

Extraordinary Ministers Of Communion



*2011 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)
Canadian Edition*

Overview

- *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal makes a distinction between a formally instituted acolyte, which is a permanent ministry, and other ministers who serve the priest or distribute communion as an extraordinary minister.*
- *A formally instituted acolyte may assist the priest as an extraordinary minister in giving communion to the people. In the absence of a deacon the acolyte may administer the chalice (Cf. 187, 191)*

Preparation

- *The ministers should arrive early to make the necessary preparations for the Liturgy.*

Introductory Rites

- Once the people have gathered, the priest with the deacon and ministers, clad in their sacred vestments, go in procession to the altar ... while the entrance song is sung, (120, 47).
- The alb is the vestment common to all ministers, ordained and lay, (cf. 336).
- Acolytes, lectors and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other vestment that is approved by the Conference of Bishops, (cf. 339).

Entrance Procession

The order of procession is (120):

- A server with smoking thurible, if incense is used;
- The servers carrying lighted candles, and between them an acolyte or server with the cross;
- **The acolytes and other ministers;**
- The lectors, one of whom, if no deacon is present, may carry the Book of the Gospels, slightly elevated;
- The deacon, who may carry the Book of the Gospels;
- The priest who is to celebrate the Mass.

Approaching the Altar

- When the priest, the deacon, and the ministers enter the sanctuary, they greet the altar with a **profound bow**. (49, 122)
- After bowing to the altar, the extraordinary ministers of communion go to their places.
- They should have an assigned place in the sanctuary or nearby.

Reverences

- There are two kinds of bows: (1) a bow of the head or slight bow, and (2) a bow of the body or profound bow (cf. 275).
- If there is a tabernacle in the sanctuary, the priest, deacon and other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar or leave the sanctuary, but not during the celebration of Mass itself.
- At other times, all who pass before the Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are part of a procession.
- Ministers who carry the processional cross or candles bow their heads in place of a genuflection (cf. 274).

Liturgy of the Word

- After the opening prayer, all sit and listen to the readings with reverence and join in the chants, prayers and responses, (cf. 128, 56, 29).

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The ministers and the people associate themselves with the priest in faith and in silence, as well as through their parts prescribed in the course of the Eucharistic Prayer.
- These...are their responses in the preface dialogue, the Sanctus, the acclamation after the consecration, and the acclamatory Amen after the final doxology, as well as other acclamations, approved by the Conference of Bishops and recognized by the Holy See. (147)

Communion Rite

- At the rite of peace, it is suitable that each person offer the sign of peace only to those nearby and in a dignified manner. (Cf. 82, 154)

Communion Rite

- The extraordinary ministers should not approach the altar before the priest has received Communion.
- After their Communion they accept from the hands of the priest celebrant the vessel containing either species of the Most Holy Eucharist for distribution to the faithful. (86, 162)

Communion Rite

- *The intention of this legislation is that extraordinary ministers of communion do not stand at the altar for the eucharistic prayer and that they are not confused with concelebrants.*
- *Since their ministry is to assist the priest and deacon with the distribution of communion, there is no reason for them to stand at the altar during the celebration.*

Communion Rite

- *They do come to the altar to receive communion before distributing it to the people, following the principle that one cannot give what one has not received.*
- *This directive does not prohibit the communion ministers from taking their places in the sanctuary for the celebration, or moving into the sanctuary during the sign of peace. In this way they are ready to move to the altar to receive communion themselves so as not to delay unduly the communion of the faithful.*

Communion Rite

- The extraordinary ministers of communion are no longer permitted to assist the priest in breaking the bread (83), or to purify or cleanse the sacred vessels --this is reserved to a formally instituted acolyte, a deacon or the priest (279).

Communion Rite

- It is not permitted to pour the consecrated wine into other chalices (83). Sufficient chalices should be brought to the altar at the Preparation of the Gifts.

Communion of the People

- The faithful communicate either standing or kneeling, as determined by the Conference of Bishops.
- When they communicate standing, however, it is recommended that they make an appropriate sign of reverence, as determined in the same norms, before receiving the Sacrament. (160)

Communion of the People

- If the host or any particle of it should fall, it is to be picked up reverently. If any of the precious Blood spills, the area where the spill occurred should be washed and the water poured into the sacrarium.... (280)

Communion Rite

- The priest or minister raises the host slightly and shows it to each person, saying: “The Body of Christ”. The communicant replies: “Amen,” and receives the Sacrament either on the tongue or in the hand. (161)
- The same procedure is followed by those ministering the Chalice, as they say: “The Blood of Christ.” (284-287).

After Communion

- When they have finished the distribution of Communion, the extraordinary ministers of communion return the vessels of eucharistic Bread or consecrated Wine to the priest or deacon at the altar (see no. 163).
- When fragments of the hosts adhere to the fingers, the ministers of the consecrated bread go to the credence table to purify their fingers, then they return to their places (see no. 278).

After Communion

- After Communion, as circumstances allow, the priest and faithful spend some time praying silently praising God in their hearts.
- To complete the prayer of the people of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion rite, the priest offers the prayer after communion in which he petitions for the fruits of the mysteries just celebrated. (45, 88-89)

Concluding Rite

- At the end of Mass the priest and deacon venerate the altar with a kiss.
- Then with the lay ministers they make a profound bow, and all leave in the manner followed for the entrance procession. (169, 186)

Communion to the Sick

- *Those who are sick or home bound are united to God's people assembled for the Sunday Eucharist by sharing in communion. For this reason, communion to the sick is taken directly from the altar and from the Eucharistic Bread consecrated at this Mass.*
- *The extraordinary ministers designated to bring the Eucharist to the sick first share in communion themselves.*

Communion to the Sick

- *After the Communion of the all faithful, they then approach the altar.*
- *At the altar, the priest, assisted by the deacon, places the consecrated hosts in a pyx and hands it to the ministers.*
- *No prayer is prescribed at this time, since it is the action of handing the elements to the ministers that is important. Moreover, a sending forth ceremony would break the flow of the communion hymn.*

Communion to the Sick

- *The ministers either leave immediately to bring Communion to the sick or remain near the altar and leave in the closing procession.*
- *After the priest has handed the consecrated elements to the ministers, he goes to the chair.*
- *To be avoided is the practice of the extraordinary ministers holding up pyxes to receive the Eucharistic Bread at the same time that they themselves receive Communion during the communion procession.*



Amen

The End