

III. CELEBRATION OF THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST

- A. Theology of Eucharist
- B. Time and Place of Eucharistic Celebrations
 - 1. Importance of Sunday
 - 2. Multiple Sunday Liturgies
 - 3. Anticipating the Sunday Mass
 - 4. Sacred Space
- C. Eucharistic Elements
 - 1. Communion Under Both Kinds
 - 2. Communion by Intinction
 - 3. Eucharistic Bread
 - 4. Reservation of the Eucharist
- D. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - 1. Functions of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - 2. Procedure for Selection and Commissioning
 - 3. Candidate Pre-requisites
 - 4. Required Formation
 - 5. Manner of Liturgical Function
- E. Ministry to the Sick and Homebound or Those in Institutions
 - 1. General Principles
 - 2. Religious Communities, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Campus Ministry Programs, and Prisons
- F. Sunday Celebration in the Absence of an Ordained Priest

Appendix A Norms for Scheduling Mass Times For Sundays and Holy Days

Appendix B Recipe for Eucharistic Bread

Appendix C Formation Opportunities for Special Ministers of the Eucharist

A. THEOLOGY OF EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is the great prayer of thanksgiving by which the whole Church joins in Christ's offering of himself in thanks and obedience to the Father. In all ages and places Christians have assembled on the Lord's Day, Sunday, to be renewed in the celebration of the sacred mysteries. By gathering as Christ's faithful, by hearing the word of God and by sharing in the Lord's table, they are renewed as God's people and the world is recreated by faith in the resurrection.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy underscores the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church:

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows (#10).

The Eucharistic Mystery stands at the center of Catholic faith and life. The challenge of living the life of Christ and fulfilling his mission can be accomplished if the faithful appreciate the power of the Eucharist. All other actions and works of the Christian life are related to this celebration.

The Eucharist is at one and the same time a Sacrifice-Sacrament, a Communion-Sacrament and a Presence-Sacrament. As sacrifice, the Eucharist is the privileged symbol of Christ's death for humankind. In the Last Supper texts, the total commitment of Jesus ("given/poured out on account of many") is revealed. Christians dare not repeat the meaning of the Cross without being committed to its cost.

When the Last Supper is symbolized, the meaning of the meal is actualized so that the faithful may be enabled to accept the consequences of the Cross. The Eucharistic meal is replete with rituals of love, of reconciliation and of shared commitment. The crucial meaning of the Eucharist is the self-gift of Jesus and its implications for the Church today.

The Church has taught the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements from time immemorial. As the Council of Trent teaches:

The true body and blood of our Lord, together with his soul and divinity, exist under the appearances of bread and wine. (Council of Trent, "Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist," Chapter IV).

This doctrine surpasses all human understanding, all logic, and ultimately all reason. The presence of Christ cannot be known by the senses but only through faith and through the communion which takes place between the Lord and his faithful in the very act of the Eucharistic celebration. Every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we remind ourselves that we are the body of Christ. We call ourselves to live the reality that we are body given, blood poured out and person shared for the sake of others.

If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond "Amen" ("yes, it is true!") and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, "The Body of Christ" and respond "Amen." Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your *Amen* may be true (St. Augustine, *Sermon 272*: PL 338, 1247).

B. TIME AND PLACE OF THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

1. Importance of Sunday

The Second Vatican Council raised awareness of the interrelationship between Sunday and the Eucharistic celebration.

By a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day the faithful are bound to come together into one place. They should listen to the Word of God and take part in the Eucharist (CSL #106).

Many developments in society have changed our lifestyle in ways that have led to the current indifference of many Christians toward Sunday.

This is a deadly danger for their faith and catechesis must constantly emphasize the need for Christians to be nourished by the love of Christ experienced in the Eucharist.

2. Multiple Weekend Masses

The number of (Sunday) Masses is not to be so multiplied as to harm pastoral effectiveness so that churches are underutilized, or priests are overworked (See *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, #26).

The Sunday Eucharist is the principal celebration of the local Church, which both signifies and fosters the unity of believers. Ideally, this is accomplished when there is only one Mass for a parish community. Permission for multiple Masses was originally given not to make participation CONVENIENT, but to make it POSSIBLE. When parishes outgrew their local churches, more than one Mass had to be celebrated. In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, a priest cannot celebrate more than three Masses in one liturgical day.

When fewer Masses are celebrated, the attendance improves and it is easier to ensure that presiders will remain attentive and prayerful, that good music will be sustained by enthusiastic musicians, cantors and leaders of song, that Communion can be ministered under both forms, that the Word will be proclaimed well, and that hospitality will be gracious and inviting.

Recognition of the official discipline of the Church reinforces not only the right, but often the need, to reduce the number of Sunday Masses celebrated in a given faith community.

It is not licit for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except for certain instances [such as Christmas] when the law permits such celebration or concelebration more than once (Canon 905).

After establishing this general rule, the second paragraph states an exception:

If priests are lacking, the local Ordinary (Bishop) may permit priests, for a just cause, to celebrate twice and even, if pastoral need requires it, three times on Sunday and holy days of obligation (Canon 905).

Pastoral need is demonstrated when the space in the church or the number of priests cannot accommodate the number of people who wish to attend Mass. Mere convenience of individuals or rigid adherence to a given schedule is not adequate reason to multiply Sunday Masses. Any attempt to improve the quality of liturgical celebration serves the real interest of the people.

3. Anticipating the Sunday Mass

A related issue to that of multiple Sunday Masses is the practice of anticipating the celebration on Saturday evening.

...pastors should carefully teach the faithful the meaning of this favor and should take steps to prevent its lessening in any way the sense of what Sunday is. This concession is meant to enable the faithful in today's conditions to celebrate more easily the day of the Lord's resurrection ("*Eucharisticum mysterium*" #28).

The indult was originally intended principally for people who are unable to participate in the celebration of Eucharist on Sunday. The special, sacred character of Sunday is lost when Sunday is freed from worship.

The liturgical day goes from sunset to sunset. Hence, vigil Masses are appropriately celebrated after sunset. Provincial Law, which the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston belongs, sets 4:30 PM as the earliest time for Mass to begin on Saturday.

See Appendix A: Norms for Scheduling Masses For Sundays and Holy Days

4. Sacred Space

To insure the reverent and careful celebration of the Eucharist, its celebration is to take place in a religious edifice.

The celebration of the Eucharist is to be performed in a sacred space, unless in a particular case necessity demands otherwise (Canon 932 §1).

To promote the cathedral church as the center of the liturgical life of the diocese, liturgies celebrated by the bishop for special occasions in the city of Wheeling or Charleston will be celebrated in the cathedral or another properly designated church or chapel. Permission of the bishop is required for any exception to this rule. These exceptions will be considered on an individual basis.

C. EUCHARISTIC ELEMENTS

1. Communion Under Both Kinds

The Second Vatican Council restored the ancient practice of Communion under both kinds. It did so, to express Christ's presence in the Eucharist more fully and to carry out the symbolic action which is articulated in the words

"Take this, all of you, and eat of it..."

and

Take this, all of you, and drink from it..."

This restored practice encourages a fuller form of participation in the Mass.

In June 2001, the United States Catholic Bishops received an indult where by the document entitled, *Norms for the Celebration and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the United States of America* is recognized.

In response to a provision of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops herein describes "the methods of distributing Holy Communion to the faithful under both kinds" and approves the following "norms, with the proper *recognitio* of the Apostolic See." The purpose of these norms is to ensure the reverent and careful distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds (22).

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the practice of communion under both species is the general norm, except in the following cases:

- a. when Masses are celebrated in the open with a great number of communicants;
- b. when the number of communicants is so great as to make it difficult for Communion under both kinds to be given in an orderly and reverent way;
- c. at Masses where the assembled congregation is of such a diverse nature that it is difficult to ascertain whether those present have been sufficiently instructed about receiving Communion under both kinds;
- d. when circumstances do not permit the assurance that due reverence can be maintained towards the consecrated wine both during and after the celebration (cf. *"Inaestimabile Donum"*, 13-14). Letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship, October 13, 1984.

2. Communion by Intinction

Communion by intinction is not the usual practice for a parish liturgy.

However, according to the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion*

Holy Communion may be distributed by intinction in the following manner: "the communicant, while holding the paten under the chin, approaches the priest who holds the vessel with the hosts and at whose side stands the minister holding the chalice. The priest takes the host, intincts the particle into the chalice and, showing it, says: 'The Body and Blood of Christ.' The communicant responds, 'Amen,' and receives the Sacrament on the tongue from the priest. Afterwards, the communicant returns to his or her place (49).

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 (50).

3. Eucharistic Bread

The bread for the celebration of the Eucharist in accordance with the tradition of the whole Church, must be made solely of wheat, and in accordance with the tradition proper to the Latin Church, it must be unleavened. By reason of the sign, the matter of Eucharistic celebration "should appear as actual food." This is to be understood as linked to the consistency of the bread, and not to its form, which remains the traditional one.

No other ingredients are to be added to the wheaten flour and water. The preparation of the bread requires attentive care, to ensure that the product does not detract from the dignity due to the Eucharistic bread, can be broken in a dignified way, does not give rise to excessive fragments, and does not offend the sensibilities of the faithful when they eat it "*Inaestimabile Donum*" #8. (See Appendix B for recipe).

In recent years, the Church has become increasingly aware of Catholics who are unable to receive communion due to an intolerance to gluten (the protein in wheat; as in the case of gluten-sensitive enteropathy, or celiac sprue).

Only the Diocesan bishop may grant permission for the use of low-gluten hosts on a case-by-case basis. Requests for permission must come from the pastor in writing. Upon review, such permission will be granted habitually for as long as the situation continues which precipitated the request. Lay persons who are gluten intolerant should inform their pastor of their condition.

The pastor should discuss with them that one solution would be to receive communion under the species of wine alone or the use of low-gluten hosts; in all cases, the individual should discuss the use of low-gluten hosts with their physician. If the decision is made, after medical consultation, to request the use of low-gluten hosts, permission from the bishop must be sought.

4. Reservation of the Eucharist

The practice of consecrating a large number of hosts at one Mass for distribution at other Masses or of consecrating an excessive amount of wine at any one Mass runs contrary to the nature of faithful participation in the Eucharistic celebration. The full, conscious and active participation of the faithful includes their **reception of the Eucharist consecrated at the Mass in which they are participating**.

Presumably, the amount of bread and wine consecrated at a given Mass should be enough to serve the assembly. The reservation of the Eucharist is not maintained for the purpose of storing large quantities of consecrated hosts for use at subsequent Masses. Rather the consecrated hosts are to be reserved in parish churches and oratories primarily for the administration of viaticum to the dying, and secondarily for giving communion especially to the sick outside Mass, for Eucharistic adoration, and for administration of Communion in the absence of an ordained priest. Reservation of consecrated wine is never permitted.

a. Reservation of Consecrated Bread

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM #85) states:

"It is most desirable that the faithful receive the Lord's body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass..."

Hosts are to be taken from the tabernacle during Mass only when it is evident that an insufficient amount of bread has been consecrated for the entire assembly to receive Communion.

b. Reservation of Consecrated Wine

The amount of wine to be consecrated should be carefully measured before the celebration so that none remains afterward. However, this is not an easy task. On the rare occasion that too much wine is consecrated, it is to be consumed reverently.

When more of the Precious Blood remains than was necessary for

Communion, and if not consumed by the bishop or priest celebrant "the deacon immediately and reverently consumes at the altar all of the Blood of Christ which remains; he may be assisted, if needs dictate, 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 (52).

D. EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

The *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani (editio typica tertia)* [General Instruction of the Roman Missal-Third edition] (GIRM) and *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America* refer consistently to “Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion,” rather than to “Eucharistic Ministers” or “Special Ministers of the Eucharist.” This, then, is the preferred title for and clearer description of this particular ministry.

“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” [Redemptionis Sacramentum, 156].

1. Functions of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be commissioned for two different functions:

- a) Those who assist the priest in ministering Holy Communion at Mass.
- b) Those who bring Holy Communion to the sick or homebound outside of Mass.

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 tasks of ministering the Eucharist to the faithful who legitimately request it, and especially from taking and giving it to the sick (c.f. “*Immensae Caritatis*” 1. #VI).

Rather than replacing the priest, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is an extension of the community’s concern for the sick and homebound. It is his/her responsibility to request periodically that the priest make himself available to the sick and the homebound so that they will not be deprived of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.

The responsibilities for ministry at Mass and to the sick and homebound are separate since they require different talents, different formation, and different procedures. One person may feel comfortable serving at the altar, but be uncomfortable in dealing with the sick or elderly. Another may be comfortable in working in a one-to-one situation, but feel awkward in front of a group.

It is possible that a person be mandated for both ministries at the same time. However, this should not be an automatic procedure. Talents and preference should be taken into consideration.

2. Procedure for Selection and Commissioning

A. Selection of Candidates

Pastors shall consult with staff members and members of Parish Liturgy Committees to determine the number of Extraordinary Ministers needed, suggest names of potential candidates and decide on formation programs to be offered. Ministry involves responding to authentic needs and is rooted in Baptism.

Only those who have received an official mandate in writing from the Bishop may serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Names for delegation are to be submitted in writing to the Office of Worship and Sacraments by the Pastor or his delegate. Mandates (certificates) are mailed to the Pastor and are to be given to the candidates at the time of public commissioning.

The Pastor's letter of request is to specify the pastoral need, the formation to be given, the full names of the candidates, and the type of mandate requested (at the altar, for the sick, or both).

A mandate is granted for three years and is to be renewed at the end of that time if the person is to continue to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Parishes are asked to work with the Office of Worship and Sacraments to designate one month each year when new ministers will be added.

The written form of the mandate is a certificate which designates a person by name to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (at the altar, for the sick, or both). The specific three-year term of service is noted. The certificate will bear the signature of the Bishop and provide space for the signature of the local Pastor.

A person is mandated for a specific parish, mission, or chapel, and not the Diocese-at-large.

In a case of real necessity, a person may be authorized by a priest in a local situation to minister Holy Communion on a SINGLE occasion. This is to be the exception and not the norm.

B. Commissioning

Whenever new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are mandated, a public commissioning ceremony is to take place in the parish. Ideally, this ceremony will take place at a Sunday Mass (Pentecost or Corpus Christi are appropriate Sundays because of the nature of the feast celebrated) or some other appropriate feast day Mass, such as Holy Thursday or the parish feast day. An appropriate Commissioning ceremony can be found in the *Book of Blessings*, #1874.

3. Candidate Pre-requisites

Either men or women who have been fully initiated and who exhibit sufficient maturity may be proposed as candidates. In the judgment of the Pastor and his staff, they should be serious about this ministry and striving to live our communal faith.

“The persons who have been appointed to be extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are necessarily to be duly instructed and should distinguish themselves by Christian life, faith, and morals. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office; Let them cultivate devotion to the Holy Eucharist and show themselves as examples to the other faithful by their piety and reverence for this most holy Sacrament of the altar. Let no one be chosen whose selection may cause scandal among the faithful” (*Immensae Caritatis* #6 - cited in plural).

In addition, consideration should be given to their gifts to perform their ministry well (gifts such as a respect for symbol and ritual communication, a sense of presence, an attitude of reverence, an interest in, caring about, and being at ease with other people, a comfortableness in dealing with the sick and/or elderly).

Potential candidates, whether by personal request or specific invitation, must understand that a discernment component is built into the formation process. Hence, at any time, either the candidate, him/herself, or the director of the program may discern that another form of ministry would be more compatible to the particular gifts of this individual.

Further, if this is the first time that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are being used in a parish, catechesis is to be given the parish at large. If this practice is in existence and no catechesis has been given or there seems to be some misunderstanding about this practice, it would be beneficial to see that proper catechesis is given before extending the practice.

4. Required Formation

Since Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion actually participate in an ecclesial and liturgical ministry and are not simply functionaries, they are required to have adequate training and preparatory formation. This is not an “optional nicety.” It is a necessity that can bring depth, reverence, and insight to this ministry. The local parish is responsible to see that this training and formation are provided. This must be a face-to face training with a hands-on component. Additional opportunities for on-going formation are also provided by the Office of Worship and Sacraments. A suggested booklet is “Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion” by Kenneth A. Riley and Paul Turner [Liturgical Training Publications].

Further, this training and formation are to meet the following norms:

- a. The Candidates are to be given instruction on the nature of Jesus mission, a Vatican II understanding of Church and a contemporary sense of lay ministry. In particular, they are to be given a clear and detailed presentation of the theology of Eucharist that puts it in the context of the Eucharistic celebration.
- b. The Candidate should be instructed in the manner of ministering Communion at the altar and/or to the sick. It is expected that this presentation also will provide rationale for the “how-to of ministry.” Part of this instruction is to be experiential: opening and closing the tabernacle, getting the feel of a chalice and ciborium, going through the ritual, etc.
- c. In the case of those who are being prepared to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion outside of Mass, some instruction in pastoral practice concerning the sick, aged, and dying is to be provided. Resources are available from the Office of Worship and Sacraments.

5. Manner of Liturgical Function

A. Reception of Communion by Ministers

“These ministers should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion...” [GIRM, 162]. It is acceptable for the Extraordinary Ministers to come forward (for example, to the steps or threshold of what would be considered the sanctuary) during the Lamb of God, or to stand far enough behind the altar (if there is enough space), so that it does not appear as if they are standing *at* or *around* the altar. They can move closer to the altar after the priest has received the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Celebrant and concelebrants receive the Body and Blood of Christ immediately after the invitation to Communion. Only after they have received, that Holy Communion is ministered to the other ministers and to the assembly. If there is a large number of concelebrants, the Communion of the assembly may begin while the priests are still consuming the Precious Blood.

After the priest’s communion, the deacon receives under both kinds and then assists the priest in ministering communion to the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. When a deacon is present, he is to be one of the ordinary ministers.

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Communion by intinction is not the norm for parish liturgy. The reasoning is that this practice may remove the communicant’s legitimate option to receive Communion in the hand or, for valid reasons, not to receive the consecrated wine. Great care is taken to be sensitive to those living with alcoholism who may only receive the Precious Body, or those with low-gluten intolerance who may only be capable of receiving the Precious Blood.

“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” [*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, 42].

B. Act of Ministering

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, the general norm is to have communion under both species at all parishes.* Two chalices should generally be used for each ciborium or communion plate. The chalices should be at a sufficient distance from the plate to allow a reverent consumption and to allow for flow of the communion procession.

The communicant has the option of receiving the Precious Body on the tongue or in the hand. The choice is the communicant’s, not the minister’s. The practice of self-intinction (whereby the communicant takes the Consecrated Bread and dips it in the Precious Blood contained in the chalice) is not allowed. If intinction is done, the minister is the one who takes the Body and dips it in the Blood and then gives it to the communicant on the tongue.

Prior to the beginning of Mass, ministers should be encouraged to wash their hands and even to use an alcohol-based solution such as waterless hand gels before and after distributing Holy Communion.

In distributing the sacred host, direct contact between the distributor's fingers and the hand or tongue of the communicant should be avoided. Please realize that this may take practice in order to ensure that the Consecrated bread does not fall on the ground.

The minister holding the Consecrated Bread addresses the communicant with the words, "The Body of Christ." The communicant answers. "Amen." (This is the ritual language of the Church. Other substitutions are not to be used.)

The minister holding the chalice addresses the communicant with the words, "The Blood of Christ." The communicant answers "Amen." The minister then gives the chalice to the communicant. The minister then wipes the lip of the chalice with a cloth (purificator), inside and out, after the person has communicated and turns the chalice approximately ninety degrees.

The action of distribution, whether it is on the tongue, in the hand, or from the chalice, is an action of ministry. Eye contact and a reverent presentation of the Body and Blood of Christ are important.

It is important to remember that the presumption on the part of the Extraordinary Minister is that the communicant has a right to receive Holy Communion and should not be denied. No Extraordinary minister may refuse Communion to someone who comes forward to receive. If there are questions or concerns about someone's eligibility, it may be discussed privately with the Pastor at an appropriate time.

If a piece of Consecrated Bread falls to the ground during the ministering of Communion, the extraordinary minister should pick it up immediately and consume it. In circumstances where the consecrated bread has been partially consumed but spit-up, the remaining amount should be wiped into a purificator. The remains can then afterwards be placed in a small dish with water to dissolve. This can then be properly disposed into the sacrarium.

If Precious Blood is spilled, then a purificator should be used to wipe the remains. If it is spilled on carpet, then water may also be used to cleanse the area with a purificator.

After all have been ministered to, the ciboria and chalices are brought to the Altar or the credence table where they are purified by the priest or deacon. The priest or deacon may purify the vessels after Mass, allowing undisturbed time for thanksgiving following communion. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may consume the Precious Blood that remains in the chalices at the Altar or Credence Table, but only the priest(s) or deacon(s) may purify the sacred vessels.

In the Churches in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, it is recommended that the already purified vessels be washed, especially the chalices, with soap and hot water on a regular basis. Washing the vessels is completely excluded from the rites and is aimed at sanitizing the vessels, done out of concern for appearance of the vessels and for hygiene. Washing may be done by an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, an acolyte, a sacristan, or another person delegated by the Pastor.

**In times of wide-spread illness, the Bishop may issue alternative guidelines in order to maintain sensible hygienic practices.*

C. Attire

Since this ministry is an exercise of the Baptismal priesthood of the faithful, and because Extraordinary Ministers are seated in the assembly with their families when they are not ministering, it is appropriate that they dress neatly in lay apparel which is consonant with the dignity of their ministry.

E. MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND OR THOSE IN INSTITUTIONS

1. General Principles

The ministry provided here by the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is a supplement to and not a substitution for the ministry of the priest.

In enlisting ministers for service to the sick, special care is to be taken in choosing persons who have sensitivity to the needs of others and who can convey the compassion of the Lord to the sick. In addition, special formation should be given these ministers. Professional Ministers of Pastoral Care can be invited to serve as resource persons to Extraordinary Ministers of the sick.

The Pastor or his delegate is to arrange an introduction of the Extraordinary Ministers to the individual sick people, assuring the home or hospital bound that his own availability will not be lessened. The Extraordinary Minister is yet another expression of the community's concern for the sick and homebound.

The Extraordinary Minister, in visiting the sick, should follow the appropriate ritual. A suggested booklet is ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNION TO THE SICK BY AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER. These may be ordered from the Office of Worship and Sacraments.

Local communities are strongly encouraged to develop programs whereby Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion bring the Communion to the sick and those confined to a home or institution. This can be done in connection with the Sunday Eucharist. Such a program would acquaint the parish community with this ministry and unite the sick and those confined to a home or institution to the celebration of the Lord's Day.

It is recommended that hosts for the sick and homebound be consecrated in the Mass from which they will be taken and in which the Extraordinary Ministers have participated. In this case, there are a number of options:

- a. After distribution of Communion to the assembly, and before the Prayer after Communion, Extraordinary Ministers may come forward to receive their Hosts for distribution.
- b. During the Communion rite, the consecrated hosts for distribution to the sick and homebound may be put into Eucharistic containers such as a pyx. These are then placed in the tabernacle until after Mass when the Extraordinary Ministers may pick them up.

The Pastor should see that worthy Eucharistic containers are available for use by Extraordinary Ministers to the sick and homebound. The consecrated host is not to be carried in a handkerchief, envelope or similar unworthy container.

Consecrated hosts which cannot be distributed immediately and consumed at once by the sick and homebound should be consumed by the Extraordinary Minister or returned to the tabernacle. They should not be left to be received at a later time, carried around while doing other business, or kept in the car or home of the Extraordinary Minister.

2. Religious Communities, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Campus Ministry Programs and Prisons

Pastors or chaplains, as appropriate and in consultation with the local religious superior, may request mandates for members of a religious community to be authorized to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion within the local religious house.

For hospitals or nursing homes to which no Catholic chaplain is assigned, the Pastor of the parish in which the institution is located may propose candidates to serve an Extraordinary Ministers. (In cases where a number of parishes utilize the same hospital or care facility, each parish may provide for its own parishioners).

Communication: In the case of hospitals, nursing homes and prisons, a clear explanation must be made to the administrators of that institution that, in addition to the usual priests and/or deacons, Extraordinary Ministers will serve the sick there as well. A list of those so authorized should be furnished to the proper local authorities. An identification card indicating that a given person is an authorized Extraordinary Minister may also be helpful. Furthermore, the Extraordinary Minister should be aware of all laws regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with regard to strict privacy and the non-disclosure of medical information.

Supervision: The priest who initially obtains the permission for a particular Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the Sick assumes a responsibility to that candidate for ongoing supervision. He should meet regularly with the Extraordinary Minister(s) regarding various details of their ministry.

F . SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ORDAINED PRIEST

In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, it is not permitted to have a Sunday celebration in the absence of an ordained priest, unless special permission is granted by the bishop. Care is to be taken that a substitute priest is found. Please call the Office of the Vicar for Clergy for assistance. If an emergency does occur, please consult the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. If a Deacon is present, it is appropriate that he preside over the service.