

# FORMATION OF ACOLYTES

## **Quality of character**

Candidates must live an exemplary Christian life, willing to give faithful service to God and the Christian faithful. In the Diocese of Colorado Springs, the minimum age for an instituted acolyte (excluding seminarians) is 25.

Acolytes, once instituted, should be willing to serve the community on a regular basis on weekends, Holy Days, and possibly at weddings and funerals. The nature of this ministry lends itself to assisting with the training of EMHCs and Altar Servers, and assisting with sacristy duties. Acolytes are to complete continuing education each year according to a mutual agreement with their pastors, and should also consider making an annual retreat.

Candidates must be instructed that if they divorce and remarry outside the Church, or cohabit with someone, they must cease functioning in this ministry. If never married, they must marry in the Church, or they likewise will be excluded from this ministry.

Candidates must understand that some of their duties will be shared with other ministers. They must always act with charity and humility. They must encourage and guide the service of youth as altar servers and encourage them and others to consider a vocation as a vowed religious, a deacon, or a priest.

## **Contents for catechesis**

Documents which must be covered in the initial training:

## ***GIRM, paragraphs 98, 187-193***

### ***The Ministry of the Instituted Acolyte and Lector***

98. The acolyte is instituted to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. In particular, it is his responsibility to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels and, if it is necessary, as an extraordinary minister, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful.[\[84\]](#)

In the ministry of the altar, the acolyte has his own functions (cf. nos. 187-193), which he must perform personally.

### **C. The Duties of the Acolyte**

187. The duties that the acolyte may carry out are of various kinds and several may coincide. Hence, it is desirable that these duties be suitably distributed among several acolytes. If, however, only one acolyte is present, he should perform the more important duties while the rest are to be distributed among several ministers.

### ***The Introductory Rites***

188. In the procession to the altar, the acolyte may carry the cross, walking between two ministers with lighted candles. Upon reaching the altar, the acolyte places the cross upright near the altar so that it may serve as the altar cross; otherwise, he puts it in a worthy place. Then he takes his place in the sanctuary.

189. Through the entire celebration, the acolyte 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, insofar as possible, that the acolyte occupy a place from which he can conveniently carry out his ministry either at the chair or at the altar.

### ***The Liturgy of the Eucharist***

190. If no deacon is present, after the Prayer of the Faithful is concluded and while the priest remains at the chair, the acolyte places the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. Then, if necessary, the acolyte assists the priest in receiving the gifts of the people and, if appropriate, brings the bread and wine to the altar and hands them to the priest. If incense is used, the acolyte presents the thurible to the priest and assists him while he incenses the gifts, the cross, and the altar. Then the acolyte incenses the priest and the people.

191. A duly instituted acolyte, as an extraordinary minister, may, if necessary, assist the priest in giving Communion to the people.[\[100\]](#) If Communion is given under both kinds, when no deacon is present, the acolyte administers the chalice to the communicants or holds the chalice if Communion is given by intinction.

192. Likewise, when the distribution of Communion is completed, a duly instituted acolyte helps the priest or deacon to purify and arrange the sacred vessels. When no deacon is present, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes, and arranges them in the usual way.

193. After the celebration of Mass, the acolyte 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.

## ***Redemptionis Sacramentum***

**paragraphs 36-42, 43-47, (maybe 80-107), 117-128 (especially 119, 122)**

[32.] “Let the Parish Priest strive so that the Most Holy Eucharist will be the center of the parish congregation of the faithful; let him work to ensure that Christ’s faithful are nourished through the devout celebration of the Sacraments, and in particular, that they frequently approach the Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance; let him strive, furthermore, to ensure that the faithful are encouraged to offer prayers in their families as well, and to participate consciously and actively in the Sacred Liturgy, which the Parish Priest, under the authority of the

diocesan Bishop, is bound to regulate and supervise in his parish lest abuses occur”.[\[74\]](#) Although it is appropriate that he should be assisted in the effective preparation of the liturgical celebrations by various members of Christ’s faithful, he nevertheless must not cede to them in any way those things that are proper to his own office.

[33.] Finally, all “Priests should go to the trouble of properly cultivating their liturgical knowledge and ability, so that through their liturgical ministry, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be praised in an ever more excellent manner by the Christian communities entrusted to them”.[\[75\]](#) Above all, let them be filled with that wonder and amazement that the Paschal Mystery, in being celebrated, instills in the hearts of the faithful.[\[76\]](#)

#### **4. Deacons**

[34.] Deacons “upon whom hands are imposed not for the Priesthood but for the ministry”,[\[77\]](#) as men of good repute,[\[78\]](#) must act in such a way that with the help of God they may be recognized as the true disciples[\[79\]](#) of him “who came not to be served but to serve”[\[80\]](#), and who was among his disciples “as one who serves”.[\[81\]](#) Strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, they are in service to the People of God, in communion with the Bishop and his presbyterate.[\[82\]](#) They should therefore consider the Bishop as a father, and give assistance to him and to the Priests “in the ministry of the word, of the altar, and of charity”.[\[83\]](#)

[35.] Let them never fail, “as the Apostle says, to hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience,[\[84\]](#) and to proclaim this faith by word and deed according to the Gospel and the tradition of the Church”,[\[85\]](#) in wholehearted, faithful and humble service to the Sacred Liturgy as the source and summit of ecclesial life, “so that all, made children of God through faith and Baptism, may come together as one, praising God in the midst of the Church, to participate in the Sacrifice and to eat the Lord’s Supper”.[\[86\]](#) Let all Deacons, then, do their part so that the Sacred Liturgy will be celebrated according to the norms of the duly approved liturgical books.

## **Chapter II**

### **THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL IN THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION**

#### **1. Active and Conscious Participation**

[36.] The celebration of the Mass, as the action of Christ and of the Church, is the center of the whole Christian life for the universal as well as the particular Church, and also for the individual faithful,[\[87\]](#) who are involved “in differing ways according to the diversity of orders, ministries, and active participation.[\[88\]](#) In this way the Christian people, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people, a people God has made his own”,[\[89\]](#) manifests its coherent and hierarchical ordering”.[\[90\]](#) “For the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical Priesthood, though they differ in essence and not only in degree, are ordered to one another, for both partake, each in its own way, of the one Priesthood of Christ”.[\[91\]](#)

[37.] All of Christ's faithful, freed from their sins and incorporated into the Church through Baptism, are deputed by means of a sacramental character for the worship of the Christian religion,<sup>[92]</sup> so that by virtue of their royal priesthood,<sup>[93]</sup> persevering in prayer and praising God,<sup>[94]</sup> they may offer themselves as a living and holy sacrifice pleasing to God and attested to others by their works,<sup>[95]</sup> giving witness to Christ throughout the earth and providing an answer to those who ask concerning their hope of eternal life that is in them.<sup>[96]</sup> Thus the participation of the lay faithful too in the Eucharist and in the other celebrations of the Church's rites cannot be equated with mere presence, and still less with a passive one, but is rather to be regarded as a true exercise of faith and of the baptismal dignity.

[38.] The constant teaching of the Church on the nature of the Eucharist not only as a meal, but also and pre-eminently as a Sacrifice, is therefore rightly understood to be one of the principal keys to the full participation of all the faithful in so great a Sacrament.<sup>[97]</sup> For when "stripped of its sacrificial meaning, the mystery is understood as if its meaning and importance were simply that of a fraternal banquet".<sup>[98]</sup>

[39.] For promoting and elucidating active participation, the recent renewal of the liturgical books according to the mind of the Council fostered acclamations of the people, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and canticles, as well as actions or movements and gestures, and called for sacred silence to be maintained at the proper times, while providing rubrics for the parts of the faithful as well.<sup>[99]</sup> In addition, ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity aimed at allowing each celebration to be adapted to the needs of the participants, to their comprehension, their interior preparation and their gifts, according to the established liturgical norms. In the songs, the melodies, the choice of prayers and readings, the giving of the homily, the preparation of the prayer of the faithful, the occasional explanatory remarks, and the decoration of the Church building according to the various seasons, there is ample possibility for introducing into each celebration a certain variety by which the riches of the liturgical tradition will also be more clearly evident, and so, in keeping with pastoral requirements, the celebration will be carefully imbued with those particular features that will foster the recollection of the participants. Still, it should be remembered that the power of the liturgical celebrations does not consist in frequently altering the rites, but in probing more deeply the word of God and the mystery being celebrated.<sup>[100]</sup>

[40.] Nevertheless, from the fact that the liturgical celebration obviously entails activity, it does not follow that everyone must necessarily have something concrete to do beyond the actions and gestures, as if a certain specific liturgical ministry must necessarily be given to the individuals to be carried out by them. Instead, catechetical instruction should strive diligently to correct those widespread superficial notions and practices often seen in recent years in this regard, and ever to instill anew in all of Christ's faithful that sense of deep wonder before the greatness of the mystery of faith that is the Eucharist, in whose celebration the Church is forever passing from what is obsolete into newness of life: "*in novitatem a vetustate*".<sup>[101]</sup> For in the celebration of the Eucharist, as in the whole Christian life which draws its power from it and leads toward it, the Church, after the manner of Saint Thomas the Apostle, prostrates herself in adoration before the Lord who was crucified, suffered and died, was buried and arose, and perpetually exclaims to him who is clothed in the fullness of his divine splendour: "My Lord and my God!"<sup>[102]</sup>

[41.] For encouraging, promoting and nourishing this interior understanding of liturgical participation, the continuous and widespread celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the use of the sacramentals and exercises of Christian popular piety are extremely helpful. These latter exercises – which “while not belonging to the Liturgy in the strict sense, possess nonetheless a particular importance and dignity” – are to be regarded as having a certain connection with the liturgical context, especially when they have been lauded and attested by the Magisterium itself,<sup>[103]</sup> as is the case especially of the Marian Rosary.<sup>[104]</sup> Furthermore, since these practices of piety lead the Christian people both to the reception of the sacraments – especially the Eucharist – and “to meditation on the mysteries of our Redemption and the imitation of the excellent heavenly examples of the Saints, they are therefore not without salutary effects for our participation in liturgical worship”.<sup>[105]</sup>

[42.] It must be acknowledged that the Church has not come together by human volition; rather, she has been called together by God in the Holy Spirit, and she responds through faith to his free calling (thus the word *ekklesia* is related to *klesis*, or “calling”).<sup>[106]</sup> Nor is the Eucharistic Sacrifice to be considered a “concelebration”, in the univocal sense, of the Priest along with the people who are present.<sup>[107]</sup> On the contrary, the Eucharist celebrated by the Priests “is a gift which radically transcends the power of the community. . . . The community that gathers for the celebration of the Eucharist absolutely requires an ordained Priest, who presides over it so that it may truly be a eucharistic convocation. On the other hand, the community is by itself incapable of providing an ordained minister”.<sup>[108]</sup> There is pressing need of a concerted will to avoid all ambiguity in this matter and to remedy the difficulties of recent years. Accordingly, terms such as “celebrating community” or “celebrating assembly” (in other languages “*asamblea celebrante*”, “*assemblée célébrante*”, *assemblea celebrante*) and similar terms should not be used injudiciously

## **2. The Ministries of the Lay Christian Faithful in the Celebration of Holy Mass**

[43.] For the good of the community and of the whole Church of God, some of the lay faithful according to tradition have rightly and laudably exercised ministries in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.<sup>[109]</sup> It is appropriate that a number of persons distribute among themselves and exercise various ministries or different parts of the same ministry.<sup>[110]</sup>

[44.] Apart from the duly instituted ministries of acolyte and lector,<sup>[111]</sup> the most important of these ministries are those of acolyte<sup>[112]</sup> and lector<sup>[113]</sup> by temporary deputation. In addition to these are the other functions that are described in the Roman Missal,<sup>[114]</sup> as well as the functions of preparing the hosts, washing the liturgical linens, and the like. All, “whether ordained ministers or lay faithful, in exercising their own office or ministry should do exclusively and fully that which pertains to them”.<sup>[115]</sup> In the liturgical celebration itself as well as in its preparation, they should do what is necessary so that the Church’s Liturgy will be carried out worthily and appropriately.

[45.] To be avoided is the danger of obscuring the complementary relationship between the action of clerics and that of laypersons, in such a way that the ministry of laypersons undergoes what might be called a certain “clericalization”, while the sacred ministers inappropriately assume those things that are proper to the life and activity of the lay faithful.<sup>[116]</sup>

[46.] The lay Christian faithful called to give assistance at liturgical celebrations should be well instructed and must be those whose Christian life, morals and fidelity to the Church's Magisterium recommend them. It is fitting that such a one should have received a liturgical formation in accordance with his or her age, condition, state of life, and religious culture.<sup>[117]</sup> No one should be selected whose designation could cause consternation for the faithful.<sup>[118]</sup>

[47.] It is altogether laudable to maintain the noble custom by which boys or youths, customarily termed servers, provide service of the altar after the manner of acolytes, and receive catechesis regarding their function in accordance with their power of comprehension.<sup>[119]</sup> Nor should it be forgotten that a great number of sacred ministers over the course of the centuries have come from among boys such as these.<sup>[120]</sup> Associations for them, including also the participation and assistance of their parents, should be established or promoted, and in such a way greater pastoral care will be provided for the ministers. Whenever such associations are international in nature, it pertains to the competence of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to establish them or to approve and revise their statutes.<sup>[121]</sup> Girls or women may also be admitted to this service of the altar, at the discretion of the diocesan Bishop and in observance of the established norms.<sup>[122]</sup>

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

### **1. Dispositions for the Reception of Holy Communion**

[80.] The Eucharist is to be offered to the faithful, among other reasons, "as an antidote, by which we are freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins",<sup>[160]</sup> as is brought to light in various parts of the Mass. As for the Penitential Act placed at the beginning of Mass, it has the purpose of preparing all to be ready to celebrate the sacred mysteries;<sup>[161]</sup> even so, "it lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance",<sup>[162]</sup> and cannot be regarded as a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance in remission of graver sins. Pastors of souls should take care to ensure diligent catechetical instruction, so that Christian doctrine is handed on to Christ's faithful in this matter.

[81.] The Church's custom shows that it is necessary for each person to examine himself at depth,<sup>[163]</sup> and that anyone who is conscious of grave sin should not celebrate or receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession, except for grave reason when the possibility of confession is lacking; in this case he will remember that he is bound by the obligation of making an act of perfect contrition, which includes the intention to confess as soon as possible".<sup>[164]</sup>

[82.] Moreover, "the Church has drawn up norms aimed at fostering the frequent and fruitful access of the faithful to the Eucharistic table and at determining the objective conditions under which Communion may not be given".<sup>[165]</sup>

[83.] It is certainly best that all who are participating in the celebration of Holy Mass with the necessary dispositions should receive Communion. Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that Christ's faithful approach the altar as a group indiscriminately. It pertains to the Pastors prudently and firmly to correct such an abuse.



[84.] Furthermore when Holy Mass is celebrated for a large crowd - for example, in large cities - care should be taken lest out of ignorance non-Catholics or even non-Christians come forward for Holy Communion, without taking into account the Church's Magisterium in matters pertaining to doctrine and discipline. It is the duty of Pastors at an opportune moment to inform those present of the authenticity and the discipline that are strictly to be observed.

[85.] Catholic ministers licitly administer the Sacraments only to the Catholic faithful, who likewise receive them licitly only from Catholic ministers, except for those situations for which provision is made in can. 844 §§ 2,3, and 4, and can. 861 § 2.[\[166\]](#) In addition, the conditions comprising can. 844 § 4, from which no dispensation can be given,[\[167\]](#) cannot be separated; thus, it is necessary that all of these conditions be present together.

[86.] The faithful should be led insistently to the practice whereby they approach the Sacrament of Penance outside the celebration of Mass, especially at the scheduled times, so that the Sacrament may be administered in a manner that is tranquil and truly beneficial to them, so as not to be prevented from active participation at Mass. Those who are accustomed to receiving Communion often or daily should be instructed that they should approach the Sacrament of Penance at appropriate intervals, in accordance with the condition of each.[\[168\]](#)

[87.] The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution.[\[169\]](#) Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a Priest and never outside the celebration of Mass. Apart from exceptional cases, it is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered on Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist.[\[170\]](#) "Children who have not attained the age of reason, or those whom" the Parish Priest "has determined to be insufficiently prepared" should not come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist.[\[171\]](#) Where it happens, however, that a child who is exceptionally mature for his age is judged to be ready for receiving the Sacrament, the child must not be denied First Communion provided he has received sufficient instruction.

## **2. The distribution of Holy Communion**

[88.] The faithful should normally receive sacramental Communion of the Eucharist during Mass itself, at the moment laid down by the rite of celebration, that is to say, just after the Priest celebrant's Communion.[\[172\]](#) It is the Priest celebrant's responsibility to minister Communion, perhaps assisted by other Priests or Deacons; and he should not resume the Mass until after the Communion of the faithful is concluded. Only when there is a necessity may extraordinary ministers assist the Priest celebrant in accordance with the norm of law.[\[173\]](#)

[89.] "So that even by means of the signs Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the Sacrifice being celebrated",[\[174\]](#) it is preferable that the faithful be able to receive hosts consecrated in the same Mass.[\[175\]](#)

[90.] “The faithful should receive Communion kneeling or standing, as the Conference of Bishops will have determined”, with its acts having received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See. “However, if they receive Communion standing, it is recommended that they give due reverence before the reception of the Sacrament, as set forth in the same norms”.[\[176\]](#)

[91.] In distributing Holy Communion it is to be remembered that “sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who seek them in a reasonable manner, are rightly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them”.[\[177\]](#) Hence any baptized Catholic who is not prevented by law must be admitted to Holy Communion. Therefore, it is not licit to deny Holy Communion to any of Christ’s faithful solely on the grounds, for example, that the person wishes to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing.

[92.] Although each of the faithful always has the right to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, at his choice,[\[178\]](#) if any communicant should wish to receive the Sacrament in the hand, in areas where the Bishops’ Conference with the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See has given permission, the sacred host is to be administered to him or her. However, special care should be taken to ensure that the host is consumed by the communicant in the presence of the minister, so that no one goes away carrying the Eucharistic species in his hand. If there is a risk of profanation, then Holy Communion should not be given in the hand to the faithful.[\[179\]](#)

[93.] The Communion-plate for the Communion of the faithful should be retained, so as to avoid the danger of the sacred host or some fragment of it falling.[\[180\]](#)

[94.] It is not licit for the faithful “to take . . . by themselves . . . and, still less, to hand . . . from one to another” the sacred host or the sacred chalice.[\[181\]](#) Moreover, in this regard, the abuse is to be set aside whereby spouses administer Holy Communion to each other at a Nuptial Mass.

[95.] A lay member of Christ’s faithful “who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist may receive it again on the same day only within a Eucharistic Celebration in which he or she is participating, with due regard for the prescriptions of can. 921 § 2.”[\[182\]](#)

[96.] The practice is reprobated whereby either unconsecrated hosts or other edible or inedible things are distributed during the celebration of Holy Mass or beforehand after the manner of Communion, contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books. For such a practice in no way accords with the tradition of the Roman Rite, and carries with it the danger of causing confusion among Christ’s faithful concerning the Eucharistic doctrine of the Church. Where there exists in certain places by concession a particular custom of blessing bread after Mass for distribution, proper catechesis should very carefully be given concerning this action. In fact, no other similar practices should be introduced, nor should unconsecrated hosts ever be used for this purpose.

### **3. The Communion of Priests**

[97.] A Priest must communicate at the altar at the moment laid down by the Missal each time he celebrates Holy Mass, and the concelebrants must communicate before they proceed with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Priest celebrant or a concelebrant is never to wait until the people’s Communion is concluded before receiving Communion himself.[\[183\]](#)



[98.] The Communion of Priest concelebrants should proceed according to the norms prescribed in the liturgical books, always using hosts consecrated at the same Mass<sup>[184]</sup> and always with Communion under both kinds being received by all of the concelebrants. It is to be noted that if the Priest or Deacon hands the sacred host or chalice to the concelebrants, he says nothing; that is to say, he does not pronounce the words “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ”.

[99.] Communion under both kinds is always permitted “to Priests who are not able to celebrate or concelebrate Mass”.<sup>[185]</sup>

#### **4. Communion under Both Kinds**

[100.] So that the fullness of the sign may be made more clearly evident to the faithful in the course of the Eucharistic banquet, lay members of Christ’s faithful, too, are admitted to Communion under both kinds, in the cases set forth in the liturgical books, preceded and continually accompanied by proper catechesis regarding the dogmatic principles on this matter laid down by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.<sup>[186]</sup>

[101.] In order for Holy Communion under both kinds to be administered to the lay members of Christ’s faithful, due consideration should be given to the circumstances, as judged first of all by the diocesan Bishop. It is to be completely excluded where even a small danger exists of the sacred species being profaned.<sup>[187]</sup> With a view to wider co-ordination, the Bishops’ Conferences should issue norms, once their decisions have received the *recognitio* of the Apostolic See through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, especially as regards “the manner of distributing Holy Communion to the faithful under both kinds, and the faculty for its extension”.<sup>[188]</sup>

[102.] The chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ’s faithful where there is such a large number of communicants<sup>[189]</sup> that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist and there is a danger that “more than a reasonable quantity of the Blood of Christ remain to be consumed at the end of the celebration”.<sup>[190]</sup> The same is true wherever access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange, or where such a large amount of wine would be required that its certain provenance and quality could only be known with difficulty, or wherever there is not an adequate number of sacred ministers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion with proper formation, or where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.

[103.] The norms of the Roman Missal admit the principle that in cases where Communion is administered under both kinds, “the Blood of the Lord may be received either by drinking from the chalice directly, or by intinction, or by means of a tube or a spoon”.<sup>[191]</sup> As regards the administering of Communion to lay members of Christ’s faithful, the Bishops may exclude Communion with the tube or the spoon where this is not the local custom, though the option of administering Communion by intinction always remains. If this modality is employed, however, hosts should be used which are neither too thin nor too small, and the communicant should receive the Sacrament from the Priest only on the tongue.<sup>[192]</sup>

[104.] The communicant must not be permitted to intinct the host himself in the chalice, nor to receive the intincted host in the hand. As for the host to be used for the intinction, it should be made of valid matter, also consecrated; it is altogether forbidden to use non-consecrated bread or other matter.

[105.] If one chalice is not sufficient for Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, there is no reason why the Priest celebrant should not use several chalices.[\[193\]](#) For it is to be remembered that all Priests in celebrating Holy Mass are bound to receive Communion under both kinds. It is praiseworthy, by reason of the sign value, to use a main chalice of larger dimensions, together with smaller chalices.

[106.] However, the pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms.

[107.] In accordance with what is laid down by the canons, "one who throws away the consecrated species or takes them away or keeps them for a sacrilegious purpose, incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; a cleric, moreover, may be punished by another penalty, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state".[\[194\]](#) To be regarded as pertaining to this case is any action that is voluntarily and gravely disrespectful of the sacred species. Anyone, therefore, who acts contrary to these norms, for example casting the sacred species into the sacrarium or in an unworthy place or on the ground, incurs the penalties laid down.[\[195\]](#) Furthermore all will remember that once the distribution of Holy Communion during the celebration of Mass has been completed, the prescriptions of the Roman Missal are to be observed, and in particular, whatever may remain of the Blood of Christ must be entirely and immediately consumed by the Priest or by another minister, according to the norms, while the consecrated hosts that are left are to be consumed by the Priest at the altar or carried to the place for the reservation of the Eucharist.[\[196\]](#)

## **Sacred Vessels**

[117.] Sacred vessels for containing the Body and Blood of the Lord must be made in strict conformity with the norms of tradition and of the liturgical books.[\[205\]](#) The Bishops' Conferences have the faculty to decide whether it is appropriate, once their decisions have been given the *recognitio* by the Apostolic See, for sacred vessels to be made of other solid materials as well. It is strictly required, however, that such materials be truly noble in the common estimation within a given region,[\[206\]](#) so that honour will be given to the Lord by their use, and all risk of diminishing the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species in the eyes of the faithful will be avoided. Reprobated, therefore, is any practice of using for the celebration of Mass common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers, as also other vessels made from glass, earthenware, clay, or other materials that break easily. This norm is to be applied even as regards metals and other materials that easily rust or deteriorate.[\[207\]](#)

[118.] Before they are used, sacred vessels are to be blessed by a Priest according to the rites laid down in the liturgical books.[\[208\]](#) It is praiseworthy for the blessing to be given by the diocesan Bishop, who will judge whether the vessels are worthy of the use to which they are destined.

[119.] The Priest, once he has returned to the altar after the distribution of Communion, standing at the altar or at the credence table, purifies the paten or ciborium over the chalice, then purifies the chalice in accordance with the prescriptions of the Missal and wipes the chalice with the purificator. Where a Deacon is present, he returns with the Priest to the altar and purifies the vessels. It is permissible, however, especially if there are several vessels to be purified, to leave them, covered as may be appropriate, on a corporal on the altar or on the credence table, and for them to be purified by the Priest or Deacon immediately after Mass once the people have been dismissed. Moreover a duly instituted acolyte assists the Priest or Deacon in purifying and arranging the sacred vessels either at the altar or the credence table. In the absence of a Deacon, a duly instituted acolyte carries the sacred vessels to the credence table and there purifies, wipes and arranges them in the usual way.[\[209\]](#)

[120.] Let Pastors take care that the linens for the sacred table, especially those which will receive the sacred species, are always kept clean and that they are washed in the traditional way. It is praiseworthy for this to be done by pouring the water from the first washing, done by hand, into the church's sacrarium or into the ground in a suitable place. After this a second washing can be done in the usual way.

#### **4. Liturgical Vesture**

[121.] "The purpose of a variety of colour of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year".[\[210\]](#) On the other hand, the variety "of offices in the celebration of the Eucharist is shown outwardly by the diversity of sacred vestments. In fact, these "sacred vestments should also contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself".[\[211\]](#)

[122.] "The alb" is "to be tied at the waist with a cincture unless it is made so as to fit even without a cincture. Before the alb is put on, if it does not completely cover the ordinary clothing at the neck, an amice should be put on".[\[212\]](#)

[123.] "The vestment proper to the Priest celebrant at Mass, and in other sacred actions directly connected with Mass unless otherwise indicated, is the chasuble, worn over the alb and stole."[\[213\]](#) Likewise the Priest, in putting on the chasuble according to the rubrics, is not to omit the stole. All Ordinaries should be vigilant in order that all usage to the contrary be eradicated.

[124.] A faculty is given in the Roman Missal for the Priest concelebrants at Mass other than the principal concelebrant (who should always put on a chasuble of the prescribed colour), for a just reason such as a large number of concelebrants or a lack of vestments, to omit "the chasuble, using the stole over the alb".[\[214\]](#) Where a need of this kind can be foreseen, however, provision should be made for it insofar as possible. Out of necessity the concelebrants other than the

principal celebrant may even put on white chasubles. For the rest, the norms of the liturgical books are to be observed.

[125.] The proper vestment of the Deacon is the dalmatic, to be worn over an alb and stole. In order that the beautiful tradition of the Church may be preserved, it is praiseworthy to refrain from exercising the option of omitting the dalmatic.[\[215\]](#)

[126.] The abuse is reprobated whereby the sacred ministers celebrate Holy Mass or other rites without sacred vestments or with only a stole over the monastic cowl or the common habit of religious or ordinary clothes, contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books, even when there is only one minister participating.[\[216\]](#) In order that such abuses be corrected as quickly as possible, Ordinaries should take care that in all churches and oratories subject to their jurisdiction there is present an adequate supply of liturgical vestments made in accordance with the norms.

[127.] A special faculty is given in the liturgical books for using sacred vestments that are festive or more noble on more solemn occasions, even if they are not of the colour of the day.[\[217\]](#) However, this faculty, which is specifically intended in reference to vestments made many years ago, with a view to preserving the Church's patrimony, is improperly extended to innovations by which forms and colours are adopted according to the inclination of private individuals, with disregard for traditional practice, while the real sense of this norm is lost to the detriment of the tradition. On the occasion of a feastday, sacred vestments of a gold or silver colour can be substituted as appropriate for others of various colours, but not for purple or black.

[128.] Holy Mass and other liturgical celebrations, which are acts of Christ and of the people of God hierarchically constituted, are ordered in such a way that the sacred ministers and the lay faithful manifestly take part in them each according to his own condition. It is preferable therefore that "Priests who are present at a Eucharistic Celebration, unless excused for a good reason, should as a rule exercise the office proper to their Order and thus take part as concelebrants, wearing the sacred vestments. Otherwise, they wear their proper choir dress or a surplice over a cassock."[\[218\]](#) It is not fitting, except in rare and exceptional cases and with reasonable cause, for them to participate at Mass, as regards to externals, in the manner of the lay faithful.

### ***Code of Canon Law, canons 230, 897-898, 907, 910-944***

Can. 230 §1. Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.

Nevertheless, the conferral of these ministries does not grant them the right to obtain support or remuneration from the Church.

§2. Lay persons can fulfill the function of lector in liturgical actions by temporary designation.

All lay persons can also perform the functions of commentator or cantor, or other functions, according to the norm of law.

§3. When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside offer liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion, according to the prescripts of the law.

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Can. 897 The most August sacrament is the Most Holy Eucharist in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered, and received and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the ages is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and effects the unity of the People of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it.

Can. 898 The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this sacrament most devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with the highest adoration. In explaining the doctrine about this sacrament, pastors of souls are to teach the faithful diligently about this obligation.

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Can. 907 In the eucharistic celebration deacons and lay persons are not permitted to offer prayers, especially the eucharistic prayer, or to perform actions which are proper to the celebrating priest.

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Can. 910 §1. The ordinary minister of holy communion is a bishop, presbyter, or deacon.

§2. The extraordinary minister of holy communion is an acolyte or another member of the Christian faithful designated according to the norm of ➡ can. 230, §3.

Can. 911 §1. The pastor, parochial vicars, chaplains, and, with regard to all those dwelling in the house, the superior of a community in clerical religious institutes and societies of apostolic life have the duty and right of bringing the Most Holy Eucharist as Viaticum to the sick.

§2. In the case of necessity or with at least the presumed permission of the pastor, chaplain, or superior, who must be notified afterwards, any priest or other minister of holy communion must do this.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

Can. 912 Any baptized person not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to holy communion.

Can. 913 §1. The administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion.

§2. The Most Holy Eucharist, however, can be administered to children in danger of death if they can distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food and receive communion reverently.

Can. 914 It is primarily the duty of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible. It is for the pastor to exercise vigilance so that children who have not attained the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed do not approach holy communion.

Can. 915 Those who have been excommunicated or interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and others obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion.

Can. 916 A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible.

Can. 917 A person who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist can receive it a second time on the same day only within the eucharistic celebration in which the person participates, without prejudice to the prescript of [⇒](#) can. 921, §2.

Can. 918 It is highly recommended that the faithful receive holy communion during the eucharistic celebration itself. It is to be administered outside the Mass, however, to those who request it for a just cause, with the liturgical rites being observed.

Can. 919 §1. A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine.

§2. A priest who celebrates the Most Holy Eucharist two or three times on the same day can take something before the second or third celebration even if there is less than one hour between them.

§3. The elderly, the infirm, and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.



Can. 920 §1. After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year.

§2. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year.

Can. 921 §1. The Christian faithful who are in danger of death from any cause are to be nourished by holy communion in the form of Viaticum.

§2. Even if they have been nourished by holy communion on the same day, however, those in danger of death are strongly urged to receive communion again.

§3. While the danger of death lasts, it is recommended that holy communion be administered often, but on separate days.

Can. 922 Holy Viaticum for the sick is not to be delayed too long; those who have the care of souls are to be zealous and vigilant that the sick are nourished by Viaticum while fully conscious.

Can. 923 The Christian faithful can participate in the eucharistic sacrifice and receive holy communion in any Catholic rite, without prejudice to the prescript of [⇒ can. 844](#)

## THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Can. 924 §1. The most holy eucharistic sacrifice must be offered with bread and with wine in which a little water must be mixed.

§2. The bread must be only wheat and recently made so that there is no danger of spoiling.

§3. The wine must be natural from the fruit of the vine and not spoiled.

Can. 925 Holy communion is to be given under the form of bread alone, or under both species according to the norm of the liturgical laws, or even under the form of wine alone in a case of necessity.

Can. 926 According to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, the priest is to use unleavened bread in the eucharistic celebration whenever he offers it.

Can. 927 It is absolutely forbidden, even in extreme urgent necessity, to consecrate one matter without the other or even both outside the eucharistic celebration.

Can. 928 The eucharistic celebration is to be carried out in the Latin language or in another language provided that the liturgical texts have been legitimately approved.

Can. 929 In celebrating and administering the Eucharist, priests and deacons are to wear the sacred vestments prescribed by the rubrics.

Can. 930 §1. If an infirm or elderly priest is unable to stand, he can celebrate the eucharistic sacrifice while seated, but not before the people except with the permission of the local ordinary; the liturgical laws are to be observed.

§2. A blind or otherwise infirm priest licitly celebrates the eucharistic sacrifice by using any approved text of the Mass with the assistance, if needed, of another priest, deacon, or even a properly instructed lay person.

## THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Can. 931 The celebration and distribution of the Eucharist can be done at any day and hour except those which the liturgical norms exclude.

Can. 932 §1. The eucharistic celebration is to be carried out in a sacred place unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise; in such a case the celebration must be done in a decent place.

§2. The eucharistic sacrifice must be carried out on a dedicated or blessed altar; outside a sacred place a suitable table can be used, always with a cloth and a corporal.

Can. 933 For a just cause and with the express permission of the local ordinary, a priest is permitted to celebrate the Eucharist in the place of worship of some Church or ecclesial community which does not have full communion with the Catholic Church so long as there is no scandal.

## THE RESERVATION AND VENERATION OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

Can. 934 §1. The Most Holy Eucharist:

1/ must be reserved in the cathedral church or its equivalent, in every parish church, and in a church or oratory connected to the house of a religious institute or society of apostolic life;

2/ can be reserved in the chapel of the bishop and, with the permission of the local ordinary, in other churches, oratories, and chapels.

§2. In sacred places where the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved, there must always be someone responsible for it and, insofar as possible, a priest is to celebrate Mass there at least twice a month.

Can. 935 No one is permitted to keep the Eucharist on one's person or to carry it around, unless pastoral necessity urges it and the prescripts of the diocesan bishop are observed.

Can. 936 In the house of a religious institute or some other pious house, the Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved only in the church or principal oratory attached to the house. For a just cause, however, the ordinary can also permit it to be reserved in another oratory of the same house.

Can. 937 Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, the church in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved is to be open to the faithful for at least some hours every day so that they can pray before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Can. 938 §1. The Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory.

§2. The tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved is to be situated in some part of the church or oratory which is distinguished, conspicuous, beautifully decorated, and suitable for prayer.

§3. The tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved habitually is to be immovable, made of solid and opaque material, and locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is avoided as much as possible.

§4. For a grave cause, it is permitted to reserve the Most Holy Eucharist in some other fitting and more secure place, especially at night.

§5. The person responsible for the church or oratory is to take care that the key of the tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved is safeguarded most diligently.

Can. 939 Consecrated hosts in a quantity sufficient for the needs of the faithful are to be kept in a pyx or small vessel; they are to be renewed frequently and the older hosts consumed properly.

Can. 940 A special lamp which indicates and honors the presence of Christ is to shine continuously before a tabernacle in which the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved.

Can. 941 §1. In churches or oratories where it is permitted to reserve the Most Holy Eucharist, there can be expositions with the pyx or the monstrance; the norms prescribed in the liturgical books are to be observed.

§2. Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament is not to be held in the same area of the church or oratory during the celebration of Mass.

Can. 942 It is recommended that in these churches and oratories an annual solemn exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament be held for an appropriate period of time, even if not continuous, so that the local community more profoundly meditates on and adores the eucharistic mystery. Such an exposition is to be held, however, only if a suitable gathering of the faithful is foreseen and the established norms are observed.

Can. 943 The minister of exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and of eucharistic benediction is a priest or deacon; in special circumstances, the minister of exposition and reposition alone without benediction is the acolyte, extraordinary minister of holy communion, or someone else designated by the local ordinary; the prescripts of the diocesan bishop are to be observed.

Can. 944 §1. When it can be done in the judgment of the diocesan bishop, a procession through the public streets is to be held as a public witness of veneration toward the Most Holy Eucharist, especially on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ.

§2. It is for the diocesan bishop to establish regulations which provide for the participation in and the dignity of processions.

## ***Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, 141, 160-165***

### **Holy Thursday**

#### *Visiting the Altar of Repose*

141. Popular piety is particularly sensitive to the adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the wake of the Mass of the Lord's supper(145). Because of a long historical process, whose origins are not entirely clear, the place of repose has traditionally been referred to as a "a holy sepulchre". The faithful go there to venerate Jesus who was placed in a tomb following the crucifixion and in which he remained for some forty hours.

It is necessary to instruct the faithful on the meaning of the reposition: it is an austere solemn conservation of the Body of Christ for the community of the faithful which takes part in the liturgy of Good Friday and for the viaticum of the infirmed(146). It is an invitation to silent and prolonged adoration of the wondrous sacrament instituted by Jesus on this day.

In reference to the altar of repose, therefore, the term "sepulchre" should be avoided, and its decoration should not have any suggestion of a tomb. The tabernacle on this altar should not be in the form of a tomb or funerary urn. The Blessed Sacrament should be conserved in a closed tabernacle and should not be exposed in a monstrance(147).

After mid-night on Holy Thursday, the adoration should conclude without solemnity, since the day of the Lord's Passion has already begun(148).

#### *Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ*

160. The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is observe on the Thursday following on the solemnity of the Most Blessed Trinity. This feast is both a doctrinal and cultic response to heretical teaching on the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the apogee of an ardent devotional movement concentrated on the Sacrament of the Altar. It was extended to the entire Latin Church by Urban IV in 1264.

Popular piety encouraged the process that led to the institution of the feast of *Corpus Christi*, which reciprocally inspired the development of new forms of Eucharistic piety among the people of God.

For centuries, the celebration of *Corpus Christi* remained the principal point of popular piety's concentration on the Eucharist. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, faith, in reaction to various forms of protestantism, and culture (art, folklore and literature) coalesced in developing lively and significant expressions Eucharistic devotion in popular piety.

161. Eucharistic devotion, which is so deeply rooted in the Christian faithful, must integrate two basic principles:

- the supreme reference point for Eucharistic devotion is the Lord's Passover; the Pasch as understood by the Fathers, is the feast of Easter, while the Eucharist is before all else the celebration of Paschal Mystery or of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ;
- all forms of Eucharistic devotion must have an intrinsic reference to the Eucharistic Sacrifice, or dispose the faithful for its celebration, or prolong the worship which is essential to that Sacrifice.

Hence, the *Rituale Romanum* states "The faithful, when worshipping Christ present in the Sacrament of the Altar, should recall that this presence comes from the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, and tends towards sacramental and spiritual communion"(169).

162. The *Corpus Christi* procession represents the typical form of an Eucharistic procession. It is a prolongation of the celebration of the Eucharist: immediately after Mass, the Sacred Host, consecrated during the Mass, is borne out of the Church for the Christian faithful "to make public profession of faith and worship of the Most Blessed Sacrament"(170).

The faithful understand and appreciate the values inherent in the procession: they are aware of being "the People of God", journeying with the Lord, and proclaiming faith in him who has become truly "God-amongst-us".

It is necessary however to ensure that the norms governing processions be observed(171), especially those ensuring respect for the dignity and reverence of the Blessed Sacrament(172). It is also necessary to ensure that the typical elements of popular piety accompanying the procession, such as the decoration of the streets and windows with flowers and the hymns and prayers used during the procession, truly "lead all to manifest their faith in Christ, and to give praise to the Lord"(173), and exclude any forms of competition.

163. The Eucharistic procession is normally concluded by a blessing with the Blessed Sacrament. In the specific case of the *Corpus Christi* procession, the solemn blessing with the Blessed Sacrament concludes the entire celebration: the usual blessing by the priest is replaced by the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament.

It is important that the faithful understand that this blessing is not an independent form of Eucharistic piety, but the end of a prolonged act of worship. Hence, liturgical norms prohibit "exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the purpose of giving the blessing"(174).

## *Eucharistic Adoration*

164. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a form of Eucharistic cult which is particularly widespread in the Church and earnestly recommended to her Pastors and faithful. Its initial form derives from Holy Thursday and the altar of repose, following the celebration of the *Coena Domini* Mass. This adoration is a most apt way of expressing the connection between the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's Sacrifice and his continued presence in the Sacrament of the Altar. The reservation of the Sacred Species, so as to be able to administer Viaticum to the sick at any time, encouraged the practice among the faithful of recollection before the tabernacle and to worship Christ present in the Sacrament(175).

Indeed, this worship of adoration has a sound and firm foundation," [109] especially since faith in the Lord's real presence has as its natural consequence the outward and public manifestation of that belief. Therefore, the devotion prompting the faithful to visit the blessed sacrament draws them into an ever deeper share in the paschal mystery and leads them to respond gratefully to the gift of him who through his humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of his Body. [110] Abiding with Christ the Lord, they enjoy his intimate friendship and pour out their hearts before him for themselves and for those dear to them and they pray for the peace and salvation of the world. Offering their entire lives with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit, they derive from this sublime colloquy an increase of faith, hope, and charity. Thus they foster those right dispositions that enable them with due devotion to celebrate the memorial of the Lord and receive frequently the bread given us by the Father.(176)

165. In adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which can take different forms, several elements deriving from the Liturgy and from popular piety come together and it is not always easy to determine their limits(177):

- a simple visit to the Blessed Sacrament: a brief encounter with Christ inspired by faith in the real presence and characterized by silent prayer;
- adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed for a period of time in a monstrance or pyx in accordance with liturgical norm(178);
- perpetual adoration or the *Quarantore*, involving an entire religious community, or Eucharistic association, or parish, which is usually an occasion for various expressions of Eucharistic piety(179).

The faithful should be encouraged to read the Scriptures during these periods of adoration, since they afford an unrivalled source of prayer. Suitable hymns and canticles based on those of the Liturgy of the Hours and the liturgical seasons could also be encouraged, as well as periods of silent prayer and reflection. Gradually, the faithful should be encouraged not to do other devotional exercises during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament(180). Given the close relationship between Christ and Our Lady, the rosary can always be of assistance in giving prayer a Christological orientation, since it contains meditation of the Incarnation and the Redemption(181).