

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
of
BALLARAT



Diocesan Liturgical Commission

**GUIDELINES FOR
EXTRAORDINARY
MINISTERS OF HOLY
COMMUNION**

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

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SELECTION OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Because of the “*inseparable union*” between Word and Eucharist (see G.I.#10,44,46) the same principles which underlie the selection of lectors ought to equally apply to the selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. These principles require an appropriate level of stability and belief. In addition, a selection basis would require a maturity (or age level) that is ready to fulfil reasonably these words from the **Rite of Commissioning**:

This ministry calls you to witness to the Gospel message in faith and conduct; you must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love.

and the conditions laid out in **Immensae Caritatis** #1.vi:

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

- 1.1 Those who have been recommended by the Parish Priest will be commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, for the parish to which they belong.
- 1.2 The preparation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be spiritual, incorporating Scriptural, Sacramental and Liturgical formation.
- 1.3 The witness value of those who serve in this ministry needs to be taken into account - both for the sake of the Extraordinary Minister and those within the congregation.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be *truly qualified and carefully prepared* so that the faithful may continue to nurture a deep reverence for the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and further their sense of the sacredness of the Eucharistic activity.

- 1.4 As the General Instruction to the Lectionary requires of Lectors that they have the ability to *understand the Readings in context and to perceive the central point of the revealed message*, this presumed level of maturity ought apply to the selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion - that they are of an age and faith commitment that has found expression in parish life and general witness.
- 1.5 A person will be commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for a period of THREE years. At the conclusion of that period, that person may continue in the ministry after renomination and the appropriate formation and recommissioning.
- 1.6 It will be appropriate for the Parish Priest to recommend to the Bishop the termination of the commission of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at any time for a good and sufficient reason.
- 1.7 Parish Priests should only appoint the number of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion sufficient to fill needs of the parish.
- 1.8 Tertiary institutions and school communities directly linked to parish communities, or serving the wider diocesan region, need to preserve the principles / guidelines adopted by the Diocese in regard to the selection of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Such institutions and communities need to have the approval of the local Parish Priest where there is a direct link of school and parish, or the approval of the Bishop or his delegate in the instance of regional secondary, tertiary or other institutions.

The Guidelines in this document are to be the criteria for selection and formation. No institution is to appoint Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for service within that Institution, or for home parishes, independently of the permission of the Bishop/Parish Priest.

FORMATION PROCEDURES

- 2.1 All applicants for commissioning as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must be recommended by the Parish Priest and undergo a time of formation.
- 2.2 Formation should be facilitated by parish teams, who have themselves undergone a time of initial formation, and follow the same content and structure as provided by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.
- 2.3 i) Formation will cover the following content:
- Structure of the Mass
 - History of the Eucharist
 - Theology of the Eucharist
 - Ministry in the Church
 - Communion to the Sick
 - Relationship to Sunday Assembly of Word and Communion
 - Practical implementation:
 - Extraordinary Ministers should be suitably dressed.
 - Arrive early enough to indicate their presence to the celebrant or leader.
 - They should normally not perform other ministries at that Mass (reader, cantor, usher, collector, etc.).
 - They sit in the assembly; some parishes like to include the Extraordinary Ministers in their entrance procession.
 - Procedures for distribution of Communion during Mass.
(Lay Communion Ministers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Archdiocese of Brisbane 1982, revised 1993, 2012,
<http://liturgybrisbane.net.au/assets/Lay-Communion-Ministers.pdf>)
- ii) Various pathways may be followed in this formation. However the introductory session should be at least two hours in duration.

The DVD *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* is the recommended resource for Diocesan formation for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (available from the Diocesan Resource Centre).

- 2.4 All commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will undertake ongoing formation.
- 2.5 Formation sessions are to be made available for those people who wish to renew their commission as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion after a period of three years.

COMMISSIONING OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- 3.1 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned at the Sunday parish Mass where possible. If the commissioning is done at a regional gathering, Extraordinary Ministers are to be presented to the parish in a simple ritual as part of the Sunday Mass.
(See Appendix 2)
- 3.2 The Rite of Commissioning is to be in accord with the **Rite of Commissioning Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.**
(January 29, 1973).
- 3.3 The Bishop or his delegate commissions those who are to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- 3.4 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned for service in their specific parish.
- 3.5 A commissioned Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may provide temporary assistance in another parish of the Diocese if the Parish Priest/celebrant requests it.
- 3.6 When a person who has been commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion moves to another parish in the Diocese, they can perform the duties of an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in the new parish only with the agreement of the Parish Priest.

FUNCTIONS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

- 4.1 The way in which Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion participate in a parish will be decided by the Parish Priest. It is strongly recommended that Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion both assist with the distribution of Communion at Sunday Mass and other Masses where necessary and take Communion, especially on Sunday, to those who are prevented from attending Mass through illness, age or similar circumstances.
- 4.2 When Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist with the distribution of Communion during Mass, a Rite similar to that in *Appendix 2* shall be used.
- 4.3 In taking Communion to the Sick, the Rite outlined in the *Rite of Distribution of Holy Communion to the Sick by Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion shall be used.*
(*Appendix 3*).

It is strongly recommended that Communion to the Sick by Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion be taken from a Sunday parish Mass.

- 4.4 Pyxes for the use of those taking Communion to the Sick shall be supplied by the parish and shall at all times remain the property of the parish.
- 4.5 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should dress in a manner that is appropriate to the importance of the ministry they are performing and is in keeping with the customs of the locality.
 - If parishes choose, when carrying out their ministry, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion could wear some distinguishing sign, eg. crucifix or eucharistic symbol worn around the neck or pinned to collar / lapel. This symbol should only be worn while the Extraordinary Minister is carrying out the ministry.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Any matters which arise relating to the role and duties of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and which are not covered by these Guidelines, should be referred to the Bishop for a decision.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

RITE OF COMMISSIONING EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

Presenter: I ask the candidates to be commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to come forward.

Names are called and candidates move to the sanctuary.

Presenter: Reverend Father, I present to you these people who have been chosen to undertake this ministry.

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ,

You have been chosen for an important ministry in this parish community. You are to be entrusted with distributing Communion during Mass, with taking Communion to the sick, and with giving it as Viaticum to the dying.

In this ministry, you must be examples of Christian living in faith and conduct; you must strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love. Remember that, though many, we are one body because we share the one bread and one chalice.

As Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion be, therefore, especially observant of the Lord's command to love your neighbour. For when he gave his body as food to his disciples, he said to them: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

Celebrant: I now ask you:

Are you ready to undertake the office of giving the Body and Blood of the Lord to your sisters and brothers, and so serve to build up the Church?

Candidates: I am.

Celebrant: Are you resolved to administer Holy Communion with the utmost care and reverence?

Candidates: I am.

The celebrant then invites a response from the assembly.

Celebrant: As the parish community of (name of parish), are you ready and willing to support and encourage (names of Extraordinary Ministers) in this ministry?

All: We are.

Candidates are then invited to kneel.

Celebrant: My dear people,
Let us pray with confidence for these people chosen to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

(Pause for silent prayer)

Merciful Father,
creator and guide of your family,
bless ✠ our sisters and brothers.
May they faithfully give the food of life to your people.
Strengthened by this sacrament,
may they walk in the way of your commandments
and come to share in the banquet of heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Relying on the help of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, I now commission these people as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

In parishes where this occurs, the celebrant then presents the Extraordinary Ministers with the symbol of their ministry and their certificate of commissioning.

If the ministers are to be presented to the parish community at Sunday Masses, the symbol may be kept and presented at that time.

Celebrant: Receive this symbol of your ministry and service to this parish community and your certificate of commissioning.

Presenter calls names and celebrant presents symbols and certificates. Candidates then return to their places.

APPENDIX 2

PROCEDURE FOR DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION DURING MASS BY EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. Report to the sacristy at least five minutes before Mass.
2. Process with celebrant, readers and servers and take places in the congregation, if this is the custom of the parish.
3. At the Sign of Peace move to the sanctuary, wash your hands at the place provided and stand to the side and behind the celebrant.
4. When the celebrant genuflects after the Lamb of God, a slight bow would be appropriate.
5. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion receive Communion before the distribution to the congregation:
 - i) When offered the Host, respond with a clear and firm "Amen";
 - ii) When offered the chalice, respond, take it firmly, take time to drink from it then return it to the celebrant.
6. As the celebrant gives you the ciborium, plate or chalice for the distribution of Communion, he may bless you saying the following or similar words: "May the Lord bless you so that you may worthily distribute the Body of Christ." Respond with an audible "Amen."
7. In distributing Holy Communion, elevate the Host and show to the communicant saying in a firm voice, "The Body of Christ." The communicant replies, "Amen." Then place the Host on hand or tongue.

If Communion under both species is taking place and you are offering the chalice, say “The Blood of Christ.” The communicant replies “Amen” and takes the chalice, drinks from it and returns it to you. Before offering the chalice to the next person, wipe the lip of the chalice, **inside and outside**, with the purifier and give the chalice a quarter turn. Ensure that you have a sufficient supply of purifiers so that the chalice is seen to be thoroughly wiped with a clean cloth.

If a member of the congregation comes forward for a blessing (with arms crossed) then make a sign of the cross on their forehead saying, “May God bless you and keep you.” **Do not** make the sign of the cross whilst holding the Blessed Sacrament.

8. When the distribution of Holy Communion is completed, return to the altar and place the ciborium/chalice on the altar. Wait until all distribution has been completed and the ciborium placed in the tabernacle. Wash your hands at the place provided and return to your place.

Under the direction of the celebrant, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be required to reverently consume all of the Precious Blood that is not received by the people. This should occur at the end of Communion and before the Post-Communion prayer.

The Precious Blood is never reserved.

9. If Communion is taken to the sick from the Mass the pyxes are filled after the distribution of Communion. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who are taking Communion to the sick, move to the side of the altar at an agreed time, receive the pyxes and a blessing and go to their ministry.
10. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be required to assist in the cleaning and putting away of the sacred vessels **after** Mass. All vessels and linens should be carefully checked and treated in a respectful manner.

The tabernacle should be locked and the key placed in a secure spot in the sacristy.

APPENDIX 3

RITE OF DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION TO THE SICK BY EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREAMBLE

The ministry begins with full, conscious and active participation in the parish Sunday Mass, at which the whole community is fed from both the table of God's Word and from the table of the Eucharist.

In preparation for their service, Extraordinary Ministers should:

- Be fittingly attired;
- Have a pyx for the Host/s and a copy of the Rite of Communion to the Sick;
- Arrive in time to liaise with the celebrant before Mass commences, so that at Communion time he can place the appropriate number of Hosts in the pyx and then commission them in the presence of the community to go forth on their ministry.

*(Taken from "Ministry of Communion to the Sick",
Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne).*

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting

The Extraordinary Minister places the Blessed Sacrament on the table.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen

The Extraordinary Minister greets the sick person and the others present. One of the following may be used:

- a. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
R. And also with you.
- b. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
R. And also with you.

According to circumstances, the Extraordinary Minister may include one of the following Penitential Rites:

Penitential Rite

The Extraordinary Minister invites the sick person and all present to join in the penitential rite, using these or similar words:

My brothers and sisters, let us turn with confidence to the Lord and ask his forgiveness for our sins.

After a brief period of silence, the penitential rite continues using one of the following:

- a. You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

You came to call sinners:

Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

- b. All say:

I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault, (striking their breast)
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

The Extraordinary Minister concludes the penitential rite with the following:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reading

The Extraordinary Minister invites the sick person and all present to listen to the reading from Scripture. The Word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the Extraordinary Minister. When Communion is taken to the sick on a Sunday or another feast, the Gospel of that day should be used. On weekdays the gospel of the day or feast or one of the following readings could be used:

- a. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:51

Jesus says:

“I am the living bread which has come down from heaven.

Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- b. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:54-58

Jesus says:

“Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me.

This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- c. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 14:6

Jesus says:

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- d. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 15:5

Jesus says:

“I am the vine,

you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me you can do nothing.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- e. A reading from the first letter of John 4:16

We ourselves have known and put our faith in
God’s love towards ourselves.

God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God,
and God lives in him.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

A brief period of silence may be observed after the reading of the Word of God.

Prayer of the Faithful

The Prayer of the Faithful may be said. With a brief introduction the Extraordinary Minister invites all those present to pray. After the intentions the Extraordinary Minister says the concluding prayer.

Example:

For all members of the church throughout the world

PAUSE

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

For all people in our families and community

PAUSE...

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

For the care and protection of God's world.....

PAUSE

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

For peace in our world.....

PAUSE.....

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

For our Pope [insert name], Bishop [insert name] and all the clergy and religious in our Diocese.

PAUSE

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

For the prayers in our hearts today.....

PAUSE.....

Lord hear us

R. Lord hear our prayer

We make these prayers through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

Lord's Prayer

The Extraordinary Minister introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

- a. Now let us pray as Christ the Lord taught us: Our Father....
- b. And now let us pray with confidence as Christ our Lord commanded:
All say: Our Father...
- c. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say: Our Father...

Communion

The Extraordinary Minister shows the Host to those present, saying:

Behold the Lamb of God,
Behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the lamb.

The sick person and all who are to receive Communion say:

*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.*

The Extraordinary Minister goes to the sick person and, showing the Blessed Sacrament, says: "The Body of Christ." The sick person answers: "Amen," and receives Communion.

Others present who wish to receive Communion then do so in the usual way. Any Hosts which remain after Communion should be consumed by the Extraordinary Minister.

After the conclusion of the rite, the Extraordinary Minister cleanses the vessel as usual.

Then a period of silence may be observed.

Prayer after Communion

The Extraordinary Minister says a concluding prayer. One of the following may be used:

Let us pray.

(Pause for silent prayer, if this has not proceeded)

- a. God our Father,
you have called us to share the one bread and one cup
and so become one in Christ.
Help us to live in him that we may bear fruit, rejoicing that he has redeemed
the world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. *Amen.*

- b. All-powerful God,
we thank you for the nourishment you give us through your holy gift.
Pour out your Spirit upon us and in the strength of this food from heaven keep
us single-minded in your service.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
R. Amen.
- c. All-powerful and ever-living God,
may the Body and Blood of Christ your Son be for our brother/sister N.
a lasting remedy for body and soul.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.
- d. We humbly entreat you, Lord,
that nourished and fortified by this divine banquet,
we may have strength to face future trials with fortitude
and to lend more generous help
to our brothers and sisters in time of trouble.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.
- e. Grant us, O merciful God,
that the holy gifts we have received
may confirm us in our resolve to do your will
and make us everywhere witnesses to your truth.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.
- f. O God, only support of our human weakness,
show the power of your protection
over your servants who are sick,
that sustained by your merciful help,
they may be restored to your holy Church in good health.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

The Extraordinary Minister invokes God's blessing and makes the sign of the cross on himself or herself, while saying:

- a. May God the Father bless us.

R. Amen.

May God the Son heal us.

R. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit enlighten us.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless us, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

- b. May the Lord be with us to protect us.

R. Amen.

May he guide us and give us strength.

R. Amen.

May he watch over us, keep us in his care, and bless us with his peace.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless us, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

- c. May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

- d. May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

APPENDIX 4

RESOURCES FOR USE IN FORMATION OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

ONE BREAD ONE BODY

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/images/docs/onebread.pdf>

BECOME ONE BODY ONE SPIRIT IN CHRIST (DVD)

Available from the Diocesan Resource Centre.

LAY COMMUNION MINISTERS - EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Archdiocese of Brisbane 1982, revised 1993, 2012)

<http://liturgybrisbane.net.au/assets/Lay-Communion-Ministers.pdf>

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION DURING MASS

(Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, Archdiocese of Melbourne)

Can be ordered from Office for Evangelisation or downloaded from

<http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Formation/Resources-and-Links.aspx>

MINISTRY OF COMMUNION TO THE SICK

(Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation, Archdiocese of Melbourne)

Can be ordered from Office for Evangelisation or downloaded from

<http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Formation/Resources-and-Links.aspx>

POWERFUL POINTS FOR LITURGICAL MINISTERS (DVD)

(Archdiocese of Brisbane Liturgy Office)

Available from Diocesan Resource Centre.

THE CATHOLIC HANDBOOK FOR VISITING THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND

Available from the Diocesan Resource Centre.

SACRED SPACE - THE PRAYER BOOK 2014

Available from the Diocesan Resource Centre.

RESOURCE PEOPLE to assist parishes in the preparation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are also available through the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

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