



PASTORAL GUIDANCE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
COMMUNION RITE AT MASS
SECOND EDITION

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The Origin and Development

In February 2013, following the intervention of Bishop Bill concerning the Fraction Rite that takes place during the Communion Rite at the celebration of Mass, the Diocesan Liturgy Council (DLC) prepared a Practice Note offering advice and guidance on how that part of the Mass might be suitably celebrated.

In the intervening years, the diocese's Liturgy Office has fielded numerous questions from the parishes of the diocese that touch on the way in which the Communion Rite of Mass should be celebrated appropriately.

In reflecting on the nature of these questions and the way in which the celebration of the Communion Rite takes place, the DLC thought it appropriate to draft some guidance to assist the parishes, and the diocese, to celebrate the Communion Rite in a more fitting and appropriate way. In doing so, the DLC returned to the source documents, particularly the 2002 edition of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), along with previous diocesan statements connected with parts of the Communion Rite to develop draft guidance.

The draft guidance was provided to Bishop Bill for his reflection and input and, in light of his feedback, was updated and finalised. The first edition of the Guidance was subsequently released in November 2018.

In early 2019, following the release of the first edition of the Guidance, the DLC undertook a process of consultation and conversation, the feedback from which has been incorporated in this second edition of the Guidance.

The Guidance document is available on the diocesan website. The document is entitled ***Pastoral Guidance for the Celebration of the Communion Rite at Mass (2nd edition)***.

Exhortation

The Communion Rite is a ritual unit within the Liturgy of the Eucharist that celebrates the final two parts of the four-part Eucharistic action – the breaking and the giving. Culminating in the reception of Communion, the Communion Rite contains the highpoint of the entire Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The parish celebration of Mass is infused with the faith of the parish community, and the celebration of the Communion Rite is the pivotal moment when the Body of Christ assembled receives the Body and Blood of Christ in order to become more fully who it is called to be.

I commend this Guidance to you.

It takes effect immediately, nothing the contrary withstanding and abrogates any previous Guidance.

Given at Hamilton, NSW, on the fourteenth September 2020.



Rev Andrew Doohan VG
Vicar General





Introduction

The celebration of Eucharist is referred to in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church as the source and summit of the Christian life (a. 11). The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy says that we, the faithful, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators, but should take part fully conscious of what we are doing: being instructed by God's Word, nourished at the table of the Lord's Body, and offering Christ and ourselves with the priest (a. 48). Yes, we are offering ourselves with Christ! No wonder some writers say we should think twice before entering a Church to celebrate Mass!

Our understanding of the Communion Rite is informed by this context. From its beginning with the Lord's Prayer, all the elements of the Communion Rite are preparing us for communion; for that procession when we, the Body of Christ gathered around the altar, come forward as sisters and brothers to receive the Body of Christ from the altar. As Augustine says, we receive what we already are, in order that we might become more truly who we are. It is in the action of holy communion that we become more truly a 'holy communion'.

If we are to take part in the Communion Rite 'conscious of what we are doing', presiders, liturgy teams and liturgical ministers must ensure the ritual action is shaped to reveal the truth of the mystery we celebrate. It is by doing the communion rite well, that we are prepared to proclaim our Amen truly.

The Body of Christ. AMEN!
The Blood of Christ. AMEN!

We hope the reflections and recommendations offered in the following pages address the questions some of you have posed in recent years.

*So now, if you want to understand the body of Christ,
listen to the Apostle Paul speaking to the faithful:
"You are the body of Christ, member for member." [1 Cor 12.27]
If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members,
it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table!
It is your own mystery that you are receiving!
You are saying "Amen" to what you are—:
your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith.
When you hear "The body of Christ" —you reply "Amen."
Be a member of Christ's body, then,
so that your "Amen" may ring true!*

From 'Your Own Mystery', a Homily by St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (430 CE)

Best wishes



Louise Gannon rsj

Manager, Worship and Prayer on behalf of the Diocesan Liturgy Council.

September 2020





Pastoral Guidance for the Celebration of the Communion Rite at Mass

At the Last Supper Christ instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet, by which the Sacrifice of the Cross is continuously made present in the Church whenever the Priest, representing Christ the Lord, carries out what the Lord himself did and handed over to his disciples to be done in his memory.

... For Christ took the bread and the chalice, gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat and drink: this is my Body; this is the chalice of my Blood. Do this in memory of me. Hence, the Church has arranged the entire celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist in parts corresponding to precisely these words and actions of Christ ...

General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 72

The Communion Rite is a ritual unit within the Liturgy of the Eucharist that celebrates the final two parts of the four-part Eucharistic action – the breaking and the giving. It consists of the following individual ritual elements:

- ▶ The Lord's Prayer
- ▶ The Rite of Peace
- ▶ The Fraction of the Bread
- ▶ Communion
- ▶ The Prayer after Communion

It is important to remember that, like everything that happens during the celebration of Mass or other liturgies, there is nothing private about

the Communion Rite. It is a corporate and communal action; something 'we' do, not something 'I' do. There are personal moments during the communal rite, but it remains – always – a communal action in which we all partake. The Communion Rite cannot, and should not, be seen as something that is about personal preference.

Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of the Guidance is not to provide prescriptive directions to be followed in every parish without exception. The variety of locations in which Mass is celebrated across the diocese means that such a task is simply impossible and entirely impractical.

The purpose of the Guidance, then, is to provide information and recommendations for local parishes, from which they can discern and decide how they might best celebrate the Communion Rite in their particular setting.

The Guidance

To assist parishes in their celebration of the Communion Rite the Diocesan Liturgy Council offers the following information, guidance, and recommendations:

The Lord's Prayer

Background

The Lord's Prayer ('Our Father') is one of the quintessential Christian prayers and holds a particular place of honour in the liturgical and prayer life of the Church. When the disciples asked Jesus how they should pray this is the prayer he taught them (cf Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). This is the reason the Lord's Prayer features regularly in many liturgical rituals.

During the Lord's Prayer the Presider, and any other concelebrating priests who are present, adopt the 'orans' position, i.e. they extend their hands palm upwards. The 'orans' position is an ancient posture of prayer having a history that goes back well before the advent of Christianity.

While not the sole preserve of the ordained, there are some who believe that only the ordained should use the posture during Mass; other scholars dispute that interpretation and believe it can be used by anyone in the assembly. In some cultures, adopting this posture is seen both as normative and obligatory. Suffice it to say that the adoption or non-adoption of the 'orans' position by other than the ordained priest should not be something that becomes a distraction or issue of division within the worshipping community.

Similarly, some people have adopted the practice of holding hands during the praying of the Lord's Prayer. Again, the adoption or otherwise of such a practice should not be a cause of distraction or division within the worshipping community.

Guidance

1. **It is highly recommended** that nothing be done to either encourage or discourage the adoption of the 'orans' position by members of the assembly during the praying of the Lord's Prayer, nor to encourage or discourage the holding of hands by members of the assembly during the Lord's Prayer.
2. **It is highly recommended** that members of the assembly are not pressured to adopt gestures that are not part of the official liturgy. While unity in posture is an important liturgical symbol there is room for legitimate diversity in this case.

The Rite of Peace

The Rite of Peace is an expression by all the members of the liturgical assembly of their ecclesial communion and mutual charity towards each other. It is a sacramental expression of the exchange of the peace of Christ between members of the gathered assembly, not an opportunity to greet people.

The appropriate time to greet other members of the assembly is either before Mass begins or after it concludes, i.e. as the Body of Christ that is the Church gathers together for worship or as the Body of Christ that is the Church prepares to disperse on mission.

While the usual expression of the Sign of Peace in Australia is the shaking of the other's hand, other expressions particular to regions or customs are not excluded. Special consideration should be given to not discouraging appropriate cultural expressions where they are encountered.

Guidance

3. Members of the assembly should offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest to themselves, and in a sober manner. It is not appropriate to walk around the church building.

The Presider offers the sign of peace to other ministers in the sanctuary. Ministers should not leave the sanctuary to offer the sign of peace to other members of the assembly, except for a valid pastoral reason, e.g. to the members of the immediate family during a celebration of a funeral Mass.

4. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be provided to members of the liturgical assembly as to the nature of the Rite of Peace as being an expression of Christ's peace. **It is recommended** that the Rite of Peace is celebrated appropriately and does not unduly impact on the Fraction of the Bread.



The Fraction of the Bread (also known as 'The Fraction Rite')

Background

The Fraction of the Bread is, of its nature, a 'messy' point during the celebration of Mass, wherein the liturgical assembly transitions to an immediate preparation, and readiness, for the receiving of Communion. Additional vessels for the distribution of Communion may need to be placed on the altar. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will need to move from their seats into the sanctuary. Although not the ideal, the Reserved Sacrament may, from time to time, need to be retrieved from the Tabernacle. It is quite understandable then how this moment in the celebration of the Mass can pass with minimal attention.

The practicalities associated with the Fraction Rite cannot be ignored. These physical actions need to take place so the natural flow of the liturgy is not interrupted or delayed unnecessarily. However, they need to be seen in their proper context, and therefore take place in an appropriate way and at an appropriate point during the Fraction Rite.

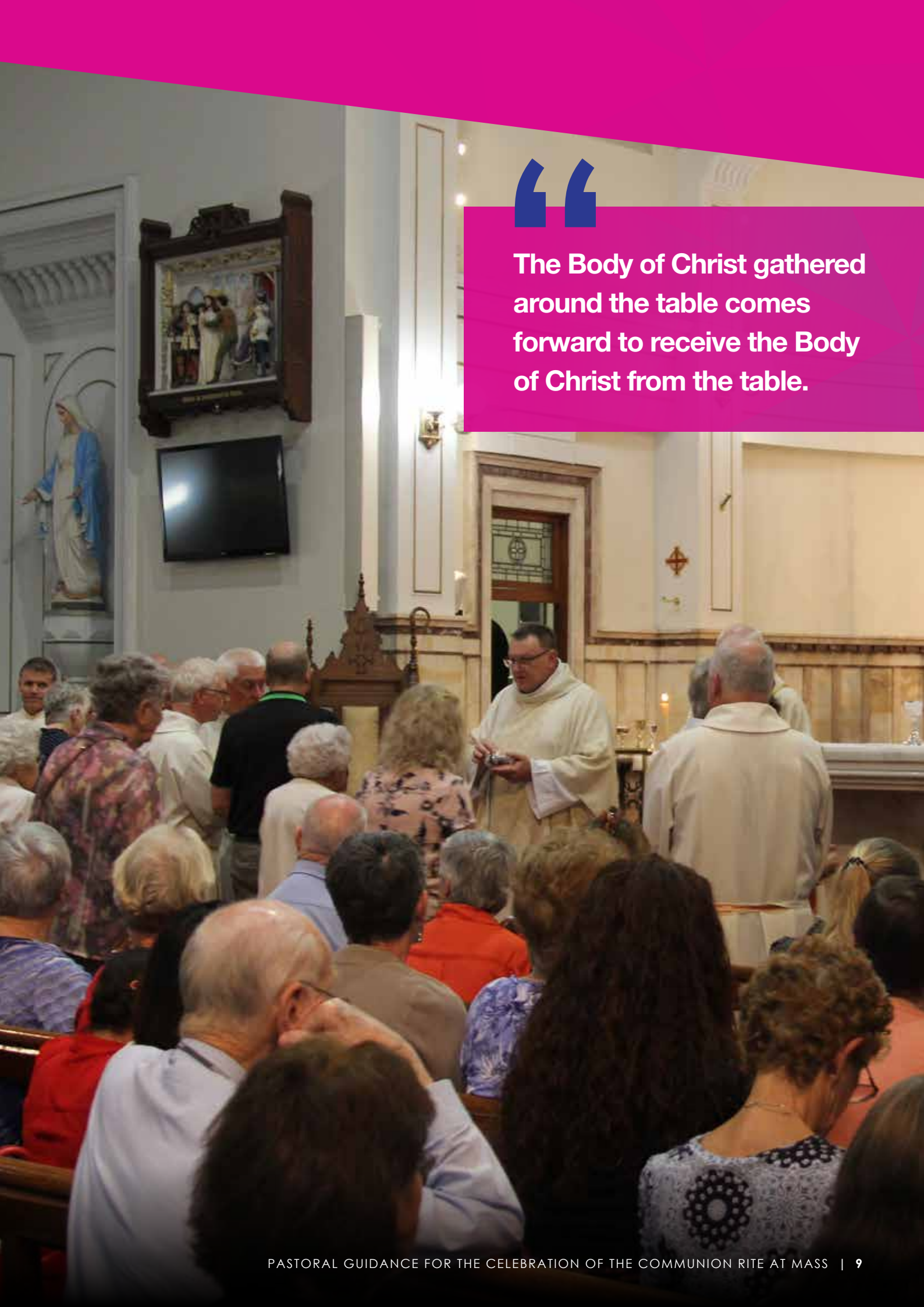
The Fraction of the Bread is accompanied by the invocation Agnus Dei, either sung (preferable) or recited aloud. A reading of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 2002 (GIRM) (no 83) makes it clear that the chant is an accompaniment to the action, and not vice versa (cf. GIRM 1975, 113). To begin the chanting, singing, or reciting of the invocation prior to the action of 'Breaking the

Bread' would seem to be contrary to the intention of the GIRM. It is proper for the assembly to begin the invocation Agnus Dei when it is not sung; it should not be left to the presider to begin the invocation, nor should presiders habitually lead the assembly in the words of the invocation.

It should be observed that the 2002 GIRM notes that "The fraction or breaking of bread is begun after the sign of peace and is carried out **with proper reverence**, and should not be **unnecessarily prolonged** or **accorded exaggerated importance**" (GIRM 2002, 83, emphasis added). However, the 2002 GIRM omits the sentence "This rite is not simply functional" that was found in the 1975 GIRM (no 56c). Clearly, this omission has some significance, and cannot be ignored, but neither can the new requirements of the GIRM 2002 be allowed to be ignored. Good liturgical practice, then, would seem to lay somewhere between these two extremes.

Guidance

5. The Fraction Rite is a significant moment in the celebration of the Mass and should thus be given its proper influence. **It is recommended** that the Presider not begin the Fraction Rite until the Rite of Peace has completed and a sufficient level of 'stillness' has returned to the liturgical assembly so that, in the prudent judgement of the Presider, it is appropriate to begin the Fraction Rite.
6. The Agnus Dei invocation accompanies the Fraction Rite and not vice versa and should not begin until the Presider is ready to begin the Fraction Rite by the first 'breaking of bread'. The invocation should continue until the 'breaking of bread' has completed and should not be unnecessarily truncated. It is recommended that appropriate catechesis be given to musicians and members of the liturgical assembly so that they become aware the Agnus Dei invocation, whether sung or recited, starts with or soon after the first 'breaking of bread' and not immediately after the giving of the sign of peace.
Pastoral Note: Encouragement and catechesis should be given to the members of the liturgical assembly that beginning the



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The Body of Christ gathered around the table comes forward to receive the Body of Christ from the table.



Communion is something that is received, not taken.

invocation belongs to them and not the presider.

7. Although some local consideration is required because of variety of church designs, **it is recommended** that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion move into the sanctuary of the church either during the Rite of Peace or after the Fraction Rite is concluded but not during the 'breaking of bread' itself (with all movement ceasing during that ritual action). **It is recommended** that Extraordinary Ministers be encouraged to sit closer to the sanctuary when they are rostered to fulfil that ministry, to reduce the distance they need to walk.
8. The 2020 experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened our awareness of the need to practice good hygiene when exercising liturgical ministry. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that such practices do not attract undue attention or interrupt the flow of the liturgy. **It is recommended** that the presider and all ministers of communion – ordinary and extraordinary – thoroughly wash their hands immediately before the liturgy begins. There should be no washing or sanitising of hands

as Extraordinary Ministers of Communion move into the sanctuary. If ministers feel a further need to wash or sanitise their hands, this should be done discreetly before entering the sanctuary. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion about this matter.

9. The placing or removing of items from the altar prior to the distribution of Communion is a necessary part of the preparations for that ritual act. These things need to take place, but should be carried out in such a way as not to detract from the Fraction Rite or unnecessarily delay the celebration of Mass. It is recommended that these actions take place either during the Rite of Peace or after the 'breaking of bread' is concluded but not during the 'breaking of bread' itself.

It is strongly recommended that the Reserved Sacrament not be brought from the Tabernacle either before or during the 'breaking of bread'.

10. **It is strongly recommended** that the Reserved Sacrament be retrieved from the Tabernacle only when absolutely necessary and not as a matter of routine practice. If the

Reserved Sacrament is needed, it should be retrieved at the point it becomes necessary, e.g. during the Communion procession, and then only at the direction of the Presider.

Communion

Background

The reception of Communion itself is the culmination of the entire Liturgy of the Eucharist and, therefore, should not simply be a functional element of the celebration of Mass. The procession of the liturgical assembly, the Body of Christ assembled, to receive the Body (and Blood) of Christ and to become more fully who it is called to be, is a pivotal moment in the celebration of Mass.

It is important to remember as we celebrate the reception of Communion that our liturgical actions give a physical expression to our theological understanding of both the act of receiving Communion and our understanding of Eucharist. For that reason, it is important to remember the following:

- a. The significance of everyone in the liturgical assembly receiving Communion from the elements consecrated during the actual celebration of the Mass – as opposed to receiving from the Reserved Sacrament – cannot be overstated. “... by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated” (GIRM 2002, 85). The habitual use of the Reserved Sacrament to enable the Communion of the liturgical assembly is something to be avoided.
- b. For similar reasons, any habitual practice of the Presider receiving Communion from a host that is specifically consecrated solely for himself, without allowing for the possibility of at least some members of the liturgical assembly receiving Communion from the same host, is something to be avoided. Such a practice reinforces an

unfortunate and diminished understanding of Communion, the Eucharist and, indeed, of ordained ministry.

- c. The combination of a) and b) above – a Presider consecrating only one host which he consumes completely while the liturgical assembly receives Communion from the Reserved Sacrament – is a practice that borders on the reprehensible and should simply not occur.

The use of song during the Communion procession expresses “the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the ‘communitarian’ character of the procession to receive the Eucharist” (GIRM 2002, 86). The Communion procession is to be accompanied by song for as long as the procession continues. The Communion song(s) begins as soon as the Presider receives Communion and continues until all have received Communion. It is infinitely preferable, therefore, for musicians to minister to the needs of the liturgical assembly, and then receive Communion at the end of the Communion song(s).

The reception of Communion in Australia is governed by n. 160 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2002) which states the following:

It is not permitted for the faithful to take the consecrated Bread or the sacred chalice by themselves and, still less, to hand them on from one to another among themselves. In the dioceses of Australia standing is the most common posture for receiving Holy Communion, though individual members of the faithful may choose to receive Communion while kneeling. When approaching to receive Holy Communion, the faithful bow in reverence to the Sacrament that they are to receive.

Communion is something that is received, not taken. For this reason, the practice of ‘self-intinction’ is not permitted.

Communion by intinction always involves the Priest intincting the host into the chalice and then placing the Sacrament in the mouth of the communicant. It is not permitted for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to distribute Communion in this way.

Care should be exercised by all ministers of Communion, ordinary and extraordinary, to ensure that requests for Communion by intinction are carried out correctly and in accord with the requirements of the GIRM a. 285, 287. Such requests should be discussed with the presider prior to the beginning of Mass.

If the number of faithful who are present warrants it, the Presider may be assisted in the distribution of Communion by others who are also present. These others fall into two categories

- a. **Ordinary Ministers** of Holy Communion: those other Priests or Deacons who are present at the Mass, unless advanced age or illness prevents them from being able to assist in the distribution of Communion; and
- b. **Extraordinary Ministers** of Holy Communion: those who are legitimately deputed by the Parish Priest to assist in the distribution of Communion on an ongoing basis or, if necessity dictates it, by the Presider at a Mass for that Mass alone.

It is never appropriate for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to displace an Ordinary Minister unless the Ordinary Minister is impeded by advanced age or illness. It is also never appropriate for Ordinary Ministers to be displaced simply because the parish regularly makes use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be appointed by the Parish Priest or equivalent for a specified term, not to exceed three years, which may be renewed by mutual discernment. Before appointment as extraordinary ministers, candidates should receive appropriate formation which is to be more than merely in their functional duties. A commitment to regular ongoing formation would normally be required for reappointment at the end of the specified term. (Please refer to the diocesan Liturgy Formation Pathway)

Extraordinary ministers are not to approach the altar until the Presider has received Communion. This does not mean, however, that they cannot move into the sanctuary of the church prior to this time, as long as they are not moving during the Fraction of the Bread. Having moved into the sanctuary, extraordinary ministers should stand as far from the altar as physically possible and move closer only after the Presider has received Communion in order that they can receive Communion themselves before moving to their appointed place for the distribution of Communion.

It is an absolute requirement that those who are to assist in the distribution of Communion have first received Communion. **It is highly recommended** that those assisting with the distribution of Communion receive both the consecrated Bread and from the chalice, though this is at the discretion of individuals. All ministers of Communion – Priest, Deacon, or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion – should model appropriate behaviour in the manner in which they receive Communion.

Although it is difficult to give hard and fast guidance because of the wide variety of church layouts in the diocese, as a general rule a ratio of two ministers of the chalice to each minister of the consecrated Bread greatly assists the flow of the Communion procession.

After the Communion procession, any remaining elements of the consecrated Bread are consumed by the Priest and Deacon or placed with the Reserved Sacrament in the Tabernacle. Any consecrated Wine should be consumed by the Priest or Deacon at the credence table; extraordinary ministers of holy communion can assist in consuming any remaining consecrated Wine. If necessary, because of the amount remaining for example, any chalice still containing consecrated Wine can be covered with a purificator and attended to immediately after Mass is concluded.

The purification of the sacred vessels takes place at the credence table, carried out by the Deacon or another suitable minister, including extraordinary ministers of holy communion (see GIRM 2002,

100, 107, 192). Within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, this should be seen as an authentic interpretation by the Bishop of the liturgical norms.

Guidance

11. **It is recommended** that all members of the liturgical assembly receive communion from the elements consecrated during the celebration of Mass. In addition, **it is recommended** that the Reserved Sacrament not habitually be brought from the tabernacle to the altar before Communion and be retrieved only when needed (if at all). It is strongly recommended that Presiders not use a single host for themselves alone; at least some members of the assembly should receive Communion from the host used by the Presider.
12. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to musicians and members of the liturgical assembly to encourage the beginning of the communion song to take place at the same time as the Presider receives communion, and its continuation until all members of the liturgical assembly have received communion. **It is recommended** that musicians be encouraged to receive communion towards the conclusion of the communion procession wherever this is physically possible.
13. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to the members of the liturgical assembly regarding the appropriate sign of reverence to be made before receiving communion, that this sign is the bow, and that the sign should take place in such a way as to be completed before standing before the minister of communion. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to the members of the liturgical assembly to discourage genuflection as a sign of reverence, particularly in the middle of the communion procession.
14. **It is recommended** that, where there are members of the liturgical assembly who habitually choose to kneel in order to receive communion, appropriate catechesis be given to ensure their actions do not impact on the safety and welfare of other members of the communion procession. Such catechesis might encourage those who wish to receive communion while kneeling to join the communion procession towards the end, or to take steps to ensure that those immediately behind them in the communion procession are not placed in an unsafe position.
15. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to members of the liturgical assembly and to Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to ensure that the practice of 'self-intinction' does not take place during the reception of communion.
16. **It is recommended** that those members of the liturgical assembly who are discerned to be suitable as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be properly formed according to the standards applicable in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and be commissioned for renewable periods of two years.
17. **It is recommended** that no special attention be given to the return of the Reserved Sacrament to the Tabernacle, since the focus during the celebration of Mass is to be the Altar; the Blessed Sacrament should be returned 'quietly', with only the minister directly involved genuflecting after returning the Reserved Sacrament to the Tabernacle. **It is recommended** that appropriate catechesis be given to all members of the liturgical assembly and liturgical ministers on the contents of General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 274, concerning reverencing the Blessed Sacrament during the celebration of Mass.
18. Following the recommendations in no. 17 above, due care and reverence should be given the Blessed Sacrament in the manner it is handled prior to being returned to the Tabernacle. Poor attention to what is being held and handled can provide a poor visual catechesis as to the dignity due to the Blessed Sacrament.

19. At the conclusion of the distribution of Communion, “the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation” (GIRM 2002, 88). **It is recommended** that a variety of these options for the period after Communion be embraced by the liturgical assembly, and that silence not be excluded from this point of the liturgy completely.

The Prayer after Communion

Background

The Prayer after Communion brings the prayer of the People of God to completion and prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated to be made manifest. With the completion of the Prayer after Communion, the Communion Rite is drawn to a close.

Like all prayers of the Proper of a Mass (the Collect, the Prayer over the Offerings, and the Prayer after Communion), the Prayer after Communion is to be prayed with the entire liturgical assembly standing (see GIRM 2002, 43). Standing is, and should be seen as, the proper posture for these prayers.

The liturgical assembly should stand for the Prayer after Communion even if something is to occur after the Prayer is completed for which they will sit.

The inclusion of any other prayer after the Prayer after Communion, regardless of its pious nature or historical antecedence, is not envisaged by the GIRM. Such prayers should not habitually be included in the celebration of Mass, and certainly should not be included at this point in the Communion Rite except at the express request of the Bishop.

Guidelines



20. It is recommended that any practice where the Prayer after Communion is prayed with the Priest and liturgical assembly seated be discontinued immediately. It is recommended that appropriate catechesis be given to the members of the liturgical assembly as to the proper posture for praying the prayers of the Proper of the Mass, including the Prayer after Communion.

21. It is strongly recommended that no additional prayers be included following the Prayer after Communion except at the express request of the Bishop.

22. It is strongly recommended that such prayers, e.g. for the Plenary Council, or for Vocations, be better placed before Mass begins.

Other Related Issues

Blessings for Children and Non-Communicants

The common practice of encouraging people, especially children, to come forward in the Communion Procession for a blessing when they are not able to receive Communion is a problematic one. At the heart of the practice is an attempt to see no presence of difference within the liturgical assembly, even when that difference is clearly present. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is made of many and different parts, and difference is not something to be avoided. True catholicity is found when differences are identified and celebrated.

The sharing in the Body of Christ in the reception of Communion is a significant part of the entire celebration of Eucharist. That sharing marks us out as different and that difference is not to be diminished. The possibility of entering into the fullness of the Body of Christ by participating in the Communion Procession and receiving Communion should not be diminished by an attempt to either eliminate difference or encourage similarity.

Just as no person can be compelled to receive Communion during Mass, since that is always a choice each person makes on each such occasion, it is never appropriate to insist that a non-Catholic or non-communicant join the Communion Process to receive a blessing. Everyone who is in attendance at any liturgy will be blessed at the end of the liturgy; participation in the Communion Procession is for the purpose of receiving





Communion not for pre-empting the blessing that will shortly follow.

When small children join the Communion Procession with their parents they do so largely because they are small children and will naturally follow or be carried by their parents. In these circumstances, it would be entirely appropriate to bless the small child who is walking with or being carried by their parent. The manner in which this is undertaken is dependent upon who the Minister of Communion is.

Of course, if an individual is moved on a particular occasion to come forward as part of the Communion Procession for a blessing rather than to receive Communion, they are not to be denied. Neither, however, should they be encouraged and, under no circumstances is it to be demanded of them.

Guidance

23. It is strongly recommended that the practice of encouraging or insisting non-communicants to process forward as part of the Communion Procession to receive a blessing be discontinued.
24. When a person presents for a blessing in the Communion Procession – child or adult – it is recommended that:

24.1. An ordinary Minister of Communion (i.e. a member of the clergy) either

24.1.1. makes the Sign of the Cross over the person, or

24.1.2. traces the Sign of the Cross on the person's forehead.

24.2. An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion either

24.2.1. traces the Sign of the Cross on the person's forehead, or

24.2.2. places a hand on the person's head.

It is recommended that these ritual actions are not accompanied by any spoken words.

The Timing of Collections

The timing of the two collections that are customary in most parts of Australia can be problematic from a very practical perspective.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (n. 73) makes the point that “Even money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or

collected in the church, are acceptable; given their purpose they are to be in a suitable place away from the Eucharistic table.” This is the only place in the General Instruction where the collection of money is mentioned. Accordingly, the logical conclusion would be that this is the only point where a collection or collections should take place.

The General Instruction also mentions “When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation” (n. 88). The purpose of the period after Communion, therefore, is given over to personal prayer or corporate praise; the inclusion of a collection at this point would appear to not be in keeping with the intention of the General Instruction.

While it is difficult to be prescriptive about the proper placement of the two customary collections, it would appear from the General Instruction that the most suitable time for the taking up of the two collections would be prior to the presentation of the gifts. In this scenario, both collections would be taken up either immediately after each other or through the use of different ‘baskets’ to distinguish the two collections. The collected offerings would then be brought forward together with the bread and wine while the entire assembly sings a suitable hymn or other piece of music.

It is recognised that this scenario might not be possible or practicable in some settings. In such circumstances, it is recommended that the two customary collections take place in such a way as to honour the inherent nature of the respective parts of the liturgy as indicated above.

Guidance

25. It is strongly suggested that wherever possible the two customary collections be taken up prior to the presentation of the bread and wine at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It is recommended that appropriate catechesis be given to the members of the liturgical assembly, and to those responsible for taking up the collections, as to the proper place of the collections in the liturgy.
26. It is strongly recommended that where the scenario outlined in n. 25 above is not considered possible or practicable, suitable consideration be given by local liturgical assemblies as to how the collections can be

structured in keeping with the intent of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

Communion for Those Living with Coeliac Disease or Gluten Intolerance

In May 2020, the Bishops’ Commission for Liturgy (BCL) published Guidelines for Holy Communion for Those Living with Coeliac Disease or Gluten Intolerance. These Guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

To quote from the brief introduction to those Guidelines:

Coeliac disease is an immune reaction to eating gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats. For those living with the disease, consuming gluten needs to be minimised or completely avoided. Failure to do so can lead to an unpleasant and, often, serious health complications. As a sign of pastoral care and hospitality, ministers of Holy Communion need to be fully aware of the reality of the condition and be prepared to assist those living with coeliac disease or gluten intolerance who come to parishes and seek to receive Holy Communion.

The practical steps outlined in the BCL Guidelines are commended to the attention of Ministers of Holy Communion, both Ordinary and Extraordinary, with the following adjustments and additions.

Members of the diocesan community who live with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance will find information about how to access low gluten hosts on the diocesan website. Please note that hosts are provided to individuals and not to parishes.

Guidance

24. It is strongly recommended that appropriate local practices for Holy Communion for those living with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance be developed and communicated to all Ministers of Communion, sacristans, servers, parish clergy, etc. Every effort should be made to ensure that any person living with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance who wishes to receive Communion is able to do so easily and without hindrance.
25. It is strongly recommended that appropriate catechesis be provided to all the members of the liturgical assembly so that any embarrassment

to members living with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance is avoided.

26. Parish clergy are strongly encouraged to exercise great pastoral sensitivity when interacting with parishioners who live with Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance and to accommodate reasonable requests to enable their participation in the act of receiving Communion.

Dismissal of Ministers of Communion to the Sick

The practice of taking Communion to the sick and housebound members of the local community has a long and laudable history. It is always preferable, when this is required, that Communion be taken from the parish's celebration of Mass using hosts consecrated during the Mass, rather than from the Reserved Sacrament.

The dismissal of Ministers of Communion is of the same nature as the dismissal of the entire worshipping community for mission. The appropriate point in the liturgy for the dismissal of Ministers of Communion, therefore, is during the Concluding Rite, after any notices or communications, and immediately prior to the Final Blessing and Dismissal.

Guidance

27. It is strongly recommended that Ministers of Communion to the sick, housebound, or those in hospital be called forward immediately after the conclusion of any notices at the beginning of the Concluding Rite.
28. It is recommended that these Ministers of Communion, after receiving the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament, be commissioned using suitable words and then immediately return to their seat. There they can make themselves ready to leave for their appointed task after the

Presider and other ministers have processed from the church.

By way of example, words similar to the following might be used to commission Ministers of Communion:

"Sisters and brothers, you are now to take the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ to our brothers and sisters who cannot be with us this day. Give them our greetings and our love; read with them today's holy Scriptures; pray with them; and minister to them this most precious Sacrament."



Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,

No hands, no feet on
earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks

Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands,
with which he blesses
all the world.

Yours are the hands,
yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes,
you are his body.

Christ has no body
now but yours,

No hands, no feet
on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks

Compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)



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