



DAVID J. WALKOWIAK

**Decree of Promulgation of
Diocesan Norms for Eucharistic Worship**

Whereas “The regulation of the Sacred Liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church, which rests specifically with the Apostolic See and, according to the norms of law, with the Bishop” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 22 §1);

Whereas Bishops, as “governors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church committed to them” (*Christus Dominus* 15) also rightly direct the use of liberty provided by the law;

Whereas the Bishops of Grand Rapids have historically moderated the liturgical life of the Diocese through publication of a *Sacramental Handbook*;;

Whereas changes in universal law, national adaptations, and the particular judgments of the Bishops of Grand Rapids in the decades since publication of the previous *Sacramental Handbook* have derogated from several of its provisions;

Whereas the division of the *Sacramental Handbook* into numbered sections allows for their separate publication and implementation;

Whereas the current National Eucharistic Revival calls for renewed attention to Eucharistic faith and discipline;

Therefore I, the Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak, Bishop of Grand Rapids, hereby promulgate, attached to this decree, a new “Section 500” of the *Sacramental Handbook* as particular law for the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

This promulgation is effected through publication on the webpage of the Office for Worship of the Diocese of Grand Rapids (<https://grdiocese.org/ministries/worship-3>) and the policies of Section 500 begin to oblige on the Solemnity of All Saints, November 1, 2023, contrary custom notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the 14th day of September, 2023.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ 

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids


Rev. Monsignor William H. Duncan, J.C.L.
Ecclesiastical Notary

500
EUCCHARISTIC WORSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26:

I received from the Lord what I handed on to you, namely, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper, he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' Every time, then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes!

These words from 1 Corinthians provide perhaps the earliest scriptural evidence for the four-fold action of the Eucharist that is still expressed in our liturgy today: to take the bread and the cup; to give thanks for them; to break the bread; and to eat and drink in remembrance of Christ. The Eucharist is the ritual through which the paschal mystery is most perfectly signified so that, through participation in the Eucharistic action, believers of every age are made sharers in Christ's victory over sin and death, sanctified by God, and made one with our God, with each other, and with the communion of saints through this union with Christ.

The paschal victory of Christ, which is signified in the Mass, is the Church's most treasured memory. It is the very source of her existence and the promise of her destiny. Although accomplished principally through the Lord's passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension, the paschal mystery must be understood more broadly through the recognition that "all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life."¹

By the power of the Holy Spirit, when the Church "memorializes" these saving deeds of Christ in the Mass, their power and grace are made present to us again. The Fathers of the Church spoke of this mystery as "a holy exchange": Christ, by participating in our humanity, makes us sharers in his divinity through our access to the sacraments of the Church and, most especially, through the Eucharistic action.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal begins with a clear statement on the importance of the Mass:

The celebration of Mass, as the action of Christ and of the People of God arrayed hierarchically, is the center of the whole of Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. For in it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit. In it, moreover, during the course of the year, the mysteries of redemption are celebrated so as to be in some way made present. As to the other sacred actions and all the activities of

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1085.

the Christian life, these are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it.²

The Eucharist is the preeminent celebration of what it means to be, to become, and to build up the Church, the Body of Christ.

“It was above all on the ‘first day of the week,’ Sunday, the day of Jesus’ resurrection, that the Christians met ‘to break bread.’ From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Christian life.”³

While the Church gathers in prayer every day of the week, Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection, the “eighth day” on which creation was made new, has a rich, even sacramental significance. Accordingly, the Sunday Eucharistic assembly, in which the faithful more clearly manifest their identity as the Body of Christ, is the most important of all parish activities.

PART I: CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST

Preparation

POLICY 501:

In order that all may draw abundant fruits from the celebration of Mass, the parish community shall carefully arrange each liturgical celebration to lead “to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful.”⁴ The Eucharist is to be celebrated according to the rubrics of the liturgical books and all other sources of liturgical law, universal and particular.

a) The celebration of the Eucharist “pertains to the whole Body of the Church, manifests it, and has its effect upon it” according to its members’ “different orders, functions, and actual participation.”⁵ To “signify more vividly the mystery of the Church,”⁶ the full diversity of ministries should be exercised in service of the assembly at each celebration of Mass. This includes ministries that support liturgical song, important in all celebrations of Mass and especially the Sunday Eucharist.⁷

b) Liturgical celebrations include effective preaching, well-prepared ministers, quality music, an appropriate environment, and an active assembly—all in harmony with the particular liturgical feasts and seasons. Pastoral staffs shall ensure that these elements are incorporated into each Sunday liturgy.

² General Instruction of the Roman Missal [hereafter GIRM] 16.

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1343.

⁴ GIRM 17-18.

⁵ GIRM 91.

⁶ GIRM 92; cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops* 119; GIRM 107, 109.

⁷ GIRM 40; *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 57.

c) The care required for a proper celebration of the Eucharist shall be reflected in the amount of time given to its preparation and the financial resources budgeted for its celebration.

d) Parish staffs, in collaboration with the liturgy committee and the parish pastoral council, are to make a thorough periodic review of parish liturgies in light of norms (as found in, e.g., *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the liturgical books) and national guidelines (e.g., *Built of Living Stones* and *Sing to the Lord*).

e) When assistance is needed or desired, the pastoral staff is encouraged to consult with the diocesan Office for Worship (616-475-1241 or worship@grdiocese.org).

Distinctive Communities of Worship

POLICY 502:

A parish Mass schedule shall neither exclude special groups from joining the parish assembly nor preclude the opportunity for them to gather as a distinctive community for Sunday Eucharist.

a) “Pastors have the responsibility of providing suitable ways to assist the faithful from other regions to join with the local community. This should be of particular concern in the churches of large cities. Where there are many visitors or expatriates of another language, pastors should provide them with the opportunity, at least occasionally, to participate in the Mass celebrated in the way customary for them.”⁸ In fact, when parish resources allow, pastors should enable distinct linguistic communities to worship regularly in their mother tongue, always respecting an imperative of parish unity that encourages interaction, cooperation, and prayer in common across linguistic divisions.

b) “Pastoral care also has as its purpose and direction particular groups. This is not for the sake of creating *ecclesiolae* or privileges, but to serve the faithful’s particular needs or to deepen the Christian life in accord with the requirements and capacities of the members of these groups. This brings advantages that spring from a special spiritual or apostolic, common bond and from the desire to help one another toward spiritual growth.”⁹ Thus weekday liturgies might occasionally be scheduled for the benefit of, e.g., retreatants or ecclesial movements. As a rule, however, care of such groups should be accomplished through participation in regularly scheduled liturgies at which they might receive some special focus or intercession.

c) In parishes where weekend Masses are celebrated in more than one language, multilingual liturgies can have value for major feasts and other events when parish unity is most appropriately expressed.¹⁰ Nonetheless, a community must be properly prepared and

⁸ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 19.

⁹ *Actio Pastoralis*, Introduction.

¹⁰ USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship, *Guidelines for a Multilingual Celebration of Mass*, Introduction.

motivated to derive benefit from this form of celebration. Pastors must determine whether multilingual liturgies will effectively support the faithful of the parish.

d) Pastoral leaders in multicultural parishes shall respond effectively to the special needs of the people, particularly when important changes are occurring within the parish population. The celebration of the liturgy shall reflect the cultural composition of the parish including language, music and artistic considerations.

POLICY 503:

All Sunday liturgical celebrations should be inclusive of children.

a) When adults and children worship together, “the witness of adult believers can have a great effect upon the children. Adults can in turn benefit spiritually from experiencing the part that the children have within the Christian community. The Christian spirit of the family is greatly fostered when children take part in these Masses together with their parents and other family members.”¹¹

b) When “the number of children is large, it may at times be suitable to plan the Mass so that it corresponds more closely to the needs of the children.”¹² It is important to note that documents permitting adaptation for the sake of children are specifically addressing the needs of younger children rather than more expansive use of the term to include all “minors” or “students.” The *Directory for Masses with Children* “is concerned with children who have not yet entered the period of preadolescence,”¹³ thus children younger than 10 years old. Elsewhere, this younger target age is identified as those who have yet to be fully initiated or “who have only recently been admitted to Holy Communion.”¹⁴

c) “Sometimes, moreover, if the place itself and the nature of the community permit, it will be appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word, including a homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant, room. Then, before the Eucharistic Liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own Liturgy of the Word.”¹⁵ In this case the children are dismissed from the assembly after the Opening Prayer and return to the assembly for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.¹⁶ The Liturgy of the Word for Children does not follow the same structure as religious education; it is a liturgical experience.

d) At Masses with children in which only a few adults participate, “with the consent of the pastor or rector of the church, one of the adults may speak to the children after the Gospel, especially if the priest finds it difficult to adapt himself to the mentality of the children.”¹⁷

¹¹ *Directory for Masses with Children* 16.

¹² *Directory for Masses with Children* 19.

¹³ *Directory for Masses with Children* 6; the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*, Introduction 15 extends the applicability of that book through elementary grades or preadolescence.

¹⁴ *Directory for Masses with Children* 1.

¹⁵ *Directory for Masses with Children* 17.

¹⁶ *Lectionary for Masses with Children*, Introduction 8.

¹⁷ *Directory for Masses with Children* 24.

Homilies and Other Preaching During Eucharistic Celebrations

POLICY 504:

“On Sundays and Holydays of Obligation there is to be a Homily at every Mass that is celebrated with the people attending, and it may not be omitted without a grave reason. On other days it is recommended, especially on the weekdays of Advent, Lent, and Easter Time, as well as on other festive days and occasions when the people come to church in greater numbers.”¹⁸

a) Among the various forms of preaching, the homily is pre-eminent and is a part of the liturgy itself. Whenever a congregation is present on Sundays or holy days of obligation, it cannot be omitted without grave cause.¹⁹

b) The homily is an integral part of the liturgy, necessary for nurturing the Christian life and constituting “a proclamation of God’s wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ, ever made present and active within us, especially in the celebration of the liturgy.”²⁰ “The unique nature of the homily is captured well in St. Luke’s account of Christ’s preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth (cf. *Lk* 4:16-30). After reading a passage from the Prophet Isaiah he handed the scroll back to the attendant and began, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’ (*Lk* 4:21).”²¹

c) The homily should explain the texts of Sacred Scripture, the Ordinary, or the Proper of the day’s Mass and take into account the mystery being celebrated.²²

d) “Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it.”²³

e) The preaching of the homily is reserved to a priest or deacon.²⁴ The homily is usually given by the celebrant of the Eucharist. It may also be given by a concelebrant or, from time to time, deacon of that liturgy.²⁵ Because the homily is an integral part of the liturgy, the homilist should be a participant in the entire act of worship; he should not appear only to give the homily and then depart.

POLICY 505:

Lay persons can be admitted to preach in a church or oratory if it is necessary in certain

¹⁸ GIRM 66.

¹⁹ Canon 767 §2.

²⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 35.2.

²¹ *Homiletic Directory* 4.

²² GIRM 65.

²³ *Evangelii gaudium* 145.

²⁴ Canon 767 §1.

²⁵ GIRM 66.

circumstances or if it is useful in particular cases. They may not give the homily during Mass.²⁶

- a) The prescription of canon 767 §1 that only a priest or deacon can give the homily must be observed. A bishop is not allowed to dispense from the requirement of this canon and permit a lay person to give the homily.
- b) Because all the baptized possess a fundamental duty to evangelize and to see that the divine message of salvation is known and accepted by all persons throughout the world,²⁷ the laity may be called upon to cooperate with the clergy in the ministry of the Word.²⁸ This cooperation includes forms of preaching distinct from the homily.
- c) “The lay faithful who are to be admitted to preach in a church or oratory must be orthodox in faith, and well-qualified, both by the witness of their lives as Christians and by a preparation for preaching appropriate to the circumstances.”²⁹
- d) Permissible forms of instruction and preaching include personal testimonies and reflections. When, on rare occasions, reflections are offered by lay preachers during the Eucharistic liturgy, they are offered in addition to the homily preached by a priest or deacon. Furthermore, “preaching by the lay faithful may not take place within the Celebration of the Eucharist at the moment reserved for the homily.”³⁰
- e) A lay person might preach if the celebrant is physically unable to deliver a homily or if he cannot speak the language of the congregation; in such cases, the priest could prepare a homily ahead of time for the lay person to deliver or translate for the people.
- f) Designated lay persons might also appropriately preach or give scriptural reflections at Liturgies of the Word, celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours, retreats, funeral vigils,³¹ and other forms of communal prayer.

Eucharistic Fast

POLICY 506:

A person who wishes to receive Communion is to abstain from food and drink for one hour prior to reception.³²

- a) While food and drink may not be taken for one hour before receiving Communion, water and medicine may be taken at any time.

²⁶ Canons 766-767; see also Policy 515 below.

²⁷ *Lumen Gentium* 33; *Ad Gentes* 21.

²⁸ Canon 759.

²⁹ USCCB complementary legislation for canon 766 (issued December 13, 2001).

³⁰ USCCB complementary legislation for canon 766 (issued December 13, 2001).

³¹ *Order of Christian Funerals* 27.

³² Canon 919 §1.

b) The elderly, the infirm, and those who care for them can receive Communion even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.³³

c) A priest who is celebrating Mass two or three times on the same day may take something before the second or third Mass even if there is less than one hour between them.³⁴

Communion Twice in One Day

POLICY 507:

“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.”³⁵

a) To receive Holy Communion is to participate in the paschal mystery of Christ; this truth stands out more clearly when Communion is received during the Eucharistic celebration, whose proclamation of the Word, offering of gifts, and Eucharistic prayer unite in “one single act of worship” with sacramental Communion.³⁶ Thus, insofar as possible, “the faithful are to be led to the practice of receiving Communion during the actual Eucharistic celebration.”³⁷

b) A person who attends multiple liturgies on the same day (e.g. a daily Mass, a funeral or wedding, an anniversary Mass, a Saturday evening Mass) may receive Communion a second time in one day (the twenty-four hour period beginning at midnight), but only while participating in the celebration of Mass. This permission does not allow a second reception outside of Mass, even in the context of a different liturgy.

c) A person in danger of death may receive Communion a second time, even outside of Mass, especially in the form of Viaticum.³⁸

Place for Mass

POLICY 508:

Every Mass shall be celebrated in a dignified, suitable, accessible place. Apart from particular cases of necessity, this place will be a church.³⁹

a) *Built of Living Stones* guides church art and architecture according to the proper authority of its individual norms and guidelines.

³³ Canon 919 §3.

³⁴ Canon 919 §2.

³⁵ Canon 917.

³⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1408.

³⁷ *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* [hereafter *HCWEOM*] 14.

³⁸ Canon 921 §2.

³⁹ Canon 932 §1.

b) Parish communities undertaking a review of Sunday liturgies are encouraged to assess the appropriateness of their worship space.

c) Provision shall be made for easy access to the entire worship space for the elderly and those with physical disabilities.

d) “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.”⁴⁰

e) “The Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory.”⁴¹

1) The tabernacle 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.”⁴²

2) “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.”⁴³

f) When the construction or renovation of a sacred place is being considered, the pastor shall consult the diocesan Church Art and Architecture Commission and the Office for Worship for assistance in applying these norms and receiving the necessary approval from the diocesan bishop.

g) Fixed (i.e., immovable) altars located outdoors may be used for the celebration of Mass, provided that precautions are taken against the effects of wind and other adverse weather. Likewise, Mass to gather the entire parish community may be celebrated outdoors once per year if the church will not accommodate a congregation of that size. Otherwise, Mass outdoors is permitted only when deemed necessary, on a case-by-case basis, by the diocesan bishop.⁴⁴

Scheduling Masses

POLICY 509:

In order that the integrity of the liturgy be preserved in parishes, the following shall be balanced in determining the number of Masses:

1) providing Masses so that the faithful can fulfill their Sunday obligation;

⁴⁰ Canon 937.

⁴¹ Canon 938 §1.

⁴² Canon 938 §3.

⁴³ Canon 938 §5.

⁴⁴ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 108.

- 2) enabling the members of a parish to gather as one worshipping community (to the extent that this is feasible);**
- 3) celebrating liturgies that are well prepared and include music and the full complement of ministries; and**
- 4) not overextending the priest celebrants and other liturgical ministers.**

a) “As to the hours and the number of Masses to be celebrated in parishes, the convenience of the parish community must be kept in mind and the number of Masses not so multiplied as to harm pastoral effectiveness. Such would be the case, for example, if because there were too many Masses, only small groups of the faithful would attend each one in churches that can hold many people; or if, also because of the number of Masses, the priests were to be so overwhelmed with the work that they could fulfill their ministry only with great difficulty.”⁴⁵ No priest may celebrate the Eucharist more than three times on a Sunday or Holyday of Obligation, or more than twice on other days.⁴⁶

b) Parish staffs should evaluate the schedule of weekend Masses where the attendance at two or more Masses is consistently less than 50% of the seating capacity of the church. When this is the case, unless there is a special need (e.g., for a particular ethnic group within the parish) or the congregation cannot be accommodated at another Mass, the pastor should consider whether to eliminate or combine scheduled liturgies.

c) Any Mass scheduled for Saturday or Sunday evening should meet a definite pastoral need and be planned and carried out with the same quality and liturgical integrity as the other Sunday Masses.

d) Parishes in a given locale are encouraged to cooperate in scheduling Masses to foster full participation and avoid the duplication of Masses.

e) In setting the Sunday schedule, enough time should be allowed for other rites which are celebrated in the Sunday liturgy (e.g., the rites of the RCIA, Baptism of infants, Anointing of the Sick, commissioning of liturgical ministers, and blessings). The length of time between Masses should ensure that no one is rushed – the priest, liturgical ministers, assembly, catechumens – before, during, or after the liturgy.

f) Ordinarily, there should be a minimum of two hours between the starting times of Masses.

Holy day of obligation Masses

g) Each parish or cluster must offer at least two Masses for every holy day of obligation.

h) Masses for holy days of obligation must be spread over at least two different times of day (roughly divisible into morning, midday, and evening).

⁴⁵ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 26.

⁴⁶ Can. 905 §2. Since this canon does not expressly provide otherwise (cf. can. 200), its ‘day is understood as a period consisting of 24 continuous hours and begins at midnight’ (can. 202 §1).

i) At least one Mass must be celebrated in the evening, whether on the holy day of obligation itself or the evening before. An exception to this general flexibility is the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, for which every parish or cluster should offer an anticipated Mass on the evening of December 31.

j) When holydays are not obligatory because they fall on a Monday, each parish or cluster must offer at least one Mass at a time accessible to the greater part of the community.

k) When holydays are not obligatory because they fall on Saturday, priests are encouraged to offer holyday Mass at a time accessible to the greater part of the community, if feasible.

Anticipated Masses

l) “When permission has been granted by the Apostolic See to fulfill the Sunday obligation on the preceding Saturday evening, pastors should explain to the faithful and should ensure that the significance of Sunday is not hereby obscured. The purpose of this concession is in fact to enable the Christians of today to celebrate more easily the day of the resurrection of the Lord. All concessions and contrary customs notwithstanding, when celebrated on Saturday this Mass may be celebrated only in the evening, at times determined by the local ordinary. In these cases, the Mass celebrated is that assigned in the calendar to Sunday and the homily and the Prayer of the Faithful are not to be omitted. What has been said above is equally valid for the Mass on Holy Days of Obligation which for the same reason has been transferred to the preceding evening.”⁴⁷

m) In order to keep the proper focus on Sunday as the day of gathering for the Eucharist,⁴⁸ each parish may ordinarily have on Saturday no more than one anticipated Mass for fulfilling the Sunday obligation, beginning no earlier than 4 p.m. The same rule applies to anticipated Masses for holy days of obligation.

n) The parish staff, in consultation with the community, should evaluate the schedule for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance on Saturday evening to ensure that there is adequate time for people to celebrate the sacrament as well as adequate time to prepare for the anticipated Sunday Eucharist.

Marriage during Sunday Mass

o) When “during Christmas Time and Ordinary Time, the parish community participates in a Sunday Mass during which Marriage is celebrated, the Mass of the Sunday is used.”⁴⁹ This norm establishes an exception to the general rule governing the use of the Ritual Mass

⁴⁷ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 28.

⁴⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 106; *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 25; General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar 3-4.

⁴⁹ *Roman Missal*, Ritual Masses V. For the Celebration of Marriage; cf. *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony* 34.

for the Celebration of Marriage. As a rule, when marriage is celebrated during Mass on days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, the Mass of the day must be celebrated; on days of lower rank, such as the Sundays of Christmas Time and in Ordinary Time (no. 6), the Ritual Mass must be used. However, if the sacrament is celebrated during the parish community's regularly scheduled Sunday Mass (including those anticipated on Saturday evening) the Mass of the Sunday must be used. This prevents the celebration of marriage from displacing the parish's usual opportunities to celebrate the Sunday.

The Easter Vigil

p) While it fulfills the Sunday obligation, the Easter Vigil is not to be considered a Mass of anticipation for Easter, but a unique liturgical experience in its own right with a "special significance in the liturgical year and in the whole Christian life."⁵⁰

q) "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday."⁵¹ "This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense."⁵²

1) Because of the variable date of Easter, the diocesan Office for Worship will inform pastors each year of the earliest time the upcoming Easter Vigil may begin.

Weekday Masses

s) On weekdays there shall not be more regularly scheduled Masses than there are priests assigned to the parish. However, when special needs (such as funerals) call for Mass at a different time, it is preferable to add a Mass that day rather than to replace one; these infrequent occurrences present just cause for bination.

Celebrating More Than One Mass

POLICY 510:

For a just cause, a priest is permitted to celebrate Mass twice on any given day. If pastoral necessity requires, he is permitted to celebrate a third Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.⁵³

a) Canon law states that it is not licit for a priest to celebrate Mass more than once a day (understood as the twenty-four hour period beginning at midnight) except when it is expressly permitted in law.⁵⁴ The bishop may permit a priest to celebrate a second Mass for a just cause.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 28.

⁵¹ *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 3; cf. General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar 21.

⁵² *Paschalis Sollemnitatis* 78.

⁵³ Canon 905 §2; see diocesan *pagella*, Faculty 5.

⁵⁴ Canon 905 §1.

⁵⁵ Canon 905 §2.

b) A just cause could include such circumstances as a funeral or wedding Mass, a Mass in another language, or a Mass at a second parish.

c) It is permitted to celebrate a third Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation, but only when there is a pastoral necessity.⁵⁶ The pastor, in consultation with his pastoral staff and liturgy committee, should determine whether there is truly a pastoral necessity in scheduling such Masses.

d) In addition to the Mass, the Church has a rich treasury of other forms of community prayer and worship, with first place accorded to the Liturgy of the Hours. Pastors should draw upon these riches to provide opportunities for parish prayer and should make particular use of them when the celebration of Mass will not be possible.

Concelebration

POLICY 511:

Concelebration by priests at the Eucharistic liturgy is called for at the ordination of bishops and priests and at the Chrism Mass. It is recommended, moreover, at the evening Mass of Holy Thursday, and at other liturgies which bring out the unity of the priesthood, of the sacrifice, and of the whole people of God. However, each priest shall retain his right to celebrate Mass individually, though not at the same time in the same church as a concelebrated Mass, nor on the Thursday of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁷

a) In Masses presided over by the bishop, priests should concelebrate with him so that the unity of the Church may be made manifest through the Eucharistic celebration.

b) No one is to be admitted as a concelebrant once the Entrance, which is the first part of the Mass, has begun.⁵⁸

c) Concelebrants should be seated together in a distinct area and should not be intermingled with the assembly nor should anyone be seated between concelebrants and the altar. If the *presbyterium* is not large enough to accommodate all the concelebrants appropriately, some are seated in another area which physically and visually unites them with the other concelebrants. Furthermore, the position of the concelebrants should not usurp or limit the functioning of other liturgical ministers. Unless it is unavoidable, concelebrants should not impede the full view of the assembly, especially when the assembly is called upon to kneel.⁵⁹

d) The principal celebrant is to wear the alb with a stole and chasuble. The concelebrating priests wear the same. However, for a just cause (such as the large number of concelebrants

⁵⁶ Canon 905 §2.

⁵⁷ GIRM 114, 199, 203; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 57.

⁵⁸ GIRM 206. Cf. GIRM 46.

⁵⁹ GIRM 215.

or lack of vestments) they may omit the chasuble.⁶⁰ Priests may not concelebrate in ordinary secular attire, in clerical garb, by wearing a stole over a cassock, or by placing a stole over a monastic cowl or habit.⁶¹

e) Upon arriving in procession, the deacons, the concelebrants, and the principal celebrant bow to the altar as a sign of reverence. Unless their large number prevents this, concelebrants also venerate the altar with a kiss.⁶² If a tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament is behind or near the altar, they genuflect instead of bowing.⁶³

f) If no deacon is present, a concelebrant reads the Gospel. If the principal celebrant is a bishop, the concelebrant asks for and receives a blessing from the bishop.⁶⁴ If the principal celebrant is not a bishop, the concelebrant bows before the altar and prays inaudibly, “Cleanse my heart and my lips...” and proclaims the Gospel in the usual way.

g) The homily is generally given by the principal celebrant; at a concelebration one of the concelebrants may preach or, in some cases, the deacon.⁶⁵

h) The rites for the preparation of the gifts are carried out by the principal celebrant while the other concelebrants remain at their places.⁶⁶

i) The concelebrants approach the altar for the Eucharistic Prayer after the principal celebrant has concluded the Prayer over the Offerings. The deacons stand behind the concelebrants, but in such a way that one of them may assist at the altar as needed.⁶⁷ The principal celebrant begins the Eucharistic Prayer only after the concelebrants have taken their places.

j) The Eucharistic Prayer should be proclaimed by the principal celebrant in a loud and clear voice, while the concelebrating priests recite the epiclesis, words of consecration, anamnesis, and post-consecratory epiclesis in a lower voice.⁶⁸ The concelebrants listen in silence during the post-sanctus and the intercessions of the Eucharistic Prayer.

k) Concelebrating priests stretch out both their hands towards the elements at the epiclesis. During the consecration, each concelebrant extends the right hand, with the palm facing toward the side, toward the bread and chalice. The concelebrants hold their hands outstretched in an *orans* gesture during the anamnesis and the post-consecratory epiclesis, but not during the other parts of the Eucharistic Prayer.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ GIRM 209.

⁶¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 126.

⁶² GIRM 211.

⁶³ GIRM 274.

⁶⁴ GIRM 212.

⁶⁵ GIRM 66, 213.

⁶⁶ GIRM 214.

⁶⁷ GIRM 215.

⁶⁸ GIRM 218.

⁶⁹ GIRM 219-234.

l) During the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, only the principal celebrant elevates the paten with the consecrated bread, while the deacon raises the chalice.⁷⁰ The concelebrants do not elevate other chalices, ciboria, etc. If no deacon is present, one of the concelebrants may elevate the chalice.

m) All concelebrants may join in the singing or recitation of the doxology or it may be done by the principal celebrant alone.⁷¹ The collective voice of the concelebrants should not, however, overwhelm the voice of the principal celebrant.

n) The concelebrants hold their hands outstretched in an *orans* gesture during the singing or recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Only the principal celebrant maintains the *orans* posture for the "Deliver us, Lord...."

o) The principal celebrant extends the Sign of Peace to those concelebrants nearest him (at least the first two) before sharing the Peace with the deacon.⁷²

p) During Communion, it is not necessary that each concelebrant receive one-half of a large host. But at least some of the Eucharistic bread should be broken for the concelebrants and the people. Concelebrants must never be given holy Communion consecrated at another Mass and must always receive Communion under both kinds unless dispensed by the diocesan bishop or vicar general due to inability to consume one or the other species.⁷³

q) Only the principal celebrant shows the consecrated host to the people when he proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God...." Concelebrants do not elevate their hosts; rather they reverently hold the consecrated host in their right hand with their left hand under it.⁷⁴

r) If there is a great number of concelebrants, they may receive the consecrated hosts and drink from the chalice while holy Communion is being distributed to the faithful. Concelebrants assist the principal celebrant in the distribution of holy Communion. When the number of ordinary ministers of holy Communion is insufficient, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion may distribute the Eucharist. Such extraordinary ministers do not receive holy Communion in the manner of concelebrants.⁷⁵

s) At the conclusion of the liturgy, the concelebrants reverence the altar with a bow, or genuflect when the tabernacle is behind or near the altar, and leave in procession.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ GIRM 180.

⁷¹ GIRM 236.

⁷² GIRM 239; *Ceremonial of Bishops* 161.

⁷³ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 98; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Circular Letter to all Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences Concerning the Use of Low-gluten Altar Breads and Mustum as Matter for the Celebration of the Eucharist, Prot. N. 89/78 – 17498, §B.2-3.

⁷⁴ GIRM 242-243.

⁷⁵ Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America [hereafter NDRHC] 39.

⁷⁶ GIRM 251; *Ceremonial of Bishops* 73.

The Matter for the Eucharist

POLICY 512:

Utmost care is to be taken in ensuring the use of valid and licit matter for the celebration of the Eucharist.⁷⁷

- a)** In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, homemade altar breads are not permitted to be used at Mass. Only hosts made from pure wheat flour and water are acceptable,⁷⁸ available from approved companies and houses of religious.⁷⁹
- b)** Gluten free hosts are invalid matter and can never be used. Low gluten hosts are available from approved suppliers.⁸⁰
- c)** Only altar wine approved for sacramental use may be used at Mass.⁸¹
- d)** Questions about ecclesiastical approval should be resolved by contacting the Office for Worship.

⁷⁷ “It is for the Bishop as principal dispenser of the mysteries of God, moderator, promoter and guardian of the liturgical life in the Church entrusted to his care (Cf. CIC can. 835 § 1), to watch over the quality of the bread and wine to be used at the Eucharist and also those who prepare these materials” (Congregation for Divine Worship, Circular Letter to Bishops on the Bread and Wine for the Eucharist [June 15, 2017] §1).

⁷⁸ *Inaestimabile Donum* 8.

⁷⁹ Cf. Circular Letter to Bishops on the Bread and Wine for the Eucharist §2: “In order to remove any doubt about the validity of the matter for the Eucharist, this Dicastery suggests that Ordinaries should give guidance in this regard by, for example, guaranteeing the Eucharistic matter through special certification.”

⁸⁰ It is desirable that each parish maintain a supply of low-gluten altar bread for the sake of communicants who require this accommodation.

⁸¹ Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 50: “It is altogether forbidden to use wine of doubtful authenticity or provenance, for the Church requires certainty regarding the conditions necessary for the validity of the sacraments.”

PART II: THE EUCHARIST IN OTHER LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

THE RITE OF DISTRIBUTING HOLY COMMUNION OUTSIDE MASS

“Sacramental Communion received during Mass is a more complete participation in the Eucharistic celebration.”⁸² Consequently, any celebration of the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass must be consonant with the Church’s intention that “The faithful are to be led to the practice of receiving Communion during the actual Eucharistic celebration.”⁸³ The more frequently Communion may be received apart from Mass, the greater the risk that participation in Mass may be seen as a secondary good. Yet we do not celebrate Mass primarily to provide opportunities for holy Communion. On the contrary, since the Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of Christian life, the faithful partake of holy Communion so as to more perfectly raise up the Church’s offering of praise and thanksgiving. Even when they must receive holy Communion apart from Mass, “the people of God share the benefits of the paschal sacrifice, renew the new covenant with us made once and for all by God in Christ’s blood, and in faith and hope foreshadow and anticipate the eschatological banquet in the Father’s kingdom, as they proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes.”⁸⁴ Holy Communion must always be clearly united to this divine thanksgiving whereby all members of Christ together “offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It.”⁸⁵ Thus, without prejudice to the principle that “those who are prevented from being present at the community’s celebration,” most especially the sick, “should be refreshed with the Eucharist,”⁸⁶ the following norms place prudent limitation on publicly scheduled opportunities to receive Communion outside Mass.

Permission to Schedule a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass

POLICY 513:

Ordinary ministers of holy Communion may distribute holy Communion outside Mass in response to individual requests and priests, in particular, “are not to refuse to give Communion to the faithful who for a legitimate reason ask for it even outside Mass.”⁸⁷ A Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass may not, however, be publicly scheduled without the permission of the diocesan bishop or vicar general.

a) Because it is intended for those who cannot participate in the community’s celebration of Mass, care must be taken that Communion outside Mass remains insofar as possible a communal form of prayer that extends rather than replaces the Eucharistic celebration. Accordingly, permission to schedule a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass within a parish will be only granted in parish churches and on days without a regularly

⁸² HCWEOM 13.

⁸³ HCWEOM 14.

⁸⁴ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 4 (as quoted by HCWEOM 14).

⁸⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 11.

⁸⁶ HCWEOM 14.

⁸⁷ HCWEOM 14.

scheduled Mass. Only one scheduled Rite of Distributing Holy Communion per parish may be permitted on such days. This rite may not be scheduled if most parishioners are reasonably able to participate in Mass at a nearby parish.

b) Occasional disruptions to a parish's schedule of Masses, e.g., due to weddings or funerals, are not sufficient cause to schedule holy Communion outside Mass. Likewise, the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass may not be celebrated in lieu of a scheduled Mass when a priest becomes unavailable, e.g., due to illness or inclement weather. Instead, some other communal form of prayer should take place at that time, with first consideration given to liturgical prayer, especially the Liturgy of the Hours.

d) When a priest is not available to celebrate the Eucharist at hospitals and nursing homes, the sick and homebound may come together to receive holy Communion according to the rites provided in *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, chapter 3. Those who are not sick or homebound are to be directed to receive Communion within the context of Mass.

e) When scheduled in a parish, the long form of the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* 26-41 is to be used, conforming where appropriate to the normative translation of the *Roman Missal*.

f) The parish must avoid any confusion about the nature of holy Communion outside Mass by the way in which the liturgy is announced to the congregation or in the manner of its celebration. It should be clear that holy Communion outside Mass is not equivalent to the celebration of Mass.

g) A Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass requires the same care in preparation and celebration that the Church has made normative for all liturgical celebrations. This includes the involvement of other liturgical ministers (see Policy 501).

Preparing the Parish

POLICY 514:

Pastors who receive permission to schedule the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass are to provide catechesis concerning this liturgy before the rite is added to the parish schedule. The rationale for this liturgy, based on the *praenotanda* of *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, shall be printed in the parish bulletin with some regularity so that there is no misunderstanding about the difference between celebrating Mass and distributing Holy Communion outside Mass. The preeminence of the Mass must be preserved among the faithful.

The Presiding Minister

POLICY 515:

“It belongs first of all to the priest and the deacon to minister Holy Communion to the faithful who ask to receive it,”⁸⁸ whether individually or in the context of a scheduled rite. Because the scheduled distribution of holy Communion will only be permitted when Mass cannot be celebrated, such celebrations will, as a rule, be directed by deacons. In the absence of an ordained minister, only a properly prepared and mandated lay leader of prayer may direct the Distribution of Holy Communion outside Mass.

- a) A mandate to serve as extraordinary minister of holy Communion at Mass or to the homebound does not authorize a lay minister to direct a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass. Further training and permission specific to this rite is required.
- b) Pastors are to apply to the bishop through the director of the Office for Worship for training and particular mandates for any lay ministers who will direct these services.
- c) Those who direct a Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass have the responsibility of leading the complete liturgy: both the celebration of the word and the distribution of holy Communion.
- d) In addition, other liturgical ministers such as lectors, cantors, or servers are to assist in the celebration as necessary.⁸⁹

POLICY 516:

A mandate empowering a lay leader of prayer to direct the Distribution of Holy Communion outside Mass does not entail permission to preach. Lay leaders of prayer are to observe “a period of silent prayer”⁹⁰ between the proclamation of the reading and the general intercessions.

POLICY 517:

Liturgies which include the distribution of Communion are to follow the rites that the Church provides, as further determined by the following diocesan norms.

- a) In scheduled celebrations of the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass on weekdays, the readings are taken from those provided in the *Lectionary for Mass* for the Mass of the day.
- b) Deacons who preside at one of these services act in accord with their ministry with regard to the greetings, the prayers, the Gospel reading, the homily, the distribution of holy Communion, the dismissal, and the final blessing. Deacons wear the vestments proper to

⁸⁸ HCWEOM 17.

⁸⁹ Cf. SCAP 25, 28.

⁹⁰ HCWEOM 29.

their ministry, that is, the alb with stole.⁹¹ They also use the presidential chair.

c) Lay leaders of prayer use those prayers and blessings specifically designated in the rite for lay persons. Lay leaders of prayer are expected to dress in a dignified manner. They may wear a simple alb without a stole. They sit in a place that allows them to be seen and heard but that also remains clearly distinct from the presidential chair.

POLICY 518:

Holy Communion is only distributed in the context of the rites that the Church provides.

- a) Distribution of holy Communion may not be inserted into or combined with other rites unless expressly permitted by the liturgical books. When such permission does exist (e.g., in the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass or the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass), this form of celebration may not be chosen principally to allow a deacon to lead.
- b) Holy Communion may not be distributed without the celebration of the full rite appropriate to the pastoral circumstance or shifted out of its proper position within the rite.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

POLICY 519:

During exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, care must be taken to follow the norms established by the Church in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* and supported by the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, so that the proper relationship between exposition, adoration and the celebration of the Eucharist is maintained.

a) “Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, either in the ciborium or in a monstrance, leads us to acknowledge Christ’s marvelous presence in the sacrament and invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental communion. Therefore it is a strong encouragement toward the worship owed to Christ in spirit and in truth. In such exposition care must be taken that everything clearly brings out the meaning of Eucharistic worship in its correlation with the Mass. There must be nothing about the appointments used for exposition that could in any way obscure Christ’s intention of instituting the Eucharist above all to be near us to feed, to heal, and to comfort us.”⁹²

b) “In churches or oratories where it is permitted to reserve the Most Holy Eucharist, there can be expositions with the pyx or the monstrance.”⁹³ The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is not permitted in the body of the church or oratory during the celebration of

⁹¹ HCWEOM 20.

⁹² HCWEOM 82.

⁹³ Canon 941 §1.

Mass. If the Blessed Sacrament has been exposed for adoration and it becomes time for the celebration of Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is to be returned to the tabernacle.⁹⁴

c) “Genuflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle or exposed for public adoration, is on one knee.”⁹⁵

d) “For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, four to six candles are lighted, as at Mass, and incense is used. For exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the ciborium, at least two candles should be lighted and incense may be used.”⁹⁶ Incense may be omitted when exposition takes place in a location that will not allow for its use.

POLICY 520:

In the absence of a priest or deacon, instituted acolytes and other extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may publicly expose and later repose the Eucharist for the adoration of the faithful.⁹⁷

a) When entrusted with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion shall observe all the ritual prescriptions found in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*.

b) Not all extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may lead celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours with exposition according to the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, but only instituted acolytes and those who have been trained specifically for this purpose by the diocesan Office for Worship.

c) Lay ministers who expose or repose the Blessed Sacrament are expected to dress in a dignified manner. They may wear a simple alb without a stole.

d) Lay ministers are not permitted to give the blessing with the Sacrament (benediction), which is reserved to bishops, priests and deacons.⁹⁸

PERPETUAL EXPOSITION AND ADORATION

The life of the parish community is centered and grounded in the celebration of the Eucharist. Outside of the times of the celebration of the Eucharist, the lives of the faithful can be

⁹⁴ HCWEOM 83.

⁹⁵ HCWEOM 84.

⁹⁶ HCWEOM 85.

⁹⁷ HCWEOM 91. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion “may publicly expose and later repose the Eucharist for the adoration of the faithful. Such ministers may open the tabernacle and also, as required, place the ciborium on the altar or place the host in the monstrance. At the end of the period of adoration, they replace the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.” The minister genuflects before removing the Eucharist from tabernacle or altar, and genuflects once more after having placed the Sacrament in its new location. The rite does not call for any prayer or song to accompany this simple exposition or reposition by a lay minister.

⁹⁸ HCWEOM 91.

nurtured by various Eucharistic practices and devotions which flow from and lead back to the celebration of the divine mysteries in the Eucharistic assembly.

Eucharistic adoration and devotions are encouraged in every parish. These include practices such as private adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, specified times for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, celebration of benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, and the Forty Hours devotion.

Perpetual adoration is sometimes observed in oratories and religious communities that have such adoration as part of their constitution and communal life. A pious association of the laity may also be permitted to have perpetual adoration as part of its constitution and purpose. The explicit permission for the pious association of the laity to observe perpetual adoration must be given by the bishop. Their activity should be seen as something within but distinct from the parish, although all members of the parish are free to participate in it. Because perpetual exposition is a devotional practice of a religious community or a pious association, it should normally take place in a chapel of that religious or lay community that has received permission for the devotion. If, for good reason, perpetual exposition must take place in a parish church, it should be in a chapel distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebrations.

The diocesan bishop has the responsibility for the regulation of perpetual adoration. He determines when and where it is to be permitted. He also establishes the regulations to be followed. He alone determines the pastoral appropriateness of perpetual adoration in each case and may limit the number of places where it occurs. He also ensures that there is a chaplain or pastor who is responsible to see to it that the proper norms and regulations are observed.

POLICY 521:

In order to observe the practice of perpetual exposition and adoration, the special permission of the diocesan bishop or vicar general must be obtained in writing.

- a) The term “perpetual exposition and adoration” is understood to mean near-continuous prayer and contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the ciborium or monstrance daily. Exposition is interrupted only during the Paschal Triduum and during the rare celebration of Mass in the reservation chapel. The practice of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle does not require special permission.
- b) Before a parish requests permission for perpetual exposition and adoration, it should first have some experience with exposition on a more limited basis, such as one day a week or for a limited period of time each day. This should help demonstrate the desire and ability to maintain perpetual exposition and adoration.
- c) A pious association of the faithful (see canons 298-311) must be established which is committed to having members present before the Eucharist at all times. Membership in this pious association should be open to members of the parish and can include the faithful from surrounding parishes. There should be a sufficient number of members to ensure that it can

sustain perpetual adoration.

d) One or more parishes can cooperate to support perpetual exposition and adoration, but there is to be only one location and it does not move from place to place.

e) There is to be a totally enclosed chapel which is separate from the body of the church. The chapel is to be secure and suitable for prayer and worship.

f) Any time Mass is celebrated in a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, the Eucharist must be replaced in the tabernacle before the celebration of Mass begins. However, Mass should not regularly be celebrated in a chapel reserved for perpetual Eucharistic adoration.

g) There is to be no exposition of the Eucharist during the Triduum. This does not exclude adoration of the Blessed Sacrament enclosed in the tabernacle at the place of repose after the Mass of the Lord's Supper. "The faithful are invited to continue" this form of "adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but after midnight the adoration should take place without solemnity."⁹⁹

h) There is to be a minimum of two people present during perpetual exposition and adoration. It would be best to schedule three or four people for each hour. At no time is the Eucharist to be left unattended. The practice of covering the monstrance in order to leave the Eucharist unattended is forbidden and can neither be continued by force of past custom nor obtain the force of custom in the future. Should exposition need to be suspended due to extraordinary circumstances, a minister of Holy Communion is to repose the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle using the simple form of the rite and, when the scheduled suspension has come to an end, expose the Eucharist in the same simple manner for further adoration.¹⁰⁰

i) There is to be a priest appointed who can and will provide for the care and supervision of the chapel.¹⁰¹ If no express appointment has been made, the chapel is the responsibility of the local pastor.

j) Any parish authorized by the diocesan bishop or vicar general to have perpetual exposition and adoration is bound to follow all the liturgical norms given in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*.¹⁰²

k) "The Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved habitually in only one tabernacle of a church or oratory."¹⁰³ It is permissible to reserve the Blessed Sacrament both in the main tabernacle of the parish church as well as in a fully detached chapel where perpetual

⁹⁹ *Roman Missal*, Mass of the Lord's Supper 43.

¹⁰⁰ *HCWEOM* 88.

¹⁰¹ Can. 934 §2.

¹⁰² *HCWEOM* 82-100.

¹⁰³ Can. 938 §1.

exposition and adoration is taking place. If, however, the chapel of exposition is merely a side chapel branching off the body of the parish church, it may not contain a separate tabernacle.

l) The priest who supervises the chapel will be asked periodically to provide the diocesan bishop a report on the practice and condition of the perpetual exposition and adoration.

PART III: LITURGICAL MINISTERS

ORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

POLICY 522:

The ordinary ministers of holy Communion are bishops, priests, and deacons. They exercise this ministry by virtue of their ordination. In the distribution of holy Communion, ordained ministers are to abide by all universal and particular norms, including the following:

a) The Bishop of Grand Rapids permits “Communion under both kinds whenever it may seem appropriate to the Priest to whom a community has been entrusted as its own shepherd, provided that the faithful have been well instructed and that there is no danger of profanation of the Sacrament or of the rite’s becoming difficult because of the large number of participants or for some other cause.”¹⁰⁴ Because “Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it takes place under both kinds,”¹⁰⁵ priests are encouraged to make generous use of this permission.

b) Individuals who are not receiving Communion may not be invited to join the Communion procession at Mass. The procession serves as a ritual expression of unity among those who are receiving the Sacrament.¹⁰⁶ Individuals unable to receive at that time are asked to remain prayerfully in their places and make a spiritual Communion.

c) Ordinary ministers of holy Communion may not impart special blessings (e.g., for children or non-Catholics) while distributing Communion. When individuals approach with the expectation of a blessing, ministers of holy Communion should acknowledge their desire by praying, “Receive Jesus in your heart,” without any accompanying gesture.

d) Ordinary ministers of holy Communion are responsible for ensuring that communicants consume the host before returning to their seats. Circumstances may require the minister to leave his place of distribution to fulfill this responsibility, asking the recipient to either consume the host or return it to the minister.

e) Ordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass may not place hosts into a pyx presented

¹⁰⁴ GIRM 283.c.

¹⁰⁵ GIRM 281.

¹⁰⁶ GIRM 86.

to them in the Communion procession. They may distribute in the Communion procession only what will be consumed immediately by the communicant.

f) “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.”¹⁰⁷ When distributing holy Communion to the sick, ordinary ministers should insofar as possible go directly from the place where the Sacrament is reserved to the sick person. They are to ensure that this norm is also observed diligently by all extraordinary ministers of holy Communion who assist them in bringing the Eucharist to the sick.

g) If a host or any particle of it should fall, it is to be picked up reverently by the minister. Ordinary ministers of holy Communion may consume the host immediately or place it on the corporal for the attention of the celebrant. If any of the Precious Blood spills, the area should be washed immediately and the water poured into the sacrarium.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

In 1969 Pope St. Paul VI issued the instruction *Fidei Custos*, which allows baptized and confirmed members of the faithful to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion in certain pastoral circumstances. This instruction and subsequent documentation, including *Immensae Caritatis* (1973) and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, have resulted in recourse to extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion as a common pastoral practice in the United States.

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass assist in the distribution of holy Communion when the number of ordinary ministers is insufficient to serve the assembly in a reverent manner. Assigning extraordinary ministers prevents the Communion Rite from becoming excessively long and out of proportion to the rest of the liturgy. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion may also be employed to enable reception of holy Communion under both kinds.

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick or homebound extend the Church’s love and concern for the sick and homebound through a personal visit that includes celebration of the Rite of Distributing Holy Communion outside Mass. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick are called upon either when a parish’s ordained ministers are not able to attend adequately to the needs of the sick or where priests or deacons are not available in a hospital or religious institution.

In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, the ministries of extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick are regarded as two distinct ministries. Each ministry presumes a particular formation and requires a separate mandate. However, an individual may be mandated to exercise both ministries.

In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, the policy authorizing the practice of extraordinary

¹⁰⁷ Canon 935.

ministers of Holy Communion at Mass was first promulgated on July 27, 1970. The following norms reaffirm that original authorization and provide additional policies for good order and pastoral practice in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. These policies apply to parishes and to all Catholic institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and convents.

Selection of Ministers

POLICY 523:

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass or to the sick shall be baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics who are in full communion with the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁸ They shall embody a mature Christian lifestyle of faith and charity, devotion and morality, service and stability, and live in ways that reflect both love for the Eucharist and love for and desire to serve Christ in others. The minimum age for an extraordinary minister of holy Communion is eighteen; high school seniors who have not reached the minimum age may be mandated to serve a Catholic high school or at Masses celebrated specifically for gatherings of youth.

- a) Pastors, superiors, and directors of religious institutions charged with the responsibility of selecting extraordinary ministers of holy Communion should invite the collaboration of others who exercise pastoral leadership in the community in the selection of these ministers.
- b) The invitation to be an extraordinary minister of holy Communion is to be understood as a call to service. In addition to what is already stated in Policy 523, those selected should be spiritually sound and capable of adhering to all of the community's procedures for extraordinary ministers.
- c) A letter of recommendation from an individual's pastor is to be submitted when the individual is being considered for commissioning as an extraordinary minister for a given institution other than the parish.

Preparation and Formation

POLICY 524:

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass and to the sick shall receive catechesis and liturgical training at both the diocesan and parish or institutional level. Parishes and institutions will provide extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick with pastoral and liturgical training that is distinct from the formation of extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass. All formation shall be completed before ministers receive a formal mandate to exercise their ministry.

- a) As the first phase, potential extraordinary ministers of holy Communion shall receive formation provided by the diocesan Office for Worship. This will be offered jointly for

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Canon 205.

extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass and to the sick and will focus on elements common to both mandates.

b) After completing diocesan formation, potential ministers must undergo further training, provided by their parish or institution, specific to their desired mandate (at Mass or to the sick) and the customs and procedures observed where they will serve. This will include detailed instruction concerning the order and practice of distributing holy Communion. Training of extraordinary ministers to the sick will also involve apprenticeship to an experienced minister.

c) Catechesis for this ministry should foster an appreciation for one's baptismal vocation, an understanding of and devotion toward the Eucharist, and a firm grasp of the meaning of this extraordinary ministry.¹⁰⁹

d) Parishes and institutions will provide opportunities for extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to receive ongoing formation and spiritual enrichment. This may be accomplished most feasibly and fruitfully in collaboration.

The Mandate and Commissioning

POLICY 525:

Pastors and directors of Catholic institutions shall submit to the diocesan Office for Worship the names of those for whom they request a mandate as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass and/or to the sick.

a) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass and/or to the sick are mandated by the diocesan bishop or vicar general for a period of five years. Each extraordinary minister of holy Communion will receive from the diocese a certificate authorizing his or her ministry for the five-year period.

b) Ministers willing to continue in service beyond the expiration of their mandate may be nominated for renewal by their pastors or directors. Further formation through the Office for Worship is not required for renewal, but continued suitability for ministry should be ensured at the local level either through refresher training or consistent participation in ongoing formation and enrichment. Those nominated will receive from the diocese a certificate authorizing their ministry for a new five-year period.

c) The local community will maintain a register containing the name and most recent date of mandate for each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at Mass and/or to the sick. An updated register shall be submitted to the diocesan Office for Worship annually following the October Count. The register may be maintained and submitted electronically.

d) By the approval of the pastor, local superior or institution director, extraordinary

¹⁰⁹ *Immensae Caritatis* I.VI; *Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Practical Provisions, Article 8.

ministers of holy Communion whose mandate in another diocese has been verified can be accepted for service without receiving training through the Diocese of Grand Rapids, provided they receive training from their parish or institution regarding local norms and procedures. These extraordinary ministers shall be entered in the parish register of ministers with the date of their mandate from the previous diocese. Their mandate must also be renewed every five years.

e) An individual cannot request on his or her own behalf to be mandated. One can only be recommended by the pastor, superior or director of a Catholic institution.

f) In cases of immediate pastoral need, priests with faculties in the Diocese of Grand Rapids may mandate an individual for a particular occasion.¹¹⁰

POLICY 526:

After receiving a mandate from the diocesan bishop or vicar general through the Office for Worship, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass or to the sick shall be commissioned in the local community where they serve.

a) The bishop delegates pastors and chaplains to commission these ministers, who are called forth from the community.

b) The rite of commissioning is found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63. Those who are mandated may receive their certificates at this rite of commissioning.

c) Once mandated, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass or to the sick may exercise their ministry anywhere in the Diocese of Grand Rapids provided the local pastor, superior or director of pastoral care does not object.

Service within Mass

POLICY 527:

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass shall serve only when there are insufficient numbers of bishops, priests or deacons present to assist in the distribution of Communion or when the ordinary ministers are prevented from doing so because of, for example, physical disability or participation in some other ministry.¹¹¹

a) Ordinary ministers of holy Communion may never automatically or routinely be replaced by extraordinary ministers. Instituted acolytes are extraordinary ministers of holy Communion by virtue of their institution and are called upon to serve before any other extraordinary ministers.

b) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass shall not be vested in any special

¹¹⁰ *Immensae Caritatis* I.II.

¹¹¹ *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 88, 151, 157-158; *Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Practical Provisions, Article 8.

garb, but shall dress neatly in a manner befitting the dignity of serving the community at the celebration of the Eucharist. They may wear a special cross or other appropriate emblem.

c) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion do not participate in the entrance procession.

d) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion sit in the nave with the assembly, unless the exercise of another liturgical ministry demands otherwise.

POLICY 528:

The priest celebrant shall receive Communion before distributing the Body and Blood of Christ to the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion and the assembly. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion are not to receive holy Communion in the same manner as concelebrants.¹¹²

a) The integrity of the Mass's sacrificial action requires the consumption of the Body and Blood by the priest.¹¹³ Therefore, the priest celebrant must consume the Eucharist before it is distributed to anyone else. The priest celebrant is not to delay his own reception of the Eucharist until after others have received. Distribution to others may commence while concelebrating priests are still receiving.¹¹⁴

b) A deacon who assists at the Mass receives the Body and Blood after the priest celebrant has received. The deacon receives the Eucharist from the priest celebrant and then assists the priest in the distribution of the Eucharist to the faithful. If the Eucharist is distributed under both forms, the deacon ministers the chalice.¹¹⁵

c) After the priest has consumed the Body and Blood and given Communion to the deacon, if present, the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion receive the Eucharist. They do not self-communicate but receive holy Communion from another minister.¹¹⁶ They may receive Communion at the altar or at a side station. If receiving at the altar they may not approach the altar until the priest celebrant has received¹¹⁷ and, where the design of the church allows, should also not enter the sanctuary until after the celebrant's Communion. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion may receive Communion under both forms when serving at Mass, even if the rest of the assembly is receiving only under one form.¹¹⁸

d) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion receive Communion before they distribute to the rest of the faithful.¹¹⁹ This helps to signify that those who minister holy Communion

¹¹² NDRHC 38-39; *Ecclesiae de Mystero*, Practical Provisions, Article 8.

¹¹³ *Mediator Dei* 112.

¹¹⁴ GIRM 246; *Ceremonial of Bishops* 164.

¹¹⁵ GIRM 182.

¹¹⁶ NDRHC 44, 50; cf. *Ecclesiae de Mystero*, Practical Provisions, Article 8.

¹¹⁷ GIRM 162.

¹¹⁸ GIRM 283b.

¹¹⁹ NDRHC 39.

are themselves filled with that same presence of the Lord that they bring to others.

e) “After all eucharistic ministers have received Communion, the bishop or Priest celebrant reverently hands vessels containing the Body or the Blood of the Lord to the Deacons or extraordinary ministers who will assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. The Deacon may assist the Priest in handing the vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord to the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.”¹²⁰

POLICY 529:

The proper forms for distributing holy Communion are those provided by the liturgical books. Ministers of holy Communion offer the host by saying, “The Body of Christ,” and offer the chalice by saying, “The Blood of Christ.”¹²¹ The communicant should audibly respond, “Amen,” each time he or she receives. No other words shall be added and the formula shall not be edited.

a) Ministers of holy Communion are not permitted to address the communicant by name before saying, “The Body of Christ” or “The Blood of Christ.” Such an address by name would not only be an illicit addition to the prescribed formula. It would also, in those inevitable cases when the name of the communicant is unknown to the minister, obscure the principle that all the faithful are equal in presenting themselves for Communion.

b) Ministers of holy Communion may not impart special blessings (e.g., for children or non-Catholics) while distributing Communion. All members of the assembly, including those who have not received the Eucharist, are blessed at the end of Mass. When individuals approach with the expectation of a blessing, ministers of holy Communion should acknowledge their desire by praying, “Receive Jesus in your heart,” without any accompanying gesture.

c) All extraordinary ministers of holy Communion should be prepared and willing to distribute either form of holy Communion depending on the need.

d) “The norm established for the Dioceses of the United States of America is that Holy Communion is to be received standing, unless an individual member of the faithful wishes to receive Communion while kneeling.”¹²²

e) “When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister.”¹²³ The custom of substituting a genuflection for a bow of the head is also acceptable, provided this does not disrupt others coming forward to receive. A gesture of reverence is unnecessary when the communicant receives kneeling, for in that case his or

¹²⁰ NDRHC 40; cf. GIRM 162.

¹²¹ GIRM 161, 286. Should a priest distribute both species by intinction, the proper formula is provided at GIRM 287: “The Body and Blood of Christ.”

¹²² GIRM 160; cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 91.

¹²³ GIRM 160.

her posture itself expresses the prescribed reverence.¹²⁴ “When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.”¹²⁵

f) “The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant.”¹²⁶ If the communicant receives on the tongue, he or she is to extend the tongue sufficiently so that the minister may easily place the consecrated host on the tongue. If the communicant receives in the hand, he or she is to extend the hands facing upward with one placed under the other so that the minister may reverently place the consecrated host on the palm.

g) If an individual approaching to receive holy Communion demonstrates an ignorance of how to receive the Sacrament, the minister should first ascertain whether the individual is Catholic. If yes, the minister may briefly and discreetly instruct the communicant before distributing to him or her. If not, the minister should acknowledge the individual’s desire for Communion by saying “Receive Jesus in your heart,” as noted in b. above.

h) Ministers of holy Communion are responsible for ensuring that communicants consume the host before returning to their seats. Circumstances may require the minister to leave his or her place of distribution to fulfill this responsibility.

i) Only a priest may distribute Communion by intinction.¹²⁷ Communicants may not receive the host and then use the host for self-intinction (by dipping it in the Precious Blood).¹²⁸ If an individual is sick or has some contagious illness, the person should refrain from drinking from the chalice.

j) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass may not place hosts into a pyx presented to them in the Communion procession. They may distribute in the Communion procession only what will be consumed immediately by the communicant.

k) If a host or any particle of it should fall, it is to be picked up reverently by the minister of holy Communion. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion are to place it on the corporal for the attention of the celebrant, who will either consume the host himself or see that it is completely dissolved in water before being poured into the sacrarium. If any of the Precious Blood spills, the area should be washed immediately and the water poured into the sacrarium.¹²⁹

l) Whatever Precious Blood may remain after the distribution of holy Communion is to be consumed immediately at the altar by the priest or deacon, or extraordinary ministers of holy Communion may immediately distribute to one another at a designated location apart

¹²⁴ *Eucharisticum Mysterium* 34.b.

¹²⁵ GIRM 160.

¹²⁶ GIRM 160.

¹²⁷ GIRM 287.

¹²⁸ NDRHC 50.

¹²⁹ GIRM 280.

from the altar.¹³⁰ When assisting in this consumption of the Sacrament, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion who are not instituted acolytes do not simply consume what remains in their own chalice; instead, they always receive from another minister. If extraordinary ministers cannot consume the Precious Blood that remains in their chalices, they should approach the altar and request assistance from the priest or deacon. The Precious Blood must never be consumed while walking.

m) A small quantity of Precious Blood may be reserved for taking Communion to the sick who cannot take solid food, if this is to take place the same day. The Precious Blood is never reserved for another Mass, nor is it poured into the sacrarium.¹³¹

n) If any of the Precious Blood should become contaminated or spoiled, it is to be disposed of reverently. This may be done by mixing it with a large quantity of water (such that the accidents of wine are no longer apparent) and pouring the mixture into the sacrarium. The Precious Blood may *never* be poured directly into the ground or the sacrarium.¹³²

o) Apart from instituted acolytes, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion at Mass may not purify the sacred vessels.¹³³

POLICY 530:

“It is most desirable that the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, receive the Lord’s Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass.”¹³⁴

Holy Communion to the Sick

POLICY 531:

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick shall use the rites provided by the Church in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* or *Pastoral Care of the Sick* when ministering to the sick or homebound at home or in a hospital.

a) The parish or Catholic institution sending forth ministers to the sick is responsible for providing appropriate vessels for the Eucharist. Only vessels that fulfill the requirements of GIRM 328-330 may be used to transport holy Communion to the sick. Pyxes lined with plastic do not meet this standard. The Eucharist is never to be carried in a handkerchief, envelope, or other profane container.

b) Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist to the sick should make arrangements with the priest for access to the tabernacle outside of the times of Mass in order to obtain the

¹³⁰ GIRM 163, 182, 279, 284; NDRHC 52.

¹³¹ NDRHC 54-55.

¹³² NDRHC 55; *Redemptionis Sacramentum* 107.

¹³³ GIRM 279; NDRHC 53. Cf. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prot. N. 468/05/L.

¹³⁴ GIRM 85.

reserved Eucharist so that it can be taken to the sick when needed. As an alternative, because communal care for the sick “may be clearly demonstrated by taking Communion to them from the community’s Eucharistic celebration,” and most significantly so on the Lord’s day,¹³⁵ pyxes may be filled and entrusted to extraordinary ministers of holy Communion during Mass under the following conditions:

- 1) Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick should approach the sanctuary to receive hosts for the sick after the distribution of Communion to the faithful and before the Prayer after Communion.
 - 2) Ministers who wish to receive hosts for the sick during Mass must make arrangements through parish procedure prior to the liturgy. Such arrangements may be habitual for stably mandated ministers, but parish procedure should allow the clergy to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the sick in need of pastoral care and to ensure that only those who have been duly appointed to minister, either stably or for a given occasion, receive custody of the Eucharist.
 - 3) Before granting an individual a mandate to serve *ad actum*, in cases of true necessity, as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion,¹³⁶ priests are to ascertain that the individual is eligible for ministry (through sacramental initiation, maturity, and manner of life), knows how to show proper reverence for the Eucharist, has a copy of the rite to be used, and understands how to celebrate that rite.
 - 4) Ministers should depart directly to their ministry once Mass has concluded or they have received care of the Sacrament. They may not stop anywhere else before fulfilling their ministry.
- c) Ministers must proceed directly to the sick or homebound when carrying the Eucharist and not engage in profane or secular activities at this time.¹³⁷ The Blessed Sacrament is never reserved in private homes, offices or automobiles nor is it kept for a long time for later distribution to the sick. Reverence for the Eucharist is to be maintained at all times.
- d) Those who care for the sick and infirm should be instructed to prepare a table covered with a cloth upon which the Blessed Sacrament will be placed. Lighted candles are prepared (and, where customary, a container of holy water).¹³⁸ A small cross may also be placed on the table, if one is readily available. While this preparation may not be possible in a hospital setting (in particular, candles may not be lit where oxygen is in use), the administration of holy Communion should not be hurried or mechanical.
- e) The sick who are unable to receive the Host may receive the Sacrament under the form of the Precious Blood. The Precious Blood, consecrated at the most recent Mass and

¹³⁵ *Pastoral Care of the Sick* 73.

¹³⁶ *Immensae caritatis* I.II.

¹³⁷ Cf. canon 935.

¹³⁸ *Pastoral Care of the Sick* 74.

reserved only for the purpose of Communion for the sick who cannot receive under the form of bread, is carried to them in a secure and worthy vessel provided by the parish or Catholic institution. Any Precious Blood that remains after distributing Communion to the sick under that form should be consumed by the minister.¹³⁹

f) Similarly, extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the sick may consume hosts that remain after distribution if it will not be possible to return the hosts to the tabernacle.¹⁴⁰

g) Vessels that have been used to carry holy Communion to the sick shall be purified after use; extraordinary ministers of holy Communion may purify in this context.¹⁴¹ The sacred vessels are not to be used for any other purpose.

OTHER LITURGICAL MINISTERS:

POLICY 532:

Ordinarily, a lay liturgical minister should serve at only one Mass each day. Normally, a minister should serve in only one capacity at a given liturgy.¹⁴²

a) Parishes are to invite and form sufficient numbers of the faithful to serve as liturgical ministers, according to liturgical norms, so that ordinarily each will serve at and participate fully in only one Mass and in only one capacity per day. This allows individuals to give their full energy and attention to serving the assembly at that Mass.

b) The selection of liturgical ministers should be made in conformity with the universal norms of the Church and reflect the ethnic and racial composition of the community.

c) Altar servers, male and female, shall be baptized Roman Catholics who regularly share in the Eucharist. While individuals may begin serving at the altar before reaching the diocesan age for the sacrament of confirmation, those who are old enough to receive confirmation are expected to do so in order to begin or continue ministering as altar servers.

POLICY 533:

Qualified persons shall be appointed and commissioned to serve as readers of the sacred scriptures during the Eucharistic celebration and other liturgical celebrations.

a) “The function of proclaiming the readings is by tradition not presidential but ministerial.”¹⁴³ Accordingly, at least one lector (or reader) is ordinarily to serve at Mass in

¹³⁹ NDRHC 54; *HCWEOM* 55.

¹⁴⁰ The rite provides for reception by the minister (*HCWEOM* 33, 47; cf. *Immensae Caritatis* I.I) and the same exceptional permission to consume the Precious Blood would seem to extend to hosts that cannot be reposed.

¹⁴¹ *Pastoral Care of the Sick* 74, 88, 96; *HCWEOM* 55, 62, 77; NDRHC 54..

¹⁴² Cf. GIRM 109, 116, 187.

¹⁴³ GIRM 59.

addition to the ordained ministers.¹⁴⁴

b) Lay persons can fulfill the function of lector in liturgical actions by temporary designation.¹⁴⁵ They are to be truly qualified and carefully prepared for this function.¹⁴⁶ Those designated in this way to serve as readers are not the same as those instituted in the ministry of lector on a stable basis; the latter are instituted during a liturgical rite performed by a bishop and, in this country, are generally preparing for ordination.

c) Those who are designated to serve as readers shall be Roman Catholics who are fully initiated (through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist), are in good standing with the Church, embody a mature Christian lifestyle, and can proclaim the Scriptures with faith and skill. As a rule, readers are to be at least 16 years old. In Masses celebrated with a Catholic school community or Masses adapted in conformity with the *Directory for Masses with Children*, younger Catholics may serve as a reader beginning in fifth grade, even if they have not received the sacrament of confirmation.

d) The preparation provided to individuals called to minister as lectors or readers “must above all be spiritual, but what may be called a technical preparation is also needed. The spiritual preparation presupposes at least a biblical and liturgical formation. The purpose of their biblical formation is to give readers the ability to understand the readings in context and to perceive by the light of faith the central point of the revealed message. The liturgical formation ought to equip the readers to have some grasp of the meaning and structure of the Liturgy of the Word and of the significance of its connection with the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The technical preparation should make the readers more skilled in the art of reading publicly, either with the power of their own voice or with the help of [amplification].”¹⁴⁷ The diocesan Office for Worship can assist the parish in providing such training programs.

e) The lector or reader has his/her own proper function in the Eucharistic celebration and should be called upon to exercise this function even when there may be ministers of a higher rank present.¹⁴⁸ This is different from the principle that extraordinary ministers of holy Communion do not serve when there are suitable ordinary ministers of holy Communion present (see Policy 527).

f) When there is more than one reader and more than one reading, it is desirable to distribute the readings among them.¹⁴⁹ However, with the exception of the Passion of the Lord, a single reading may not be divided among several ministers.¹⁵⁰

g) In the absence of a deacon, during the entrance procession the reader may carry the *Book of the Gospels* (but not the *Lectionary*) with suitable dignity, i.e., slightly elevated, so that

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction 51; GIRM 99.

¹⁴⁵ Canon 230 §2.

¹⁴⁶ GIRM 101.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction 55.

¹⁴⁸ GIRM 59, 208; *Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction 52.

¹⁴⁹ *Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction 52.

¹⁵⁰ GIRM 109.

one's eyes see over the book.¹⁵¹ If a *Book of the Gospels* is not available, no book is carried in the entrance procession. The *Book of the Gospels* is not carried out in the recessional.¹⁵²

h) The reader proclaims the scripture readings from the ambo; the reader never proclaims the Gospel. If there is a commentator or song leader, these should be led from another suitable place and not from the ambo. While the responsorial psalm and the prayer of the faithful are customarily led from the ambo, these may also be led from another suitable place.¹⁵³

i) A pastor may delegate a qualified Catholic who does not ordinarily exercise this ministry to read at a particular ceremony, such as a funeral or wedding. Such readers should be assisted in preparing and practicing the reading.

¹⁵¹ GIRM 194-195.

¹⁵² *Book of the Gospels*, Introduction 22.

¹⁵³ GIRM 61, 71.

PART IV: MASS OFFERINGS

The practice of accepting a single offering for each Mass in return for the priest's praying for a requested intention has informed various theories throughout the centuries to explain how the fruits of Christ's sacrifice might be applied to the special intention of the one(s) offering the Mass. The councils and popes who have defended the practice have not prescribed any one of those explanations as definitive, so while we may safely affirm that the Church believes in a priest's ability to apply Mass for a specific intention, we must also concede that the full extent of that application's benefit and the means of its accomplishment remain matters of theological opinion.

Without settling that theological question, the Church has nonetheless attempted to articulate more precisely the nature of the offerings that accompany requests for prayer. In order to avoid connoting payment for services rendered, through use of the term "stipend" (Latin: *stipendium*), the revised Code of Canon Law now describes these donations with the term "offering" (Latin: *stips*).¹⁵⁴ Canon 946 states that: "The Christian faithful who give an offering to apply the Mass for their intention contribute to the good of the Church and by that offering share its concern to support its ministers and works." Thus, the offering is a gift to the Church and its purpose is to help support the Church in providing for ministers and services. It is not a contract involving specific services in exchange for money. When such an offering is accepted, the only obligation undertaken is the canonical obligation to say the Mass. When a priest celebrates or concelebrates a Mass with the intention of offering the Mass for the intention of the donor, the obligation is satisfied. No other obligation is incurred, such as a requirement to publicize the intention or announce it at Mass. The faithful should understand that the publication of Mass intentions is a means of inviting communal prayer rather than granting individuals exclusive claims to a given Mass.

General Practice

POLICY 534:

The faithful should be catechized about the theological meaning of the offering given for the celebration of the Mass and about the ascetical importance of almsgiving and the sharing of goods, of which the offerings for the celebration of the Mass are an outstanding form.¹⁵⁵

a) Parishes should not reserve special roles for donors, such as bringing forward the gifts of bread and wine, which, although acceptable liturgical practice, should not be seen as a prerogative of the donor which other worshipers do not have. Special intentions should also not be announced or remembered at Mass using phrases such as, "This Mass is being offered for..." or, "...for whom this Mass is offered," when these phrases might be understood to exclude the intentions of the rest of the faithful.

b) Some practices can be encouraged that avoid undue emphasis while still inviting prayer for special intentions, such as publishing the offering intention in the parish bulletin or including the offering intention in the Prayer of the Faithful along with other intentions in

¹⁵⁴ Cf. canons 945-958, 1308-1310.

¹⁵⁵ Canon 946; *Mos iugiter* Art. 7.

the same category, such as other parishioners who are ill or deceased without, however, adding the phrase "...for whom this Mass is offered."

Ordinary Offering for Celebration of a Mass

POLICY 535:

The ordinary offering to be made for the celebration of a Mass is \$10.

- a) The bishops of the Province of Detroit, in accord with the law,¹⁵⁶ have determined that the ordinary offering for a Mass is to be \$10.
- b) The priest may accept an offering for a Mass which he concelebrates.
- c) Only one offering may be accepted for each Mass. Several offerings should not be joined together and fulfilled at a single Mass. For an exception to this, see Policy 539.
- d) Priests are encouraged to celebrate Mass for the intentions of the poor and needy even if no offering has been received.¹⁵⁷

POLICY 536:

In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, all offerings to apply Mass for particular intentions are deposited into the parish account unless, in the case of voluntary offerings, it is obvious that such would be contrary to the will of the donor.¹⁵⁸

- a) The salary scale for priests in the Diocese of Grand Rapids has been adjusted so that it is not necessary for them to rely on the traditional stipend as part of their income. Therefore, any offering made is considered an offering to the Church and placed in a separate accounting until the obligation has been satisfied. The offerings can then be transferred to the general accounting of the parish. It is not necessary that these funds be kept in a segregated savings account, but there must be at least a separate financial account line as an obligation for them and sufficient parish funds to cover those obligations.
- b) A retired priest is permitted to retain the offering for those Masses he celebrates. Only one stipend per day may be retained by any priest.¹⁵⁹
- c) A pastor is obligated to celebrate the *Missa pro populo* every Sunday and holy day of obligation¹⁶⁰ and no offering may be accepted for this Mass. If he is legitimately prevented from doing so, he may delegate another priest to say it on that day, or he may say it himself

¹⁵⁶ Canon 952 §1.

¹⁵⁷ Canon 945 §2.

¹⁵⁸ Canon 531.

¹⁵⁹ Canon 951.

¹⁶⁰ Canons 534 §1 and 540 §1.

on another day. If the priest has the care of several parishes, he is required to say only one *Missa pro populo* for all the people entrusted to his care.¹⁶¹

d) The policy of the Diocese of Grand Rapids is that the Christmas and Easter collections are deposited into the general parish funds.

POLICY 537:

A parish or an individual priest may not accept more offerings for Masses than what can be reasonably satisfied within a year.¹⁶²

a) It is important that there not be even any appearance of commercialism or trafficking in Masses.¹⁶³

b) If the number of Masses requested to be celebrated is greater than what can be celebrated in the parish, the Masses may be celebrated elsewhere unless the donors have expressly indicated a contrary intention.¹⁶⁴ They may be transmitted to parishes which have few requests, to other priests who are retired or do not have parochial assignments, or to missions or oratories.

c) When a parish transmits an intention for a Mass to another place, it must also transmit the entire offering received from the donor, even if it is greater than the norm of \$10.¹⁶⁵

d) Parishioners should be educated regarding leaving bequests to the parish for Masses to be offered after their death. Individuals should avoid leaving large sums of money “for Masses” in their will; instead, requests for prayer should be determinate and capable of reasonable fulfillment. To maintain the distinction between donating to the Church’s works and requesting the application of Masses, the faithful might be encouraged to leave a general bequest to the parish with their desire to be remembered in the prayers and liturgical celebrations of the parish. The pastor should contact the Office of the Vicar General for advice if the parish receives a large bequest for more Mass intentions than can reasonably be fulfilled in due time.

POLICY 538:

The pastor is to ensure that an accurate record is kept of the offerings received for intentions for Masses and of the celebration of those Masses.¹⁶⁶

a) For priests in parochial assignments, this record is usually kept by the parish and administered by someone appointed and trained to do so. The priest should ensure the

¹⁶¹ Canon 534 §2.

¹⁶² Canon 953.

¹⁶³ Canon 947.

¹⁶⁴ Canon 954.

¹⁶⁵ Canon 955 §1.

¹⁶⁶ Canon 958.

accuracy of that record. For priests who are retired, they are to maintain proper records of the offerings received and Masses celebrated by them.¹⁶⁷

b) The record is to indicate the number of Masses to be celebrated, the intention, the amount of the offering received, and the date the Mass was celebrated.¹⁶⁸

c) If any intentions and their offerings have been transferred to another place or priest, the transfer is to be noted in the record.¹⁶⁹

Collective Mass Intentions

POLICY 539:

The norm is one intention for one Mass. Collective Mass intentions are only permissible as an exception when the following circumstances are met:¹⁷⁰

1) each of the donors making the offering has been explicitly informed at the time of making the offering that this particular Mass is for a collective intention and the donors freely consent to having the intention and offering combined with others in a Mass; and

2) the place and time for the celebration of the particular Mass is made public.

a) Having a Mass with offerings for collective intentions might be appropriate on such days as All Souls or other special solemnities.

b) The amount offered for such collective intentions can be less than the norm of \$10 for each celebration, but it should never be more than that. The entire amount offered for the collective intentions should be deposited into the general parish funds, unless it is clearly designated for a specific purpose, such as for the missions or some charitable cause.

c) Masses for collective intentions can be celebrated with no offerings given by any donors, but the intentions simply gathered together from anyone who wishes.

d) In the Diocese of Grand Rapids, no more than two Masses with collective intentions and offerings shall be offered during any given month. The permission of the Vicar General is required in order to celebrate such a Mass more frequently.

e) A parish may not use Masses with collective intentions as a method of sweeping together an excess number of intentions previously requested nor to maximize the number of offerings it can accept.

¹⁶⁷ Canon 955 §4.

¹⁶⁸ Canon 958.

¹⁶⁹ Canon 955 §3.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *Mos iugiter*.

f) It is especially important to avoid the impression of trafficking in Masses when making use of collective Mass intentions nor should there be an unseemly promotion of such Masses.

Offerings for Weddings and Funerals

POLICY 540:

Parishes which establish fees for the celebration of weddings or funerals in the church must ensure that those fees are just and equitable.

- a) A person's inability to make an offering should not preclude his or her receiving the sacrament of matrimony or the rite of Christian burial.
- b) The fee for funerals and weddings may include the cost of providing professional musicians, liturgical ministers, utilities, security, and maintenance of the building. It may also help defray the costs of marriage preparation and premarital testing programs. While these fees may be established to help a parish meet the costs of providing services, they should never be excessive or used as a means of creating income for the parish. There is to be no fee for the ministration of the priest, but he is free to accept an offering for his service and even to suggest a customary amount.
- c) The schedule of such fees should be clearly communicated and explained beforehand to those who are requesting the service.
- d) If the family requests that a priest who is a relative or friend be permitted to preside at a wedding or funeral, the request should be honored if at all possible. Any arrangement for a stipend to such a priest is the responsibility of the family and not the parish.

Stipend for Visiting Priest

POLICY 541:

A parish or pastor that requests an outside priest for assistance in providing Sunday liturgies and sacramental celebrations or daily Masses during the week should provide an appropriate remuneration to that priest.

- a) If an outside priest is asked to celebrate Sunday Mass (including anticipated Mass), he should be offered at least \$100 per Mass plus the diocesan rate for round-trip mileage.
- b) If a priest is asked to celebrate weekday Mass, he should be offered \$50-\$75 per Mass plus the diocesan rate for round-trip mileage.
- c) If the priest also provides the sacrament of reconciliation he should be offered \$50 in addition to what he receives for the celebration of Mass.

d) When receiving this remuneration for celebration of Mass as an outside priest, priests who are assigned to parish ministry may retain only the mileage reimbursement. The remainder of the remuneration is to be directed to the parish to which they are assigned, which provides their support. Retired priests and others with no parish assignment may retain the full remuneration.

PART V: THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS: THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church dedicates both day and night to the Lord's service. It offers thanksgiving and praise and unites work, sufferings, and joys to Christ who prays for us as our priest in his self-offering to the Father.¹⁷¹

While parish communities may not be familiar with or have had much experience with celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours, it is an age-old tradition in the lives of Catholics to pray at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. In promoting the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church is simply building upon that natural Christian movement of the heart and giving form to this personal prayer in union with the whole Church.

"In the Holy Spirit Christ carries out through the Church the task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, not only when the Eucharist is celebrated and the sacraments are administered, but also in other ways and especially when the Liturgy of the Hours is celebrated. There Christ himself is present in the gathered community, in the proclamation of God's word, in the prayer and song of the Church."¹⁷²

Since the earliest days of the Church's existence, Christians gathered for prayer at certain hours, especially morning and evening. While private prayer is necessary and commendable, community prayer has a special dignity which Jesus himself assigned to it: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst" (Mt 18:20).

The purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours is to sanctify the day and all human activity. "The Liturgy of the Hours extends to the different hours of the day the praise and prayer, the memorial of the mysteries of salvation and the foretaste of heavenly glory, which are offered in the Eucharistic mystery, 'the center and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community.'"¹⁷³ Hence, both historically and theologically, great importance has always been attached to the Church's tradition of gathering to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

The Liturgy of the Hours, in which Christ himself is present, is a rich part of the Church's heritage of worship. The availability of its communal celebration should be seriously considered, not only by parishes faced with the lack of a priest for daily Eucharist, but also by all local

¹⁷¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1174-1178.

¹⁷² General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours [hereafter GILH] 13.

¹⁷³ GILH 12.

assemblies.

By means of thorough education and formation, pastors and pastoral ministers should be encouraged to open to the faithful the treasures of this liturgy of the Church. In places where daily celebrations of the Eucharist may no longer be always available, the Liturgy of the Hours should be considered as an integral part of the worship of the Church and a splendid part of its heritage.

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours

POLICY 542:

Pastors shall catechize the faithful about the importance of daily prayer and promote the daily celebration of at least some part of the Liturgy of the Hours.

- a) Where the Liturgy of the Hours is celebrated, the format outlined in Chapter 2 of the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours is to be followed.
- b) Parishes are encouraged to consider celebrating one of the hours in conjunction with parish meetings or other gatherings of the faithful, e.g., celebrating Night Prayer at the conclusion of an evening meeting.
- c) “Those in holy orders or with a special canonical mission have the responsibility of initiating and directing the prayer of the community,”¹⁷⁴ but in the absence of a priest or deacon lay Catholics may lead celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours.¹⁷⁵ The lay faithful who lead scheduled parish celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours shall be fully initiated Catholics who are properly trained for this ministry.
- d) The Liturgy of the Hours may be celebrated in a church, a chapel, or any suitable place.
- e) Efforts should be made to incorporate music and a complement of ministers in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours according to the principle of progressive solemnity.¹⁷⁶
- f) The Liturgy of the Hours may be celebrated during a period of Eucharistic exposition in accordance with the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ GILH 23.

¹⁷⁵ GILH 254, 258.

¹⁷⁶ GILH 273.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *HCWEOM* 96.

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