

Guidelines for the Diocese of Salina Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Church law and practice, lay persons may be commissioned to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the Diocese of Salina. These guidelines are to enable proper pastoral and liturgical practice regarding the Holy Eucharist.

I. Specific Norms

The commission to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is to be given by the bishop or his delegate upon recommendation of the pastor, chaplain or parish life coordinator and the completion of a satisfactory course of instruction in a parish, vicariate or diocesan program. Extraordinary Ministers should be mature Christians who give consistent evidence in their lifestyles that they are ready and willing to exercise this privileged ministry.

The particular number of these ministers in each parish or institution is to be based upon pastoral need.

Ordinarily, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is to be 21 years of age. In particular cases a pastor/ chaplain/Parish Life Coordinator may petition that a younger person be permitted to assume this ministry.

The term of the original commissioning is for three years and may be renewed as long as the minister is willing to serve and there is no impediment. A minister should be removed from this ministry if, because of a changed life/faith situation, particular circumstances would warrant, e.g. if it would cause scandal among the faithful, etc.

Extraordinary ministers are appointed to a specific parish or institution, and may not minister outside or beyond the parameters of their appointment.

Special consideration is to be given to the need for preparation on the part of the sick who will receive Communion from an Extraordinary Minister. When possible, the priest should introduce the Extraordinary Minister and explain the circumstances in which Holy Communion can be brought more often to the sick person and indicate the concern and prayers of the parish community for the sick.

Pastors should be aware that they are empowered to mandate extraordinary ministers for a particular instance where a crowd of people at any Mass would call for extra ministers of the Eucharist.

II. Lay Leaders of Prayer

Each parish of the diocese should choose one or more Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to serve as Lay Leaders of Prayer. These ministers preside according to the prescriptions of the Church's approved rituals: "Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest" and "Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass" if the priest is incapacitated for the Eucharist or must be away from the parish and a substitute cannot be reasonably obtained in time for the regular services of the parish. Such Lay Leaders of Prayer are to receive special training and a particular commissioning from the Bishop. A special set of guidelines has been issued for this ministry.

III. Selection and Training

Pastors should develop the full complement of ministries that participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not, therefore, "double up" as lectors, ushers, choir members or others in any specific celebration.

An annual updating of the Extraordinary Ministers is recommended for the enrichment of their ministerial awareness and skills. A brief day of recollection for the Extraordinary Ministers will provide opportunities for prayer and ongoing formation. The theology and spirituality of the Eucharist, as well as due reverence

and care for the Blessed Sacrament should be part of the training required.

A variety of video and audio tapes and booklets are available for instructional and catechetical purposes regarding Eucharistic Ministry, theology of Eucharist, history and theology in the Church and the practical matters involved in various aspects of this ministry at Mass, Communion under both forms; Communion to the sick, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and lay leadership for Word and/or Communion Services. Personnel from the Diocesan Liturgy Office and other people throughout the Diocese are available to give parish or vicariate instructional and training sessions to prepare Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or to give renewal days for ministers.

IV. Installation of Ministers

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be re-commissioned every three years. The diocesan liturgy office will annually send to pastors/parish life coordinators a list of ministers who need to be re-commissioned.

A public ceremony should take place in the parish for the installation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Ideally this would be at a Sunday Mass or at some other appropriate feast, e.g. the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or a parish feast day.

The ceremony should be both simple and brief. A suggested rite of installation has been included in these guidelines. Additional rites can be found in the *Book of Blessings*. This ceremony will provide the pastor with an ideal opportunity to catechize the people about the Holy Eucharist, to encourage reverence, and to reinforce instructions about reception of Communion in the hand and from the cup.

V. Rite of Installation for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

(After the homily, which should stress the pastoral reasons for this office in the Christian community, the priest presents the minister-elect to the people in these or similar words):

Our brother/sister N., has been entrusted with the important duty of distributing Holy Communion and of bringing Communion and Viaticum to the sick and to those in danger of death.

(The priest addresses the minister(s)-elect.)

You, my brother/sister, have been chosen for an important office and must now strive more earnestly than ever to live the Christian life, to give good example, to take your faith seriously, and to be devoted to this great mystery which signifies the unity of the Church and brings it about; we who share this one bread become one body in Christ Jesus.

Since you give Holy Communion to your brothers and sisters in Christ, you must try to practice that charity which was commanded by our Lord. He gave His body as food to his disciples and told them: "This, then is what I command you: 'love one another'."

(After the instruction, the minister-elect stands in front of the presider who asks him/her:)

Are you resolved to undertake this office of giving the Body and Blood of Christ to your brothers and sisters for the service and growth of the Church?

Minister-elect: I AM.

Are you resolved to reverence and care for the Eucharist which you will administer?

Minister-elect: I AM.

(All stand: The minister-elect kneels, and the presider invites those present to pray.)

My brothers and sisters, let us pray that our brother(s)/sister(s) chosen to administer the

Body and Blood of Christ may be filled with God's blessing.

(All pray silently for a brief period.)

Presider: God of mercy, source of all grace and blessing, bless + our brother(s)/sister(s). May he/she/they faithfully distribute the sacrament to our brothers and sisters, be strengthened and comforted by it, and one day be found worthy to share in the Paschal feast of heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

(An invocation for the newly-designated ministers is added to the general intercessions.)

(At the preparation of the gifts, the newly-designated minister(s) brings the vessel with bread to the altar. At communion it is desirable that he/she/they receive under both kinds.)

IV. Resources

Special Ministers of the Eucharist - Pueblo Publication, Chicago.

Ministers of Care - Liturgy Training Publication, Chicago.

This Holy and Living Sacrifice - Directory for the Celebration and Reception of Communion under Both Kinds - National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Communion Rituals (various).

(The above can be ordered through the Office of Liturgy).

Videos and DVDs: Please consult the Media Catalog on the diocesan website: www.salinadiocese.org, Catholic Education, Audio/Visual Aids, and check out through the Media Center.

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Salina Diocese
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