



Guidelines for
Acolytes, Altar Servers and
Extraordinary Ministers
of Holy Communion

ISSUED BY THE DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

2005



The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) was published authoritatively in Latin with the publication of the Missal Romanum (Vatican City 2002). At the time of publication there is no official English translation of the text for use in Australia. References to the GIRM in this document are to the 2002 version using the interim ICEL translation.

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INTRODUCTION

“Christ the Lord has left to the Church, his spouse, a testament of his immense love. This wonderful gift of the Eucharist, which is the greatest gift of all, demands that such an important mystery should be increasingly better known and its saving power more fully shared. With the intention of fostering devotion to the Eucharist – the summit and centre of Christian worship – the Church, moved by pastoral zeal and concern, has on more than one occasion issued suitable laws and appropriate documents.”

(Immensae Caritatis, Pope Paul VI, 1973)

“The Eucharist, as Christ’s saving presence in the community of the faithful and its spiritual food, is the most precious possession which the Church can have in her journey through history.” *(Ecclesia de Eucharistia, Pope John Paul II 2003)*

“The Church’s doctrine regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, in which the whole spiritual wealth of the Church is contained – namely Christ, our Paschal Lamb – the Eucharist which is the source and summit of the whole of Christian life, and which lies as a causative force behind the very origins of the Church, has been expounded with thoughtful care and with great authority over the course of the centuries in the writings of the Councils and the Supreme Pontiffs.” *(Redemptionis Sacramentum 2004)*

I am most grateful to our Diocesan Liturgical Commission for drafting these Guidelines according to the Church’s teaching on the Mystery of Faith we celebrate, receive and adore in the Holy Eucharist. It is my wish to promote an understanding, shared by all, of the reverence and respect needed and of the complementarity of the various ministries as we celebrate the Eucharistic Mystery. When we prepare for the liturgy, the needs of the particular faith community are to be taken into account.

These Diocesan Guidelines attempt to develop a common understanding built on the contents of liturgical law, with suggestions for good liturgical practice, while underscoring the expectations of the universal Church and the local Church of the Diocese. It is my fervent hope that they will be of assistance to the Pastors of our Diocese as well as to the Religious and Lay liturgical ministers who so generously give of their time to foster worthy celebrations of the liturgy that will nourish participants’ faith so that we may all be of *one mind and heart* because we understand, love and serve (GIRM #24) the Sacred Liturgy of the Church.

I authorise them for use in the Diocese of Wollongong.



Most Rev Peter W Ingham DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
14 September 2004

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early in 1972 two decisions made in Rome had a profound effect on what had happened until then in the distribution of Holy Communion.

On 1 January 1972 the Church implemented Pope Paul VI’s decree of 15 August 1971 that the ministries of Acolyte and Lector would now be available to lay people.

One of the roles for Acolytes would be to assist with the distribution of Holy Communion.

A month later, on 25 January 1972, the Church issued the faculty by which lay people could assist with the distribution of Communion.

In July 1992 Pope John Paul II confirmed a Vatican clarification that the 1983 Code of Canon Law allows both males and females to assist at serving Mass.

Bishop Ingham has authorised that this clarification may be availed of in the Diocese of Wollongong.

2. THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF MINISTRIES

“For these people are the People of God purchased by Christ’s Blood, gathered together by the Lord, nourished by his Word. . . . These people are holy by their origin but becoming ever more holy by conscious, active, and fruitful participation in the mystery of the Eucharist.” (GIRM #5)

Liturgical ministry within the Eucharistic celebration is a call to participate in a special way in this marvellous mystery: the dying of Jesus, his rising and coming again. Those to whom the church entrusts this sacred ministry, are called to a most “important office of immense love”. (Pope Paul VI, Immensae Caritatis, 25 January 1973)

“The nature of the ministerial priesthood also puts into its proper light another reality, which must indeed be highly regarded, namely, the royal priesthood of the faithful. Through the ministry of the Bishop and the priests, the faithful’s spiritual sacrifice is brought to completeness in union with the sacrifice of Christ, the one and only Mediator. For the celebration of the Eucharist is the action of the whole Church; in this celebration, all, in

virtue of their position within the People of God, should do all but only those parts that belong to them. In this way greater attention will also be given to some aspects of the celebration that have sometimes been neglected in the course of time.” (GIRM #5)

The call to liturgical ministry within the celebration of the Eucharist is based in Baptism and the royal priesthood of the faithful. As selfless, mature service, it requires proper disposition, ongoing formation and continual conversion. Liturgical service enriches faith and impels us to a deeper commitment to the Christian life. Good liturgical practice enriches faith for all present; poor practice can be a stumbling block for growth in faith.

Each ministry group - acolytes, readers, Eucharistic ministers, servers, commentators, cantors, musicians, sacristans, ushers, collectors - will need periodic education on how their respective roles complement each other and highlight the ministerial priesthood proper to a Bishop and a priest, *“who offer the sacrifice in the person of Christ and preside at the assembly of the holy people.”* (GIRM #4)

It is liturgically inappropriate, for example, in normal circumstances for altar ministers to assume other roles such as reading, commentating, or leading music.

Because each ministry's role is to contribute to the overall prayerful experience of the community, the number of persons around the altar needs to be adequate but not superfluous.

The prime characteristic of all that surrounds liturgical celebration is *"noble simplicity"*. (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 34)

The roles and tasks of those who serve within the liturgy are guided by and arise from this characteristic. At all times during the Liturgy of the Eucharist the focus is the Eucharistic action and care is taken to avoid any gesture or movement that draws attention to oneself and distracts the Assembly from this focus.

This will be achieved firstly by the proper initial training of all persons in their respective roles, and secondly, by their ongoing formation in liturgy.

3. ACOLYTES

Role

- a) The liturgical ministry of the Acolyte is to assist the Priest or Deacon in the service of the altar. (GIRM #98)
- b) The Acolyte has a particular role in preparing the altar and the sacred vessels. In the absence of an Acolyte, an Altar Server may assume this role.
- c) The role of the Acolyte during the celebration of Mass is outlined in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM #188-193). Practical interpretation of these for this Diocese is given in Appendix A.
- d) The Priest stands at the altar leading the Eucharistic Prayer. To preserve this presidential role no one (except other concelebrants or a Deacon) stands beside the Priest at the altar. Nor does the Acolyte sit at the side of the Priest. The Priest's chair symbolises his unique presidential role and is shared only by Deacons if available.
- e) An Acolyte may act as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. (GIRM #98)

Institution of Acolytes

Five-Year Faculty of Service

- a) Intending candidates are expected to have completed an introductory course drawn up by the Diocesan Liturgy Office and approved by the Bishop.
- b) Acolytes are required to be at least 16 years of age.
- c) During the introductory course the candidates are reminded that their decision to enter the ministry is to be made only after they have completed the course and understood the significance of their decision.
- d) The Bishop institutes Acolytes at a Parish or at times at a Diocesan ceremony after a written application by the candidate and an assurance by the Parish Priest that certain prerequisites of experience and formation have been met. (see The Rites, Part II, p 107)
- e) A candidate is instituted in the Ministry of Acolyte for his lifetime and is not required to be reinstated.

3. ACOLYTES *(continued)*

- f) In the Diocese of Wollongong, permission to regularly exercise the ministry is at the discretion of the Bishop and is granted for a maximum period of five years, following which the Acolyte may apply for a further period of service.
- g) The Bishop reserves the right to withdraw the faculty of service at any time.
- h) The Acolyte's faculty of service permits him to serve anywhere within the territory of the Diocese of Wollongong, but always and only at the invitation of the Priest in charge of the church or chapel.
- i) An Acolyte taking up permanent residence outside the Diocese of Wollongong automatically surrenders his faculty to exercise his ministry within the Diocese and he is requested to notify the Diocesan Liturgy Office of his departure.
- j) An Acolyte from another Diocese, taking up permanent residence and service in the Wollongong Diocese, is asked to notify the Diocesan Liturgy Office of the date and place of institution and other details so that a Five-Year Faculty of Service can be issued.
- k) Any Acolyte wishing not to continue in the active ministry before the conclusion of five years is expected simply to notify his Parish Priest and the Diocesan Liturgy Office of the fact.

and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. Consequently, they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, in the measure proper to each one, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner." (Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 29)

"Lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil their role." (Canon 231§1)

"Since an Acolyte is especially destined for the service of the altar, he should familiarise himself with everything which pertains to divine worship and should endeavour to understand its spirit and its inner meaning." (Pope Paul VI, Ministeria Quaedam, 15 August 1972, #6)

The term "training" refers to all that people need to know to carry out their role with confidence and understanding.

"Formation" refers to wider education and other assistance given from time to time to help people mature in the understanding of their ministry and role. Formation may include courses on liturgy, or some specific liturgical rite, retreats and spiritual enrichment days.

Ongoing formation of Acolytes and Adult Servers involves more than knowing the rubrics. They need to have an understanding of the spirit of the liturgy and to continually renew this understanding.

Acolyte formation takes place at both Parish and Diocesan level.

Formation and Training of Acolytes

"Those who serve at the altar exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought to discharge their office therefore, with the sincere devotion

The Diocesan Liturgy Office will conduct

- a) An introductory course for candidates applying to become Acolytes.
- b) Regional gatherings from time to time to provide enrichment in their understanding of the liturgy.

The Parish will provide

- a) Initial formation in scripture, theology and the principles of liturgy - especially where it has not been possible for candidates to attend

the Diocesan course. In this case, the Parish undertakes to conduct a course with content similar to the Diocesan course.

- b) Practical training based on the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.
- c) Regular opportunities for personal reflection and deeper appreciation of their ministry. This may well take place in conjunction with Acolytes from neighbouring parishes and combined with formation for Adult Servers.

4. ADULT ALTAR SERVERS

Role

- a) An Adult Server is a lay minister commissioned to serve at the altar and assist the Priest and Deacon in a similar way to the Acolyte. (GIRM #100)
- b) An Adult Server may carry the cross, the candles, the censor (thurible), the bread, the wine, and the water. (GIRM #100)
- c) The Adult Server may act as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion if he/she has been commissioned for this role. In the case of necessity, the Priest may commission for the occasion. (GIRM #162)
- d) An Adult Server performs the functions of an Acolyte with the exception of cleansing the sacred vessels after the distribution of Communion.

Commissioning of Adult Altar Servers

- a) The Parish Priest commissions Adult Altar Servers at a Sunday Mass after prerequisites

of formation have been met (see Book of Blessings, p 783) or at the ceremony where the Bishop institutes acolytes for the parish.

- b) Adult Altar Servers are 16 years or older.
- c) An Adult Altar Server applies to his or her Parish Priest or is invited to participate in this lay liturgical ministry by the Pastor.
- d) The local Pastor determines the time of service.
- e) An Adult Altar Server simply notifies his or her Parish Priest when no longer able to assist at the altar.
- f) Intending candidates are invited to attend the introductory course conducted by the Diocesan Liturgy Office for Acolytes or to participate in a similar course conducted within their Parish.
- g) The Adult Altar Server may offer his or her service anywhere within the territory of the Diocese of Wollongong, but always and only at the invitation of the Priest in charge of the church or chapel.

Formation and Training of Adult Altar Servers

"Those who serve at the altar exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought to discharge their office therefore, with the sincere devotion and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. Consequently, they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, in the measure proper to each one, and they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner." (Vatican II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 29)

"Lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil their role." (Canon 231§1)

Formation of men and women Adult Servers will also take place at both Diocesan and Parish levels.

5. JUNIOR ALTAR SERVERS

- a) The Altar Servers' special ministry is to serve in the sanctuary, in areas pertaining to the altar and lectern.
- b) Under the direction of an Acolyte or Adult Server, they assist with the smooth flow of the liturgical rite, enhancing the spirit of worship and prayer.
- c) Servers need to be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out with appropriate reverence. They should have already received Holy Communion for the first time and normally receive the Eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
- d) Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues along with the congregation. They also join in the singing of the hymns.
- e) For young people, their time of altar service may play an important part in their personal spiritual growth. It is considered to be a laudable practice for parishes to encourage young people in this form of service.
- f) Servers are seated in a suitable place on the sanctuary. The place next to the Priest is normally reserved for the Deacon.
- g) Altar Servers play a very visible part in parish liturgy. Their training and formation programs take place at parish level. The formation of Junior Servers should include instruction on the Mass and its parts and their meaning. Servers need appropriate guidance on maintaining proper decorum and attire when serving Mass and other liturgies.

- h) In keeping with the special dignity of this ministry of service within the sanctuary, opportunities for continuing education and reflection are offered.
- i) The proper training of Servers, especially the young, is most important and is ideally

- the responsibility of one or two people in the parish so that uniformity and consistency can be maintained throughout the group.
- j) The Order for Blessing of Altar Servers may be used before altar servers first begin to function in this ministry. (Book of Blessings p 783)

6. EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion is the Bishop, Priest or Deacon. Those who assist the ordained are called "Extraordinary" Ministers of Holy Communion. (GIRM #162)

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (Commissioned)
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the School Environment
- Extraordinary Ministers taking Holy Communion to the Sick and Elderly
- "Ad Hoc" Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Role

- a) This ministry involves men and women in giving Communion to the Assembly. It may also involve taking Communion to the sick and elderly. (*Immensae Caritatis, I*)
- b) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion do not normally participate in the entrance procession. They do not normally go to the tabernacle during the Eucharist.
- c) The ministers approach the altar after the Priest has received Communion. (GIRM #162) In some parishes it may be advisable to gather in a suitable place outside the sanctuary area after the Lamb of God, in order to approach the altar in an orderly fashion.

- d) After receiving Communion, they receive the vessel containing the Eucharistic species from the priest and move to their position for the distribution of the Body or Blood of the Lord.
- e) After distribution of Communion, the ministers take the vessels to the place designated, and then move to their seats according to local custom, thus presenting a minimum of distraction during the post-Communion reflection.
- f) Ministers show the greatest reverence for the Holy Eucharist by their demeanour, their attire, and the manner in which they handle the consecrated bread and wine.

Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- a) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned by the Parish Priest within a Parish Sunday Mass. They are commissioned according to *"The Order for the Commissioning of Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion."* (Book of Blessings, p 795 or The Rites, Part II, p 142)
- b) In the parish setting, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (including "Ad Hoc" Ministers) should be at least 16 years of age.

- c) The criteria of *"Immensae Caritatis"* are to be observed in their selection:

"The faithful who are extraordinary ministers of communion must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting." (Immensae Caritatis, Part I:vi)

- d) The recommended occasion for induction is the Solemn Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. The ceremony takes place after the Gospel during the Sunday Eucharist.
- e) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned for a three-year period. At the end of this time, the situation of the minister, local circumstances and the discretion of the Parish Priest will determine whether new or additional candidates are required, and whether existing ministers will be asked to step down.
- f) Ad hoc Ministers of Holy Communion may be called upon by priests when Acolytes or appointed Extraordinary Ministers are unavailable. The blessing may be given in the following or similar words:

Priest:

Merciful God, creator and guide of your family, bless our brothers/sisters who have been chosen to give the Bread of Life to your people on this special occasion. May the saving mysteries they distribute lead them to the joys of eternal life

OR

May the Lord bless you as you minister the Body of Christ to God's faithful people.

Formation and Training of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Formation and training is provided by the local parish. From time to time the Diocesan Liturgical Commission will assist with general formation sessions.

Eucharistic Ministers need to receive sufficient spiritual, theological and practical preparation in order to fulfil their role with knowledge and reverence.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the School Environment

In Masses which take place within the school environment, those who are designated Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in their own parishes may exercise the ministry. This may include students in the school community who participate in the ministry in their home parish.

On the occasion of there not being any Eucharistic Ministers who minister in their local parish, "Ad Hoc" Ministers may be commissioned with a blessing. They need to be at least 16 years of age and would be selected after consultation with the Parish Priest or school chaplain.

Extraordinary Ministers Taking Holy Communion to the Sick and Elderly

Acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed by the Pastor to take Communion to the sick and elderly when there is pastoral need.

Communion of the Sick and Sunday Mass

"The faithful who are ill are deprived of their rightful and accustomed place in the eucharistic community. In bringing Communion to them the minister of Communion represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of the whole community." Pastoral Care of the Sick, 73

"The obligation to visit and comfort those who cannot take part in the Eucharistic Assembly may be clearly demonstrated by taking Communion to them from the community's Eucharistic celebration. This symbol of unity between the community and its sick members has the deepest significance on the Lord's Day, the special day of the Eucharistic Assembly." Pastoral Care of the Sick, 73

Sunday is an ideal day for Communion to the sick since every Sunday is a "little Easter" commemorating the resurrection of Jesus. It is the day of the week when God calls his people together to worship *"in spirit and in truth"*.

To establish clearly the link between Communion of the Sick and the Sunday Eucharist of the community, the Extraordinary Minister will ordinarily take the Eucharist from Sunday Mass. Such ministers will normally be commissioned in the midst of the Eucharistic assembly after the Prayer after Communion using the following or similar formula:

Celebrant:

**Dear friends in Christ,
you are now to carry the Body of the Lord
from this Eucharistic assembly
to our brothers and sisters who are
unable to be here with us.
Give them our greetings,
read today's Scriptures with them,
pray with them and minister to them
this most precious sacrament.**

The priest then hands the pyxes to the Communion Ministers. After the final blessing and dismissal they may process out with the celebrant and proceed to their destinations.

The Journey

The following practical guidelines are suggested as ways to show reverence to the Blessed Sacrament:

- a) The minister carries the consecrated host(s) in a pyx.
- b) *"The Communion Minister should wear attire appropriate to this ministry."* Pastoral Care of the Sick, 72
- c) When carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick the minister will endeavour to be aware of the presence of the Lord and to remain in prayer with Him. While being courteous to people who are met along the way, the minister will not engage in unnecessary conversation.
- d) The minister carrying the Body of Christ ordinarily goes to the sick person without unnecessary digression eg it is not appropriate to do shopping on the way. However, the minister may prefer to take the family home in the car first, unless the family is to be involved in visiting the sick. The passengers in the car may join in praying some common prayers or listening to reflective music.
- e) The minister may wish to take another parishioner or family member on the visit and this is a laudable practice.
- f) To reinforce the connection with the parish community, and where the sick or elderly person is well enough, it is recommended that the Parish bulletin and /or the *Catholic Weekly* be taken to the person. Alternatively, the Eucharistic Minister may share the news of the Parish after the Rite of Communion is completed.

- g) In arranging the time of the visit the minister may encourage other members of the family to be present.

The Visit

- a) Upon entering the room the minister greets the sick person and others present in a warm, friendly manner. It may be appropriate to chat for a few minutes before beginning the prayer. If you are a personal friend and are likely to have a lengthy and animated visit, it may be most appropriate to pray and minister communion early in the visit so that the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is not forgotten.
- b) When the time comes to begin the prayer, the minister spreads out the cloth on the table, lights the candle (unless safety requires otherwise as in the case of oxygen cylinders in use) and sets the book with the Scriptures or the Sunday Missal on the table.

Rite of Communion of the Sick

There are two Rites for Communion of the Sick.

Rite A: The full Rite for use when Communion takes place in ordinary circumstances, eg a visit to a sick person's home or to a private room in a hospital. This Rite includes a Liturgy of the Word.

Rite B: A modified Rite for use in more restrictive circumstances such as in hospital wards or nursing homes or when the sick person is very unwell.

Both these Rites can be found in Pastoral Care of the Sick.

Rite A

Holy Communion in Ordinary Circumstances

This Rite follows closely the structure of the Mass. The elements of the Rite are as follows:

Greeting
Penitential Rite
Scripture Reading and Response
Prayer of the Faithful
The Lord's Prayer
Communion
Silent Prayer
Prayer after Communion
Blessing

This outline can be used as a guide to shape a visit that is appropriate to each situation, eg a portion of a reading may be all that is needed by a sick person. What is important is that some effort is made to make parts of the Mass present to the sick, including some sharing of the Word.

Rite B

Holy Communion in a Hospital or Institution

This shorter Rite contains the following elements:

Greeting
The Lord's Prayer
Communion
Concluding Prayer

Whenever possible, Communion of the Sick is accompanied by a reading of the Word of God (a small portion from the Sunday readings is suitable) and other prayers and responses associated with the Mass. Hence the full Rite is used in most circumstances.

Some Practical Considerations

- a) When giving Communion to the sick person, it can happen that the minister may sometimes need to break off a portion of the Host rather than use the complete particle. Some seriously ill people may have **difficulty in swallowing** and their mouths may be quite dry. Thus, a drink of water immediately before or after giving Communion might be offered to help the patient swallow the sacred Host.

Those with difficulty in swallowing may also be helped if the minister floats a small particle of a Host on a spoonful of water and 'feeds' the sick person with the spoon. Needless to say, if there are no more sick to be visited, the remainder of such a broken Host is to be returned to the tabernacle or consumed by the minister.

- b) After distributing Holy Communion it can be most helpful for the minister to pray with the sick person - either spontaneously or by saying slowly the person's favourite prayers, eg the Lord's Prayer, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Anima Christi. It will be appreciated that, besides the formal prayers of the Rite of Communion to the Sick, this warmth and kindness is a way of communicating the mercy and love of Christ.
- c) Extra consecrated hosts not used after taking Communion to the sick must be taken back to the Church and replaced in the tabernacle. Do not overlook the possibility of giving the last communicant more than one consecrated host.
- d) Those who cannot receive Communion in the form of bread may receive it in the form of wine. The precious Blood must be carried to the sick person in a vessel so secured as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If all the precious Blood is not consumed, the minister consumes it and then washes the vessel with water. Water used for cleansing the vessel may be drunk or poured out in a suitable place.
- e) It is recommended that each one who has been refreshed by Communion should remain in prayer for a period of time.

Preparation of the Sick Room

It is appropriate that the following preparation be made:

A small table or sideboard area with a clean cloth, a crucifix and a lighted candle is set up near the sick bed. A small glass of water may also be required for the sick person. In many cases the minister may need to bring the suitable cloth (preferably white or cream), the crucifix and the candle(s) and many ministers would be advised to carry a small kit for this purpose.

Fast

The sick and those who assist them are exempt from the Eucharistic fast.

"Ad Hoc" Ministers of Holy Communion

"Ad Hoc" Ministers of Holy Communion may be called upon by Priests when Acolytes or appointed Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are unavailable. However, care should be taken that they are adequately prepared for their task.

"Ad Hoc" Ministers include family members who may be appointed by the Parish Priest to give Communion to the ill, to a person with disabilities or a dying family member. As in the case of Acolytes and Ministers of Holy Communion appointed to take Communion to the sick and elderly, care is taken to preserve the ecclesial sense of continuity with both the community and the Eucharistic liturgy from which the Eucharist is brought to the sick person.

Distribution of Communion over the Easter Period

- a) Holy Communion may be taken to the sick on Holy Thursday and Good Friday.
- b) On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may be given only by way of viaticum. (14, 15, 16 from *Communion Outside Mass - June 21, 1973*)

7. ORDER OF COMMUNION RITE

"It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and that, in the instances when it is permitted, they participate in the chalice, so that even by means of the signs, Communion will stand out more clearly as a sharing in the sacrifice actually being celebrated." (GIRM #85)

If an occasion should arise when more particles than those consecrated at a particular Eucharist are needed, the tabernacle may be approached.

The number of consecrated hosts reserved in the tabernacle should be kept to a minimum to emphasise the actual Communion at a particular Mass. Also, it has significance for the sick, for example, to know that they are communicating from a particular Mass at which they have been prayed for.

After the distribution of Communion, the gathering of the remaining particles into one vessel is done discreetly. In ordinary circumstances the Priest returns the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. Local parishes may have an established custom of delegating this role to an appropriate minister. Meanwhile, the other Ministers of Communion return to their seats in a manner according to local custom. At this point in the Communion Rite the tabernacle is not the focus. The time immediately following Communion is primarily a time of prayer and thanksgiving.

Good liturgical sense suggests that the calm of the Communion reflection be established as soon as possible. During the distribution of Communion objects on the altar can be removed by the Acolyte and the Servers. The Priest moves to his chair at the earliest opportunity, thus showing that the time of prayer has commenced. (GIRM #164)

Appendix A

The Role of the Acolyte and Adult Server at Mass

Before Mass Begins

- a) The Acolyte is instituted to serve at the altar and to assist the Priests and Deacon. In particular, it is up to the Acolyte to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels. (GIRM #98)
- b) Adult men and women servers may fulfil the duties of an Acolyte with the exception of purification of the sacred vessels. (GIRM #100 and #107)

Preparations for Mass

- a) Set the Altar. Prepare water and wine, breads, ciborium, chalice, candles, church lights, microphones, lectionary and Book of Gospels (set places), Missal and other ritual books needed. If incense is to be used, thurible and boat ready, charcoal alight.
- b) Acolyte and Adult Servers wear alb and cincture.

Introductory Rites

- a) In the procession to the altar, the Acolyte or Server may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the cross is placed upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, it is put in a worthy place. Then the cross bearer takes his or her place in the sanctuary. (GIRM #188)
- b) The procession forms in the following order:
 - Thurifier
 - Cross bearer (Acolyte or Adult Server)
 - Two candle bearers
 - Other Acolytes and/or Servers
 - Reader/s
 - Celebrant(GIRM #120)

- c) If used, the thurible is presented to the Celebrant after he has kissed the altar.
- d) Through the entire celebration the Acolyte or Server is to approach the Priest or the Deacon, whenever necessary, in order to present the book to them and to assist them in any other way required. Thus, it is appropriate that, whenever possible, the Acolyte or Server occupies a place from which he or she can conveniently fulfil this ministry. (GIRM #189) This does not mean the Acolyte or Server sits beside the Priest (reserved for the Deacon), or stands facing the people, or stands behind or beside the Priest at the altar during the Eucharistic prayer (reserved for other concelebrants or the Deacon).
- e) The Missal is held before the Celebrant at the chair for the Introductory Rites, concluding with the Opening Prayer. The book is held so that the Celebrant's view of the congregation is not obscured (for example, Acolyte or Server stands to the side to hold the book).
- f) Candle bearers may accompany the Celebrant to the lectern and flank it during the Gospel.
- g) If thurible is used, incense is put in the thurible prior to the Gospel. The Celebrant is presented with the thurible after he announces *"a reading from the Holy Gospel . . ."*.
- h) Books are held before the Celebrant at the Creed and Prayer of the Faithful.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- a) After the Prayer of the Faithful, when no Deacon is present, the Acolyte or Server prepares the altar. The corporal is spread in the centre of the altar, chalice and purifier are placed at the right hand corner of the altar, the Missal (on stand) is placed to the left of the corporal. (GIRM #139)

- b) The Acolyte or Server assists the Priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, when appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the Priest. (GIRM #190)
- c) If incense is used, the Acolyte or Server presents the censer (thurible) to the Priest and assists him in incensing the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the Acolyte or Server incenses the Priest and the people. (GIRM #190)
- d) The Acolyte or other minister presents the cruets to the Priest. (GIRM #142)
- e) The Celebrant's hands are washed according to local custom. Besides handling the jug and basin, the Acolyte or Server would assist by opening the towel for easier use by the Celebrant.
- f) If bells are used, the bell is rung at the elevation of the Host and Chalice according to local custom. (GIRM #150)
- f) Greeting of peace is exchanged with the Celebrant and with other ministers on the sanctuary.
- h) Bell may be rung after "Lamb of God" (local custom).

The Communion Rite

- a) If needed, a duly instituted Acolyte, as an Extraordinary Minister, may assist the Priest in giving Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, when no Deacon is present, the Acolyte may administer the Chalice to the communicants. (GIRM #191)
- b) If an Adult Server is also an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion he or she may also assist with the distribution of Holy Communion or may be specially commissioned by the Celebrant on that occasion to do so.

- c) The GIRM assumes that Holy Communion will be distributed from hosts consecrated at that Mass. Hence, there is no mention of approaching the Tabernacle before Communion. If such a need arises due to miscalculation, the Tabernacle may be approached by the Celebrant or Deacon or one of the ministers who normally has authority to access the tabernacle.
- d) If there are consecrated hosts left after Communion, the Priest either consumes them at the altar or carries them to the Tabernacle (GIRM #163) or he may ask an Acolyte or an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist to do so.
- e) *"After the distribution of Communion, a duly instituted Acolyte helps the Priest to cleanse and arrange the sacred vessels. When no Deacon is present, the Acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the side table, and there cleanses, wipes and arranges them in the customary way."* (GIRM #192) The purification of the vessels may be left until immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people. (GIRM #163)

The Dismissal Rite

- a) The Acolyte or Server holds the book for the Prayer after Communion and the Dismissal Rite as required.
- b) After the celebration of Mass, the Acolyte, Adult Server and other ministers return in procession to the sacristy together with the Deacon and the Priest in the same way and order in which they entered. (GIRM #193)
- c) Candles and lights are put out; books, vessels, etc, returned to cupboards - unless another Mass is to follow.

You, however, are the Body of Christ and his members. If, therefore, you are the Body of Christ and his members, your mystery is presented at the table of the Lord, you receive your mystery.

To that which you are, you answer: "Amen";
and by answering, you subscribe to it.

For you hear: "The Body of Christ!" and you answer:
"Amen!" Be a member of Christ's Body,
so that your "Amen" may be the truth.

Saint Augustine

