



**Norms for
ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY
MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
November 2002**

**Modestly edited edition
accommodating changes in 2003 and following years
to the Missal and Norms for Communion under Both Kinds.**

◆ See pages 16-22. ◆



**Norms for
ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY
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Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
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This document succeeds and replaces *Guidelines for Eucharistic Ministers: Formation and Commissioning of the Laity* published by the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois in June 1988. This older document is to be removed from the *Pastoral Leadership Manual, Volume II (Liturgy and Initiation)* and replaced with this new text. Additional copies are available for purchase from the Catholic Pastoral Center, Office for Worship, 1615 West Washington Street, Springfield IL 62702-4757. (217) 698-8500.

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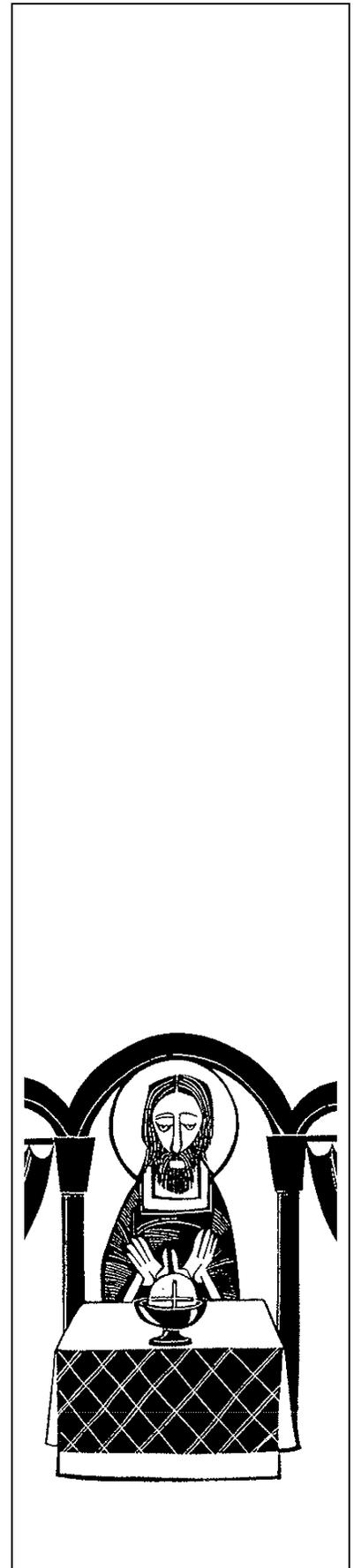
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MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

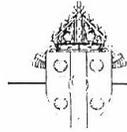
**Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
November 2002**

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DECREE



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Office of the Bishop

I am happy to present the “Norms for Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.” These norms will help us understand and put into effect the universal norms of the Catholic Church, as well as particular norms for the dioceses of the United States, here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

God has given us no greater gift in Jesus Christ than the Eucharist. Ministering this holy sacrament to others is a privilege. It is to be done only after prayerful reflection on the meaning of the Eucharist and proper training. The information in these pages will help both ordinary and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion carry out their responsibilities properly and respectfully. I ask that these norms be studied and followed with care.

This document contains helpful excerpts from “Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America.” In keeping with these norms, it is my wish that Holy Communion be distributed under both kinds at weekday and Sunday Masses celebrated in this diocese. This is to be done after proper catechesis of the people and proper preparation of the ministers of Holy Communion.

Therefore, I decree this document to be particular law for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, effective immediately.

Most Reverend George J. Lucas
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois

Mrs. Cheryl A. Kannall
Ecclesiastical Notary

November 1, 2002
Springfield, Illinois

HISTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

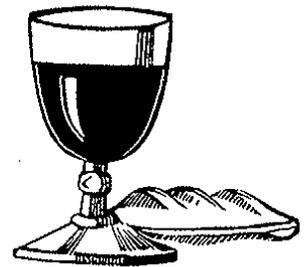
In April 1969, the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments issued the instruction *Fidei custos*, on special ministers to administer communion. Pope Paul VI, in his pastoral concern to respond to the needs of the faithful, amended the existing law concerning ministers of communion. The instruction once again permitted the laity, under the direction of the bishop and the pastor, to assist in the distribution of communion to themselves and to the faithful.

In March 1971, the same congregation issued a rescript or answer to a question raised by the president of the episcopal conference of the United States of America. It granted the faculties permitted by Pope Paul VI to diocesan bishops and other ordinaries authorizing, under certain conditions, members of the faithful to distribute holy communion. Three instances were named: (a) qualified persons are permitted to give holy communion to themselves, to the faithful, and to the sick when an ordinary minister is unable to do so; (b) lay superiors of religious communities are permitted to give holy communion to themselves, to the members, to the faithful who are present, and to the sick; and (c) qualified persons are permitted to assist the celebrating priest during Mass when a very lengthy distribution of communion cannot otherwise be avoided. This was extended indefinitely by the Holy See in January of the following year.

In January 1973, the instruction *Immensae caritatis* was issued, facilitating sacramental communion in particular circumstances. This instruction from the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments addressed four areas: (a) special ministers of the eucharist, (b) a more extensive faculty to receive communion twice in one day, (c) mitigation of the eucharistic fast in favor of the sick and the elderly, and (d) devotion and reverence toward the eucharist in the case of communion in the hand. This instruction resulted in revising one part of the Roman Ritual, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* that was published in June of that same year.

In March 1975, the fourth vernacular edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* added the above norms supporting the deputation of special ministers of holy communion.

In November 1984, the Bishops of the United States issued the document *This Holy and Living Sacrifice: Directory for the Celebration and Reception of Communion under Both Kinds*. The document provided a summary of the Church's eucharistic teaching as well as laying down norms for the reception of communion under both kinds. It expanded what was already permitted on weekdays to Sundays and to holy days as well.



Ordained ministers – bishops, priests, and deacons – remain the “ordinary” ministers of the eucharist. In a February 1987 rescript, the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law gave a negative decision to the question whether special ministers of holy communion may exercise the ministry even when ordinary ministers are present and not participating in the Mass. In commenting on the response, the Liturgy Secretariat of our episcopal conference wrote:

“...[W]hen ordinary ministers (bishops, priests, deacons) are present during a eucharistic celebration, whether they are participating in it or not, and are not prevented from doing so, they are to assist in the distribution of Communion. Accordingly, if the ordinary ministers are in sufficient number, special ministers of the eucharist are not allowed to distribute Communion at the Eucharistic celebration.

“Causes which might prevent an ordinary minister from assisting with Communion would include infirmity or physical disability, and participation in some other ministry while the Eucharist is being celebrated.”

On 07 April 2002, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* went into effect. This document replaced the earlier one on the same topic, *This Holy and Living Sacrifice*. It brings national norms into conformity with the new *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the new *Roman Missal* of 2000 issued in Latin in the spring of 2002. These new norms were approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Holy See and will be inserted into future editions of the Roman Missal.

The practice of having special or extraordinary ministers of holy communion, both for the celebration of liturgy and for the sick and infirm, dates to the very early centuries of Church history. The practice was less common by the eighth century, and except for rare occasions, had virtually disappeared by the middle ages. Communion in the hand was also common in earlier times, but met with the same result. Restoration of earlier practices are not meant to simply lead us back to the practices of the early Church, but to respond to needs of the present time.

This document for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois presents practical norms for all ministers of holy communion. They also provide for the formation, appointment, and commissioning of extraordinary ministers of holy communion.

Church Documents on Ministers of Holy Communion:

CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, **Instruction** *Fidei custos*, on special ministers to administer communion, 30 April 1969. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 259, nos. 2043-2053.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, **Rescript** (U.S.A.) to the conference of bishops, authorizing laypersons to give communion, 9 March 1971. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 263, nos. 2071-2072.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, **Rescript** (U.S.A.) to the conference of bishops, extending indefinitely at the pleasure of the Holy See, authorizing laypersons to give communion, 18 January 1972. See Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter 1965-1975*, January-February 1972, 8:1-2, page 309.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, **Instruction** *Immensae caritatis*, on facilitating reception of communion in certain circumstances, 29 January 1973: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 65 (1973) 264-271; *Notitiae* 9 (1973) 157-164. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 264, nos. 2073-2088.

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Rite of Commissioning Special Ministers of Holy Communion*, **Introduction**, 29 January 1973; *Notitiae* 9 (1973) 165-167. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 343, nos. 2949-2952.

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, Chapter 1, Holy Communion outside Mass, **Introductions** [nos.13-25], 21 June 1973: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1973; *Notitiae* 9 (1973) 311-316. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 266, nos. 2091-2103.

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, **General Introduction** and Chapter 3, Forms of Worship of the Eucharist, **Introductions** [nos. 1-12, 79-92, and 101-112], 21 June 1973: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1973. See *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979*, doc. 279, nos. 2193-2226.

Code of Canon Law, 1983, canon 910, on ordinary and extraordinary ministers of holy communion.

Emendations in the Liturgical Books Following upon the New Code of Canon Law. Washington DC: International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1984. Pages 9-12 note the required changes to earlier editions published before January 1983 of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, nos. 8, 10, 11, 14, 21, 23, 24, 83, 86, 91, 101, and 102.

THE ROMAN RITUAL, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, 1983.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *This Holy and Living Sacrifice: Directory for the Celebration and Reception of Communion under Both Kinds*, United States Catholic Conference, 1984.



PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE AUTHENTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW, **Rescript** to the conferences of bishops, on special ministers not replacing ordinary ministers of communion, 20 February 1987, with publication by the CONGREGATION FOR SACRAMENTS, 15 June 1987. See Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter 1986-1990*, February 1988, XXIV, pages 103-104.

THE ROMAN RITUAL, *Book of Blessings*, approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, 1989; Chapter 63 "Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion," nos. 1871-1896.

THE ROMAN MISSAL, Appendix, "Rite of Commissioning a Special Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion."

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, Liturgy Documentary Series 13, 2002.

THE ROMAN MISSAL, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2002), nos. 98, 100, 162, 182, 191-192, 240, 245-249, 278-280, 281-287, 319-324, 327-334.

THE MEANING OF THE EUCHARIST

Jesus said: “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20). In order to fulfill the Lord’s command, we remember and we celebrate anew at each Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist the sacrificial, covenant meal that Christ shared with his own disciples. As we gather in community, as Body of Christ, we experience the presence of Christ in sacrament as the food and drink that gives us life (John 6:22-58); that strengthens us on our journey in this life, and unites us as community in all our diversity (1 Corinthians 10:16-17); so that Christ might be everything in all of us (Colossians 3:11).

When we gather to celebrate the paschal mystery in memory of the Lord Jesus Christ, we recall the gift of his death and life for our sake. Like the Lord who poured out his life for us, we, too, are enabled to continue his mission of service (Mark 10:44-45) for the world. Unless the consecrated bread is broken, unless the consecrated cup is poured out, the full experience of Christ at Mass is incomplete. Again, liturgy speaks to our lives. We are called to be broken and poured out like Christ in order to feed those who are hungry, in order to satisfy those who are thirsty (Matthew 25:31-46 and John 7:37-39).

In the celebration of the eucharist, the heart of our liturgical faith life as Christians, we pray “through him, with him and in him.” Our prayer is joined to the perfect prayer of Christ. As he offers his life to the Father, so do we offer our own lives in union with Jesus Christ the Lord.



ORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

The ordinary ministers of holy communion are those who have received holy orders: bishops, priests, and deacons.

By universal and particular law and under the direction of the diocesan bishop or religious superior, priests may provide for extraordinary ministers to assist with the giving of holy communion to the faithful within weekday and Sunday Masses and to those who are sick or dying.

Additionally, the law provides that priests may depute extraordinary ministers for one celebration when there is need. In the *Faculties and Permissions for Priests and Deacons for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois* (1989), the bishop grants the following faculty to priests:

“5. The faculty is granted to priests [to] appoint communion distributors for a given particular occasion in cases of genuine necessity (*Immensae caritatis*, no. II [*Documents on the Liturgy*, no. 2076]).

“Outside individual cases of genuine necessity, communion distributors are to receive their mandate from the Office of the Vicar General / Moderator of the Curia and be commissioned at the parish or institution (cc. 230, § 3; 910, § 2).”

The same document, in appendix #3, grants to deacons the faculty to distribute holy communion at Mass and to bring communion to the sick and the dying.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Extraordinary or special ministers of holy communion are members of the faithful who have received suitable training and formation for the ministry, have been given the necessary mandate by the diocesan bishop, and have been commissioned for this ministry according to the prescribed rite.

PARISH AND INSTITUTION TRAINING AND FORMATION

I. Role of the Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion

Among the ordinary ministers of holy communion, the first is the diocesan bishop. The bishop is the high priest of the diocesan flock and is charged with watching over the liturgical life of the diocese. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 41, notes that, in some way, the faithful's life in Christ is derived from and dependent upon the bishop. The diocesan bishop oversees, among many things, the norms for the distribution of holy communion under both kinds. These norms must be observed wherever the eucharist is celebrated within the diocese.

Priests, by virtue of ordination, are also ordinary ministers of holy communion. Finally, deacons who assist priests in the distribution of communion are also ordinary ministers. During Mass the deacon ministers the sacred cup.

II. Role of the Extraordinary or Special Minister of Holy Communion

The two terms, “extraordinary” and “special” are found in Church documents and ritual books. Both are used in describing members of the faithful as ministers of the eucharist and as ministers of holy communion. They mean exactly the same thing. The role of an extraordinary or special minister of holy communion is important within the liturgy and within the life of a community. The faith family, then, should be clearly instructed on this important service to the Church.

The Vatican Council II, in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 34, speaks of the role of the laity in the Church in this way:

“Since he wishes to continue his witness and his service through the laity also, the supreme and eternal priest, Christ Jesus, gives them life through his Spirit and ceaselessly impels them to accomplish every good and perfect work.

“To them, whom he intimately joins to his life and mission, he also gives a share in his priestly office of offering spiritual worship for the glory of the Father and the salvation of humanity. Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the [H]oly Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that ever richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, if accomplished in the Spirit, become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ: their prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of



mind and body, even the hardships of life if patiently borne (see Peter 2:5). In the celebration of the eucharist, these are offered to the Father in all piety along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.”

It is in this context that we can understand the Church’s wisdom in designating the laity and vowed religious to assist the ordained in the distribution of communion from the plate and cup. The presiding priest remains the central minister of the sacrament. Nevertheless, as need is present, and with proper mandate, others also share in this ministry.

III. Need for Extraordinary or Special Ministers of Holy Communion

The number of extraordinary ministers of holy communion will be determined by the pastoral needs of each parish or institution. Some may assist during the liturgical celebration of Mass, others may minister the communion to the sick and infirm and to the dying, and still others may participate in both capacities. It is to be understood, moreover, that all extraordinary ministers may, in the absence of ordinary ministers (priests and deacons) and at the direction of the pastor, distribute holy communion outside Mass within a Celebration of the Word of God.

The Instruction *Fidei custos* and the norms for the Dioceses of the United States lay down the following concerning lay Christians chosen for this ministry. They should:

1. be outstanding in Christian life, in faith, and in morals;
2. be those whose mature age warrants the choice;
3. have suitable spiritual, theological, and practical preparation to carry out this ministry;
4. have the ability to fulfill this role with knowledge and reverence;
5. be fully initiated Catholics;
6. have a mandate from and follow the guidance of the diocesan bishop; and
7. be commissioned according to the prescribed rite.

IV. Training and Formation for Extraordinary or Special Ministers of Holy Communion

All extraordinary ministers of holy communion will receive suitable catechesis on the theology of the eucharist, the theology of Christian worship, and the practice of Roman Catholic liturgy. They will understand the role of both the hierarchy and the laity in the Church as well as the importance of lay ministry. This formation and training will be provided by parish or institution leadership.

Those ministers who assist the priest celebrant during the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist will understand the proper manner of both receiving and distributing holy communion.

Those ministers who distribute holy communion to the sick and infirm and to the dying will understand the proper rite in which to do so, and will be familiar with the important aspects of general pastoral care to the sick and to the dying.

The following suggestions will be helpful for designing the parish or institution **Training and Formation for Extraordinary or Special Ministers of Holy Communion**:

- I. History and Background
 - A. Practice in the Early Church
 - B. Church Documentation for Present Practice
 - C. History in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

- II. Theology of the Eucharist
 - A. Deepening Understanding of the Eucharist
 1. Ecclesial nature of the Eucharist
 2. Eucharist as the Memorial of Christ's Sacrifice
 3. Eucharist as the Sacred Banquet
 4. Real Presence of Christ
 - B. Reasons and Needs for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 1. Pastoral Need
 2. Baptism as Source for Ecclesial and Liturgical Ministry
 3. Guidance by the Diocesan Bishop

III. Ministry

- A. Service
 - 1. Life of a Christian
 - 2. Witness to the Community of Faith
- B. Reverence
 - 1. Love and Care for the Eucharist
 - 2. Personal Faith Response

IV. Norms

- A. Universal Norms in Church Documents and Ritual Books
- B. Diocesan Norms and Guidelines

V. Practical Aspects of the Ministry

- A. Scheduling and Responsibility
- B. Ritual Language and Terms
- C. Time and Manner of Entering the Sanctuary and Approaching the Altar
- D. Communion Stations
- E. Procedure for Distribution from the Plate and the Cup
- F. Attention to Musicians and Others with Special Needs
- G. Cleansing of the Sacred Vessels
- H. Communion for the Sick and Infirm
- I. Viaticum for the Dying
- J. Communion outside Mass

VI. Prayer and Continuing Formation

- A. Participate in Periodic Gatherings As a Ministerial Group
- B. Attend to Regular Times for Faith Sharing and Common Prayer

V. Mandating Extraordinary or Special Ministers of Holy Communion

When the pastor or institutional leadership has determined the particular needs concerning extraordinary or special ministers of holy communion, the following procedure is followed:

1. Contact in writing the Office of the Vicars General or the Office of the Chancellor.
2. Specify the ministers who will assist during the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist.
3. Specify the ministers who will serve the sick and infirm as well as the dying.
4. Specify the ministers who will assist in both ministerial roles.
5. Specify the length of time for the diocesan mandate, that is, one, two, or three years.

When the diocesan mandate has been issued, the ministers must be commissioned for their ministry in the presence of the people during a Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist prior to exercising the ministry. The “Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion” in the *Book of Blessings* is used, chapter 63, nos. 1871 and following.

Current ministers whose mandates are being renewed for an additional and consecutive term do not need to be commissioned again. However, if a person has been commissioned in the past, but an interval of time has passed without active service or the mandate has lapsed, then the order for commissioning is to be celebrated.



NORMS FOR HOLY COMMUNION WITHIN MASS

The *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* spell out the following in nos. 30-55:

- Planning (nos. 30-31),
- Preparations (nos. 32-35),
- At the Preparation of the Gifts (no. 36),
- At the Breaking of the Bread (nos. 37-40),
- Distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord (nos. 41-47),
- Other Forms of Distribution of the Precious Blood (nos. 48-50), and
- Purification of Sacred Vessels (nos. 51-55).

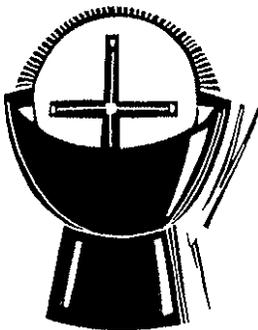
This complete document should be read and incorporated into the local training and formation.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING THE NORMS

With the promulgation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal* and the confirmation by the Holy See of the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, there are some past practices that will need changing.

Notable changes in both universal and diocesan past practice include: who may break the body of Christ, **when and** who may pour the blood of Christ into the cups; when the deacon drinks from the cup; the sign of reverence to the body and to the blood by each communicant; both how and who may consume what remains of the body and the blood at the conclusion of the communion of the faithful; and the dismissal of ministers to the sick from Mass.

The following pages contain excerpts from the new norms in the smaller column along with some questions and answers to either clarify the norms or lay out diocesan norms.



Some Commentary and Questions and Answers on These Norms for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

Q. Is water included among the gifts brought to the altar?

A. **No.** This number restates GIRM 2002, no. 73. The gifts brought forward by members of the faithful are bread, wine, and money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church.

Q. Are all the vessels needed for communion brought to the altar at this time?

A. **No.** The additional ciboria or plates are brought to the altar during the fraction rite and singing of the *Lamb of God*. See no. 37 below. **Only one** All of the chalices or cups and **only one** ciborium or plate is brought to the altar during the preparation of the gifts. If the chalice is not large enough to hold all the wine needed for the celebration, **additional chalices or cups are brought to the altar**. As many flagons with wine as needed are also brought in procession for the preparation.

Q. In many places, Mass is celebrated without a deacon or concelebrating priest. Can the bishop make any exceptions or grant limited permissions for extraordinary ministers of communion to assist with the breaking of the body of Christ or the pouring into the cups?

A. **No.** See also GIRM 2002, no. 83. Further, the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments declined to grant an indult to the dioceses of the United States for extraordinary ministers of communion to help with the distribution of the Precious Blood into additional cups. Cardinal Medina, the prefect of that congregation, is quoted in the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy *Newsletter*, March-April 2002 explaining why the request was denied. "...[T]he duties of an extraordinary minister ...aid in the distribution of Holy Communion...[and] does not entitle them to assume any other role at the liturgy except this kind of limited assistance...."

Q. Who may bring the reserved sacrament from the tabernacle to the altar during the breaking of the bread?

A. **As in the previous *Roman Missal*, no provision is made for anyone to bring the reserved sacrament at this time.** The GIRM 2002, no. 85, provides the reason: "It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, **may** receive the Lord's **Body** from hosts consecrated at the same Mass..."

- It should not be a habitual or even a frequent practice at Sunday Mass to offer communion to all or some of the faithful with the reserved sacrament.

Q. What if the chapel of reservation is at some distance from the altar causing an awkward delay if more eucharistic bread is needed?

A. **When deemed necessary, an extraordinary minister of communion may bring the reserved sacrament to the altar during the singing of the *Lamb of God*.** This ciborium should remain covered throughout the showing of the host and the beginning of communion to the faithful and used only if needed.

Excerpts from
Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States America

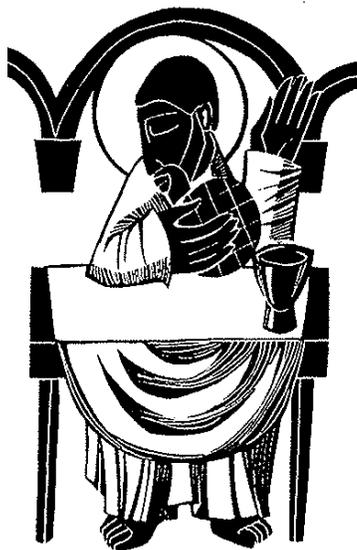
At the Preparation of the Gifts

36. The altar is prepared with corporal, purificator, Missal, and chalice (unless the chalice is prepared at a side table) by the Deacon and servers. The gifts of bread and wine are brought forward by the faithful and received by the Priest or Deacon or at a convenient place.

Added to Norms no. 36 because of CDWDS, Instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2002), nos. 105-106: "If one chalice is not sufficient for Holy Communion to be distributed under both kinds...several chalices are placed on a corporal on the altar in an appropriate place, filled with wine...."

At the Breaking of the Bread

37. As the *Agnus Dei* or *Lamb of God* is begun, the Bishop or Priest alone, or with the assistance of the Deacon, and if necessary of concelebrating Priests, breaks the Eucharistic bread. **Other empty ciboria or patens are then brought to the altar if this is necessary....**



Other empty ~~chalices and~~ ciboria or patens are then brought to the altar if this is necessary. The Deacon or Priest places the consecrated bread in several ciboria or patens ~~and~~, if necessary, ~~pours the Precious Blood into enough additional chalices~~ as ~~are~~ required for the distribution of Holy Communion. If it is not possible to accomplish this distribution in a reasonable time, the celebrant may call upon the assistance of other Deacons or concelebrating Priests. ~~This action is usually carried out at the altar, so that the sharing of all from the one cup is signified; in the case of large assemblies, it may be done at the side table within the sanctuary (presbyterium).~~

38. If extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required by pastoral need, they ~~should not~~ approach the altar ~~as~~ before the Priest receives Communion. After the Priest has concluded his own Communion, he distributes Communion to the extraordinary ministers, assisted by the Deacon, and then hands the sacred vessels to them for distribution of Holy Communion to the people.

Q. How can a parish be sure there will be enough eucharistic bread consecrated at every Mass?

A. During the diocesan October Count, every parish already counts the numbers who attend each Mass. Ushers, sacristans, or some other designated persons can count the numbers to receive communion for the various feasts and seasons and establish reliable estimates for the whole year.

- At times, these reliable estimates will need to be adjusted, for example, if there is a sudden influx of visitors or if bad weather prevents the faithful from coming to the church. Either the sacristan can adjust the amount before the gifts are brought in procession or the priest celebrant can do the same immediately before the gifts are offered during the preparation of the gifts.

Q. Some parishes and institutions regularly bake legal communion bread or do it occasionally for solemn celebrations. How can the one priest break the bread without the fraction becoming inordinately long?

A. If the parish or institution bakes its own bread, it is done within the legal norm. See GIRM 2002, no. 320, that specifies wheat flour and water. The larger number of loaves for the faithful may be broken into individual pieces before Mass begins so that the fraction rite is not too long.

Q. When does the *Lamb of God* end?

A. **The *Lamb of God*, whether sung or recited, must be long enough to cover not only the fraction rite of breaking the body of Christ ~~and pouring into the cups and the distribution of the host to concelebrating Priests~~, but also the personal prayer said silently by the presiding priest.** Additional tropes are added to the *Lamb of God* as necessary. Only the last one ends in “grant us peace.”

Q. Who may bring the empty chalices and ciboria to the altar?

A. **Either servers or extraordinary ministers of communion may do this.**

Q. Does “they approach the altar” mean that extraordinary ministers of communion may not enter the sanctuary until after the priest receives communion?

A. **No.** Entering the sanctuary and approaching the altar are not the same action. The Church wants the communion rite to be celebrated with reverence but without undue delay. Extraordinary ministers of communion may enter the sanctuary during the sign of peace and stand at a suitable distance behind or at the side of the altar as the design of the sanctuary allows. This guide may help: extraordinary ministers do not stand where concelebrating priests would stand at the altar. After the presiding priest consumes the body of Christ and drinks the blood of Christ, he begins to minister communion to the ministers.

Q. May the priest minister both the body and blood to one deacon or extraordinary minister of communion first? And then can this second person minister the cup to the rest of the extraordinary ministers of communion after the priest ministers the body of Christ?

A. Yes.

Q. When do the cantor and other musicians share in communion?

A. They are not the among the first to receive communion. The GIRM 2002, no. 86, requires that the communion song begins as the priest celebrant takes communion. This helps the assembly focus on the unity of the ritual act of communion that begins when the priest receives communion and ends only when the last member of the assembly receives communion. The song then begins long before the procession of the faithful begins.

One option, then, is for all the musicians to be among the last to receive communion. Another option is for the musicians to spread their reception throughout the entire rite so, that at any given time, only a few are in the procession and most are supporting the singing.

Q. Does the GIRM 2002 change the time when the deacon drinks from the cup?

A. Yes. Formerly, the deacon was the last to drink from the cup. Now, the deacon drinks from the cup before ministering communion to others.

Q. May any of the ministers of communion wait until after the communion of the faithful to receive the body and blood?

A. No.

Q. Should those who will not or may not receive communion be in the communion procession?

A. No. The procession, as is communion itself, is reserved to those permitted to receive communion in the Catholic Church. See “Guidelines for the Reception of Communion” approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on November 14, 1996 and the *Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines: That All May Be One* issued by the bishops of the province in 1986. Parents should use their good judgment concerning infants and small children.

Q. May extraordinary ministers of communion, after themselves receiving communion, take a cup or a plate off of the altar?

A. No.

39. All receive Holy Communion in the manner described by the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, whether Priest concelebrants (cf. GIRM, nos. 159, 242, 243, 246), Deacons (cf. GIRM, nos. 182, 244, 246), or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (cf. GIRM, no. 284). Neither Deacons nor lay ministers may ever receive Holy Communion in the manner of a concelebrating Priest. The practice of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion waiting to receive Holy Communion until after the distribution of Holy Communion is not in accord with liturgical law.

40. After all Eucharistic ministers have received Communion, the Bishop or Priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the Deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Deacon may assist the Priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Distribution of the Body and Blood of the Lord

41. Holy Communion under the form of bread is offered to the communicant with the words "The Body of Christ." The communicant may choose whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive him, taking care that nothing is lost."

42. Among the ways of ministering the Precious Blood as prescribed by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Communion from the chalice is generally the preferred form in the Latin Church, provided that it can be carried out properly according to the norms and without any risk of even apparent irreverence toward the Blood of Christ.

43. The chalice is offered to the communicant with the words "The Blood of Christ," to which the communicant responds, "Amen."

44. The chalice may never be left on the altar or another place to be picked up by the communicant for self-communication (except in the case of concelebrating bishops or Priests), nor may the chalice be passed from one communicant to another. There shall always be a minister of the chalice.

45. After each communicant has received the Blood of Christ, the minister carefully wipes both sides of the rim of the chalice with a purificator. This action is a matter of both reverence and hygiene. For the same reason, the minister turns the chalice slightly after each communicant has received the Precious Blood.

46. It is the choice of the communicant, not the minister, to receive from the chalice.

Q. What is the proper posture of the faithful for receiving the body of Christ?

A. According to GIRM 2002, no. 43, the Bishops of the United States have decided that the normative posture for receiving holy communion is standing. Further, the Holy See confirmed the following adaptation that takes the place of GIRM 2002, no. 160, paragraph 2:

"...The norm established for the Dioceses of the United States of America is that Holy Communion is to be received standing, **unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion kneeling (CDWDS, Instruction, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, no. 91) Communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for this norm."**

Q. What is the proper sign of reverence made by the faithful before receiving the body of Christ and the blood of Christ?

A. A bow of the head is the proper and normative gesture when receiving communion under either kind. GIRM 2002, no. 160, reads: "When receiving Holy Communion standing, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood."

Q. How many ministers of the cup should be scheduled?

A. As a rule, there should be two ministers of the cup for each minister of the plate. This helps the communion procession to move with reverence and to accommodate all who wish to drink from the cup.

Q. What should be done if more bread than needed was consecrated?

A. It is either consumed or reserved before the prayer after communion. Any of the ordinary or extraordinary ministers or members of faithful who have already shared in communion may assist in consuming what remains.

Q. What should be done if more wine than needed was consecrated?

A. Concerning the precious blood, none of it can be reserved except in the rare case of a parishioner whose health prevents consuming even a small portion of a host. It may not be reserved nor may it be poured down the sacrarium or on the ground. It must be consumed before the prayer after communion is prayed. Any or all of the following may be used, being sure no member of the faithful still wants to receive from the cup: (a) the priest or other ordinary minister may consume what remains, (b) the extraordinary minister of communion may drink what remains at the communion station, (c) the extraordinary minister of communion may drink what remains at the side table, or (d) members of the faithful who have already received communion may help to consume what remains. Note that no one goes to the sacristy to consume what remains.

Q. May extraordinary ministers cleanse the sacred vessels after the distribution of communion?

A. No longer; the indult was not renewed. ~~Yes. The Holy See, by indult to the conference, grants this permission when the diocesan bishop deems it appropriate. Bishop Lucas permits extraordinary ministers to cleanse the sacred vessels at any Mass when appropriate.~~

Q. May ministers remove sacred vessels to the sacristy before the dismissal from Mass?

A. No.

Q. When does the cleansing or purifying the sacred vessels take place?

A. Two times are possible. Cleansing of the vessels (a) may take place at the side table immediately after communion or (b) may be placed on a corporal at the side table, covered, and then cleansed after Mass either at the side table or in the sacristy.

47. Children are encouraged to receive Communion under both kinds provided that they are properly instructed and that they are old enough to receive from the chalice.

....

50. The communicant, including the extraordinary minister, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. Communion under either form, bread or wine, must always be given by an ordinary or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

Purification of Sacred Vessels

51. After Communion the consecrated bread that remains is to be reserved in the tabernacle. Care should be taken with any fragments remaining on the corporal or in the sacred vessels. The Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest and collects and consumes any remaining fragments.

52. When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for Communion, and if not consumed by the Bishop or Priest celebrant, the Deacon, standing at the altar, "immediately and reverently consumes ~~at the altar~~ all of the Blood of Christ which remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests." When there are extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, they may consume what remains of the Precious Blood from their chalice of distribution with permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

53. ~~The sacred vessels are to be purified by the Priest, the Deacon or an instituted acolyte.~~ The chalice and other vessels may be taken to a side table, where they are cleansed and arranged in the usual way. Other sacred vessels that held the Precious Blood are purified in the same way as chalices. Provided the remaining consecrated bread has been consumed or reserved and the remaining Precious Blood has been consumed, it is permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified...suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people."

...

55. The reverence due to the Precious Blood of the Lord demands that it be fully consumed after Communion is completed and never be poured into the ground or the *sacrarium*.

56. The norms and directives established by the Church for the celebration of any liturgical rite always have as their immediate goal the proper and careful celebration of those rites. However, such directives also have as their purpose the fostering of celebrations that glorify God and deepen the faith, hope, and charity of the participants in liturgical worship. The ordered preparation and celebration of the Mass, and of Holy Communion in particular, should always profoundly affect the faith of communicants in all its aspects and dimensions. In the case of the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, Christian faith in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist can only be renewed and deepened in the life of the faithful by this esteemed practice.

57. In all other matters pertaining to the Rite of Communion under both kinds, the directives of the *General Instruction*, nos. 281-287, are to be consulted.

Q. When should communion pyxes be filled for extraordinary ministers who will carry holy communion to the sick directly from Mass?

A. **There are options.** Pyxes may be brought to the altar during the fraction rite along with the other cups and plates. They are filled either then and left closed on the altar during communion or left on the altar and filled at the end of communion.

After the communion of the faithful, they may be given directly to the extraordinary ministers of communion without any blessing or dismissal or they may be placed on a corporal on the side table until the end of Mass. Care should be taken that the eucharist is safeguarded after the dismissal and any procession of ministers.

Q. When should these ministers be dismissed?

A. **They are dismissed with the rest of the faithful in the concluding rite after the announcements, greeting, and blessing.** The dismissal of these ministers should not take place in either a separate rite prior to the prayer after communion or before the rest of the assembly.

If it is helpful, mention may be made in the announcements of the extraordinary ministers taking holy communion to parishioners unable to come to church for Mass.

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS FOR MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

1. As a rule, liturgical ministers do only one ministry per liturgy. Extraordinary ministers of holy communion should not read or serve or do other special ministry at the same celebration.
2. As a rule, extraordinary ministers of holy communion need not be part of the processions or sit in reserved places. Since the ministry of the eucharist is exercised only during the communion rite, they need not be part of the entrance or closing processions.
3. Extraordinary ministers of holy communion do not wear the alb since the special ministry takes place only during the communion rite.
4. Extraordinary ministers of holy communion are present and active during the entire liturgy.
5. Extraordinary ministers of holy communion, as do all liturgical ministers, show the greatest reverence for the eucharist by their demeanor, their attire, and the manner in which they handle holy communion and the sacred vessels.
6. Great care is taken should there be any mishap during the distribution of communion. If a host is dropped, the minister immediately picks it up and either puts it in the palm of the hand holding the ciborium or plate or takes it to the altar or side table. The minister consumes it at the end of the communion procession.
7. If the blood of Christ is spilled, the minister immediately wipes the floor with the purificator. The area is covered with a purificator until it can be washed. If needed, the minister takes up a new position for ministering the cup with a clean purificator so that the affected area is not in the path of the communion procession. The affected area is then washed or wiped with a wet purificator and the water poured into the sacrarium.



MINISTRY OF COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND THE HOMEBOUND

Special formation, beyond that given to extraordinary ministers of holy communion for Mass, is given to those ministers who will take communion to the sick and the homebound. These ministers must be sensitive to the needs and moods of those they visit. They should be able to make the following observations:

1. What are the particular circumstances of the communicant? Does the person live alone; is he or she bedridden; who provides the care; etc.
2. What are the infirmities of the communicant? Does the person have a hearing impediment; does he or she become disoriented at times or disruptive; etc.
3. Can the person receive the body of Christ or only a portion of it or must the communicant receive the blood of Christ only?
4. How will other members of the household participate in the rite?

Some sick people may not be comfortable with receiving communion more than once a month. They may feel that it is an imposition for anyone to come more frequently. The ministry of communion should be explained and continually offered to the sick and the homebound. Initially, the extraordinary minister of holy communion could accompany the priest on a communion call so that the minister and communicant can become acquainted. It should be made clear to all that the opportunity to receive holy communion from the extraordinary minister will not replace the regular visit of the priest who is the ordinary minister.



The extraordinary minister of holy communion to the sick has permission to take communion to the homebound and infirm at any time. But there is special significance in carrying the eucharist to them directly from the Sunday celebration. The Lord's Day remains the principal day on which the community gathers to celebrate the eucharist. Although they are separated physically from the worshipping community, the infirm and aged are more a part of the community and its Sunday liturgy when they share in holy communion at home on Sunday. The introduction to the rite for "Holy Communion outside Mass" in the ritual book *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, no. 14, states:

“...[I]t is proper that those who are prevented from being present at the community’s celebration should be refreshed with the eucharist. In this way they may realize that they are united not only with the Lord’s sacrifice but also with the community itself and are supported by the love of their brothers and sisters.”

If a sick person should spit out the host, the minister wraps it in the purificator and carries it back to the church. The host and any fragments are placed in a covered vessel with water until the host dissolves. The contents are then placed in the sacrarium.

On occasion, sick people are unable to receive communion under the form of bread. At the discretion of the priest, they may receive it under the form of wine alone. Only in this instance may the precious blood be reserved. It is carried in a vessel that is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. Whatever remains after communion is consumed by the minister who also sees that the vessel is properly purified. See *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, no. 54.

It is part of the good pastoral care for ministers to bring news and information from the parish and the diocese to those they visit. The parish bulletin as well as inserts, flyers, special envelopes, and calendars are items that can be brought for each communion visit. Ministers can also share the announcements from the concluding rite and other information that may be of interest.

The parish should supply the extraordinary ministers of holy communion to the sick with a ritual edition of the proper ritual book that is indicative of the dignity of the liturgy of the Church. Newly designated ministers to the sick and infirm require the mandate of the bishop and are commissioned for this ministry.

RITE OF DISTRIBUTING HOLY COMMUNION OUTSIDE MASS WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

When holy communion is given outside Mass, it may take place within a Celebration of the Word of God as set forth in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, no. 17:

“The local Ordinary may give other special ministers the faculty to give communion whenever it seems necessary for the pastoral benefits of the faithful and a priest, deacon, or acolyte is not available.”

When communion is given outside Mass in a church or chapel, a corporal is placed on the altar, already covered with a cloth. Candles should also be provided. The following rite is used only when the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist is not celebrated that day in the parish church or chapel.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

[Song]
Greeting
Penitential Rite
[Opening Prayer]

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

- Texts are chosen from the Mass of the day or from votive Masses of the Holy Eucharist or the Precious Blood. There may be one or more readings, the first one followed by a responsorial psalm. A short form of the reading of the word is provided in the ritual text.

Readings
Silence
General Intercessions

HOLY COMMUNION

- The eucharist is brought from the tabernacle to the altar.
Lord’s Prayer
Sign of Peace
Showing of the Host
[Communion Song]
Communion
Silence or Song of Praise
Concluding Prayer



CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing
Dismissal

It is the responsibility of the pastor or local superior to determine the need for the distribution of holy communion outside Mass. It is also their responsibility to train, form, and appoint the ministers necessary for the celebration.

It is essential that all those who exercise ministry are familiar with the rites provided by the Church. The rite should be well planned, and include, whenever possible, other members of the assembly to proclaim the readings, to serve, and to enhance the celebration with suitable music.

SOME RESOURCES

Ritual Books and Church Documents

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the Sacramentary, and the Lectionary for Mass.

Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, 1983.

Pastoral Care of the Sick, 1983.

Guidelines for the Reception of Communion. U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1996.

The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions & Answers. A statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2001.

Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Diocese of the United States of America, 2002.

Eucharist, Communion, and Communion Ministers

A Eucharist Sourcebook. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

Joseph M. Champlin, *An Important Office of Immense Love: A Handbook for Eucharistic Ministers*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.

Michael Kwatera, OSB, *The Ministry of Communion*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983.

_____, *Training the Eucharistic Minister*. VHS, 24 minutes. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1987.

Clare T. Pelkey, CSJ, *The Body of Christ: A Guide for Eucharistic Ministers*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1988.

Victoria M. Tufano, *Guide for Ministers of Communion*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

_____, *Guía para Ministros de la Comunión*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

_____, *Video Guide for Ministers of Communion*. VHS, 26 minutes. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

_____, *Video Guía para los Ministros de la Comunión*. VHS. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999.

Eucharistic Ministry to the Sick

Genevieve Glen, OSB, Marilyn Kofler, SP, and Kevin E. O'Connor, *Handbook for Ministers of Care*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Los Ministros de la Comunión a los Enfermos. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Articles and Inserts

Andrew D. Ciferni, OPraem, "This Saving Cup" and "Esta Copa de Salvación." Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, distributed by Oregon Catholic Press.

"Take and Eat" and "Tomen y Coman." Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, distributed by Oregon Catholic Press.

