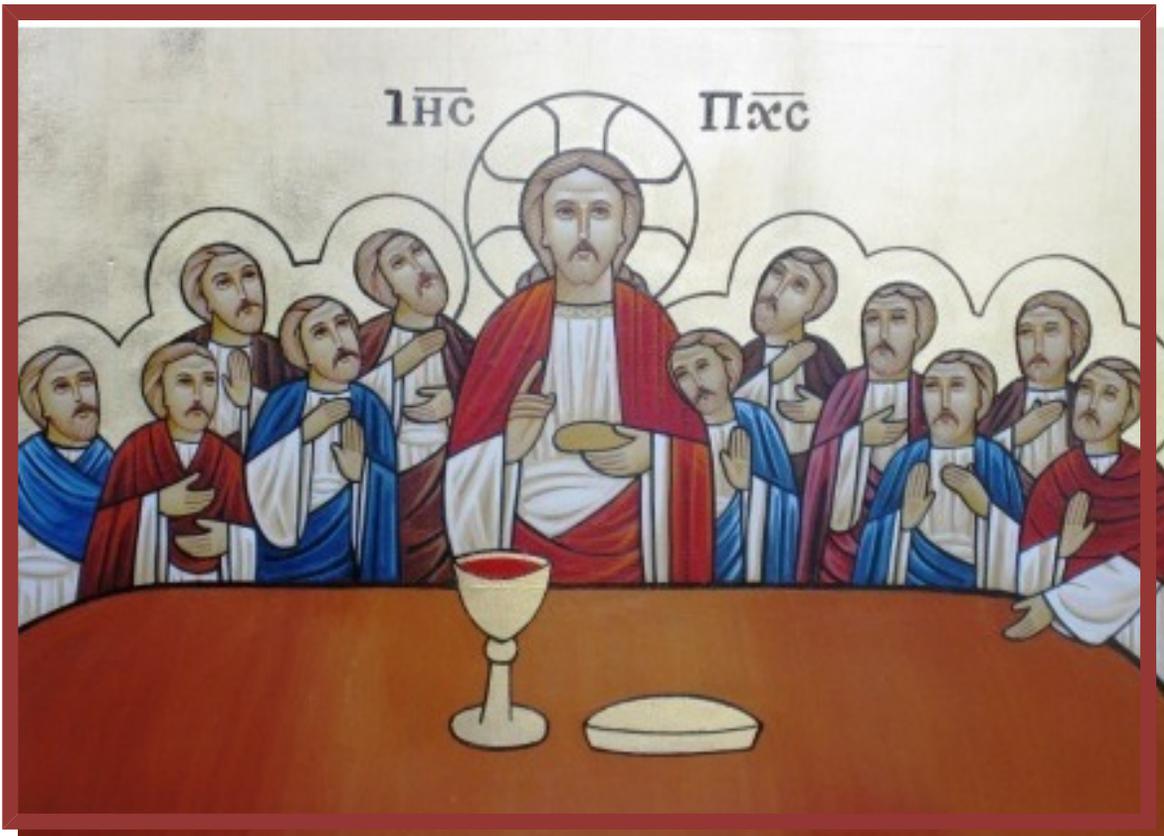


Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



Archdiocese of Cape Town

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DECREE OF PROMULGATION

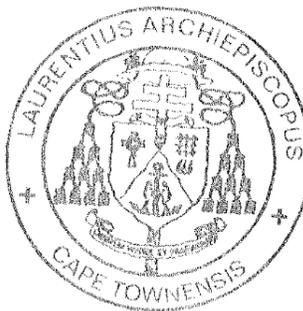
In accordance with the faculties entrusted to me by law (cc. 910,§,2 and 230,§,3), I hereby decree for use in the territory the Archdiocese of Cape Town the promulgation of the booklet entitled “*Office and Functions of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Cape Town*”.

The norms contained in this booklet become effective as from July 1, 2009

Given at Cape Town, this 19th day of June, 2009.

Lawrence Henry

+Lawrence Henry
Archbishop of Cape Town



S. M. Bell

Sister Sheila Bell
Chancellor

OFFICE AND FUNCTIONS
of
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION
in the
ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

Introduction:

1. The instruction of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments dated 29 January 1973 with the Latin title **IMMENSÆ CARITATIS** issued by Pope Paul VI, states:

“The proof of his boundless charity that Christ the Lord left to his Bride the Church, namely, the inexpressible and supreme gift of the Eucharist, requires us to deepen our appreciation of this great mystery and to share ever more fully in its saving power. Accordingly, the Church, in its pastoral zeal and care, has repeatedly made practical laws and timely statements of doctrine aimed at furthering devotion toward the Eucharist, the summit and center of Christian worship.

The new conditions of the present seem to demand that, without prejudice to the supreme reverence due to so great a sacrament, access to communion be made easier, so that by sharing more fully in the effects of the sacrifice of the Mass, the faithful may more willingly and intensely give themselves to God and to the good of the Church and of all humanity.

The first measures to be taken are meant to prevent reception of communion from becoming either impossible or difficult because there are not enough ministers. Measures must be taken, secondly, to prevent exclusion of the sick from this great comfort of the spirit, the reception of communion, because of their inability to observe the law of fast, even in its current less severe form.”

The Instruction further states:

“There are various circumstances in which a lack of sufficient ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion can occur, namely:

- within 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 suitable persons - individually chosen as an extraordinary minister - for a specific occasion, or for a set period, or in the case of necessity, in some permanent way, either to give Holy Communion to themselves and others of the 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 Holy Communion 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.

- 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 communities of both men and women religious the office of distributing Holy Communion in the circumstances described in number I can rightly be given to the non-ordained superior of men religious or to the superior of woman religious 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 Holy Communion to the faithful who legitimately request it, and especially from taking and giving it to the sick.

The faithful who have been appointed as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are necessarily to be duly instructed and should distinguish themselves by their Christian life, faith and morals.

Let them strive to be worthy of this great office; cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own piety and reverence for this most august Sacrament of the altar.

Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful.”

2. Furthermore, the 1983 Code of Canon Law states:

- Canon 230.3. Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are

not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of the functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the word, preside over liturgical prayer, confer baptism and distribute Holy Communion, in accordance with the provisions of the law.

- Canon 910.1. The ordinary minister of Holy Communion is a bishop, a priest or a deacon.
- Canon 910.2. The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is an acolyte, or another of Christ's faithful deputed in accordance with canon 230.3.

3. In addition, cognizance must also be taken of the Instruction, **REDEMPTIONIS SACRAMENTUM** issued in 2004, which says the following:

- There can be no substitute whatsoever for the ministerial Priesthood. For if a Priest is lacking in the community, then the community lacks the exercise and sacramental function of Christ the Head and Shepherd, which belongs to the essence of its very life. For the only minister who can confect the sacrament of the Eucharist in persona Christi is a validly ordained Priest.
- When the Church's needs require it, however, if sacred ministers are lacking, lay members of Christ's faithful may supply for certain liturgical offices according to the norm of law. Such faithful are called and appointed to carry out certain functions, whether of greater or lesser weight, sustained by the Lord's grace. Many of the lay Christian faithful have already contributed eagerly to this service and still do so, especially in missionary areas where the Church is still of small dimensions or is experiencing conditions of persecution, but also in areas affected by a shortage of Priests and Deacons.
- More recently, in some dioceses long since evangelized, members of Christ's lay faithful have been appointed as "pastoral assistants," and among them many have undoubtedly served the good of the Church by providing assistance to the Bishop, Priests and Deacons in the carrying

out of their pastoral activity. Let care be taken, however, lest the delineation of this function be assimilated too closely to the form of pastoral ministry that belongs to clerics. That is to say, attention should be paid to ensuring that “pastoral assistants” do not take upon themselves what is proper to the ministry of the sacred ministers.

- Furthermore, it is never licit for laypersons to assume the role or the vesture of a Priest or a Deacon or other clothing similar to such vesture.
- As has already been recalled, “the only minister who can confect the Sacrament of the Eucharist in persona Christi is a validly ordained Priest.” Hence the name “minister of the Eucharist” belongs properly to the Priest alone. Moreover, also by reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon, to whom it belongs therefore to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ’s faithful during the celebration of Mass. In this way their ministerial Office in the Church is fully and accurately brought to light, and the sign value of the Sacrament is made complete.
- In addition to the ordinary ministers there is the formally instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass. If, moreover, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay member of Christ’s faithful may also be delegated by the diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the norm of law, for one occasion or for a specified time, and an appropriate formula of blessing may be used for the occasion. This act of appointment, however, does not necessarily take a liturgical form, nor, if it does take a liturgical form, should it resemble sacred Ordination in any way. Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.
- This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy

Communion, and not “special minister of Holy Communion” nor “extraordinary minister of the Eucharist” nor “special minister of the Eucharist,” by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.

- If there is usually present a sufficient number of sacred ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be appointed. Indeed, in such circumstances, those who may have already been appointed to this ministry should not exercise it. The practice of those Priests is reprobated who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons.
- Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the Priest and Deacon are lacking, when the Priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged. This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation, considering the circumstances and culture of the place, is not at all a sufficient reason.
- It is never allowed for the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to delegate anyone else to administer the Eucharist, as for example a parent or spouse or child of the sick person who is the communicant.
- Let the diocesan Bishop give renewed consideration to the practice in recent years regarding this matter, and if circumstances call for it, let him correct it or define it more precisely. Where such extraordinary ministers are appointed in a widespread manner out of true necessity, the diocesan Bishop should issue special norms by which he determines the manner in which this function is to be carried out in accordance with the law, bearing in mind the tradition of the Church.

Consequently, the following are the norms governing the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in the Archdiocese of Cape Town.

Selection, Terms and Formation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- i Parish priests have been granted the faculty to appoint extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in their respective parishes, as well as for institutions within their parish boundaries. In addition, any priest celebrant may designate suitable persons to distribute Communion for a specific occasion when the need arises.
- ii Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must be Catholics, whose qualities of Christian life, faith and morals recommend them.
- iii They must be at least twenty-one years of age and participate regularly in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. If the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion is married, the marriage must be one recognized by the Church.
- iv All extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (including members of religious orders and secular institutes) should receive sufficient spiritual, theological and practical preparation to be able to fulfil their role with knowledge and reverence. It is the responsibility of the parish priest to ensure that this formation is provided. The Archdiocesan Centre for Pastoral Development will assist parishes with this responsibility by offering regular formation programs at a parish / deanery / archdiocesan level.
- v Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (including members of religious orders and secular institutes) are to be commissioned in their parishes, by their parish priests, for a period of one year. A parish priest may re-commission them for further periods of one year at a time. The names of those commissioned must be recorded in a special register, which is to be kept in the parish archives.
- vi Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned for their own parish only. They may not distribute Holy Communion anywhere else except with the permission of their own parish priest and

of the parish priest of the place where Communion is to be distributed (or of the respective chaplain, in the case of a hospital or institution).

vii Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are to be encouraged to attend the annual archdiocesan holy hour conducted on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.

viii It is understood that the parish priest or Archbishop may terminate the service of an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at any time, and the extraordinary minister may also resign at any time. For example, if there is a change in the good standing of an extraordinary minister in relation to the law of the Church, that person is no longer permitted to serve as an extraordinary minister.

The Liturgical Presence and Functions of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass

- o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should show a reverence for the Eucharist, reflected in their full, conscious and active participation at Mass, their appearance and the manner in which they handle the Blessed Sacrament.
- o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should dress in a manner consonant with the dignity of the service they offer i.e. secular clothing that is modest and appropriate for worship. At the discretion of the parish priest, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may:
 - use special dress, as long as it is distinctive and not confused with the dress of a priest or deacon.
 - wear a cross, medal or pin to designate the role in which they are serving.
- o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may exercise other ministries such as reader or cantor. They may not, however, exercise these other ministries at one and the same Mass.
- o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, regardless of where they are placed in the gathered assembly at Mass, follow the postures of the other faithful i.e. standing, kneeling and sitting at the appropriate times.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion come forward from their place among the people during the Lamb of God and take their position in some inconspicuous place in the sanctuary.

- o After the Communion of the priest, the deacon (if present) receives Communion from him. Thereafter the extraordinary ministers receive Communion. Then they receive the Sacred Vessels (which must be handed to them) with the Body and Blood of the Lord for distribution to the faithful.
- o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion never receive Holy Communion in the manner of concelebrants.
- o The deacon or a concelebrating priest assists in the preparation of the Eucharistic bread and chalices for Holy Communion. If it is necessary to use hosts consecrated from a previous Mass, a priest or deacon should bring the reserved sacrament to the altar from the tabernacle (that is if the tabernacle is not situated in the sanctuary). When there is no concelebrating priest or deacon, this can be done by an acolyte or an extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion. This must be done reverently and without ceremony during the saying / singing of the Lamb of God.
- o When the distribution of Holy Communion is complete, the Sacred Vessels are returned to the altar where the celebrant, concelebrating priest or deacon gather into one or more ciboria any remaining Sacred Hosts and then place them in the tabernacle.
- o When there is no concelebrating priest or deacon, the ciboria can be placed in the tabernacle by an acolyte or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- o When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for Communion, it is reverently consumed at the altar by the celebrant; he may be assisted, if needed, by other deacons and priests.
- o When extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are ministering in the absence of concelebrating priests or deacons, they may consume

what remains of the Precious Blood from the chalice they were administering. This must be done reverently whilst facing the altar.

- o The Sacred Vessels should be purified by a priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte immediately or be left to be purified as soon as Mass has been completed, at the side of the altar or at the credence (side) table.
- o When Holy Communion is being taken from Mass to the sick or those unable to leave their homes, the priest gives the pyx containing the Holy Eucharist to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion immediately after Communion has been distributed. Alternatively, they may depart immediately after receiving Communion themselves, or even as part of the concluding procession of ministers.

* * * * *

References are from:

- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*
- *Immensae Caritatis*
- *Code of Canon Law*
- *Redemptionis Sacramentum*
- *Archdiocese of Cape Town - Directives for Clergy dated 12 April 2001*
- *Pastoral Introduction to the Order of the Mass - SACBC*

* * * * *

Response: Amen

PROCLAIMING THE WORD;

***A brief passage from sacred Scripture is now proclaimed
(See page 17)***

HOLY COMMUNION:

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion now introduces the Lord's Prayer in these words:

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine
teaching we dare to say:

Response: Our Father who art in heaven

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion shows the Holy Eucharist saying:

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

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

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion goes to the sick person and, showing him/her the sacrament say:

The Body of Christ

After communion there is a period of silence and then the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion says the concluding prayer:

Father, you have brought to fulfillment the work of our redemption through the Easter mystery of Christ your Son. May we who faithfully proclaim his death and resurrection in these sacramental signs experience the constant growth of your salvation through Christ our Lord.

Response:

Amen

The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, makes the sign of the cross on him/herself while saying:

May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Response:

Amen

Scriptures that may be used:

John 6:54-58

John 15:4 - 5

John 14:6

1 Corinthians 11:26

John 14:23

1 John 4:16

The Gospel of the day.

John 6: 54 -58

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who eats my flesh will have life because of me. This is the bread came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.

The Word of the Lord.

John 14:6

Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”

The Word of the Lord.

John 15: 4-5

Remain in me as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

The Word of the Lord.

1 John 4:16

We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

The Word of the Lord.

Anima Christi

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me,
Body of Christ, save me,
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Let me not be separated from you,
From the malicious enemy defend me
In the hour of my death call me
And bid me come to you,
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.*

APPENDIX B
A BLESSING FOR SENDING FORTH
EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION FROM
MASS

This blessing and dismissal may be used as the Extraordinary Minister(s) of Holy Communion go forth to bring Communion to the sick. This simple blessing reminds us that our community of faith extends beyond the church walls, with the sick being a vital part of that community.

The celebrant may say:

Our Extraordinary Minister(s) of Holy Communion will take the Eucharist to those who are confined to their homes.

The celebrant then addresses the Extraordinary Minister(s) of Holy Communion:

As you go, take with you not only the Sacrament we have celebrated, but also the Word of God which we have heard, as well as the affection of this parish community, and ask for the prayers of those whom you visit in return.

The celebrant then blesses the Extraordinary Minister(s).

OR

The celebrant may say:

**My brothers and sisters,
you are sent to bring the Word of God
and the Bread of Life from this assembly
to the sick and home-bound members of our parish family.
Go to them with our love and our prayers
in the name of Jesus Christ.**

The extraordinary minister(s) respond: Thanks be to God.

*Prepared for use in the
Archdiocese of Cape Town*

*By
Ministries Team
Centre for Pastoral Development*

